

Participating in the Streets

Social Conflict and its Influence on Policy Planning, a
Comparative Study of Gas Extraction in Groningen and
Wind Farm Development in Drenthe (2000-2019)

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Menno Ferwerda

Utrecht University

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Abstract

In this thesis the causes for the success of social conflict, as form of self-organised participation, in influencing policy and planning is analysed. In Groningen people struggle with the consequences of the extraction of fossil fuels, as gas induced earthquakes frequently hit the province. In Drenthe the need for more sustainable energy is perceived as a threat to the landscape and community, as large wind farm projects are developed in the region. In this thesis a comparison of the movements that emerged in response to the policies attached to these cases is made. A combination of success factors is formulated: if the public opinion is favourable towards a movement, it contributes to the support the movement enjoys, with enough support the movement is able to expand its actions, these actions should include legal procedures, if ruled in favour of the movement, success is inevitable.

Keywords: social conflict, self-organised participation, protest movements, gas induced earthquakes, wind farm development, comparative analysis, Groningen, Drenthe

Name: Menno Ferwerda

Student number: 6528155

Assignment: MA Thesis

Supervisor: dr. H. Schouwenburg

Study Program: History of Politics and Society, MA

Institute: Utrecht University

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List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
EZ	Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs
GBB	<i>Groninger Bodem Beweging</i> (action group part of the anti-gas movement in Groningen)
M	Magnitude
MW	Megawatts
NAM	<i>Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij</i> (Dutch oil and gas exploration and production company)
OVV	<i>Onderzoeksraad voor Veiligheid</i> (Dutch safety board)
RCR	<i>Rijkscoördinatieregeling</i> (Dutch law awarding decision-making power to the state in wind farm construction)
SodM	<i>Staatstoezicht op de Mijnen</i> (overseer of the extraction of fossil fuels from Dutch soil)
SVWoL	<i>Structuurvisie Windenergie op Land</i> (plan for wind farm construction in the Netherlands)
WAG	<i>Stichting Waardevermindering door Aardbevingen Groningen</i> (action group part of the anti-gas movement in Groningen)

Introduction

The way energy is harnessed, transported, and consumed in a society, has always played a large role in the structuring of landscapes and identities. As a result of the industrial revolution, energy production shifted from local resources to far away drilled and mined fossil-fuelled energy. The considerable distance from residential areas resulted in an alienation from energy production and the costs concerned.¹ From the 1970s onwards, concerns about the damaging effects of fossil fuels decreased this distance again.² However, it was not until the turn of the century, as steps were taken towards a more sustainable energy system – a transition away from fossil fuels – that the way energy was generated became a local matter again. The developments in the 1970s and those surrounding the energy transition led to increasing polarisation between the costs and benefits of energy production. Especially the transition, which might be warmly embraced by those who believe in the virtues of renewable energy, instils fear and anger in those who perceive it as an intrusion into the landscape they feel attached to.³

In the Netherlands, once at the forefront of the energy transition but now scoring second to last on the European Union (EU) renewable energy index, two clear cases related to the problems with fossil and sustainable energy present themselves.⁴ For years now, in the most northern province of the country, Groningen, people have experienced problems with gas extraction activities. Once the pride of the province, since the 1990s it has induced frequent earthquakes, leading to heavy opposition. In the adjacent province of Drenthe, people struggle with the development of a large wind farm project which they, in the context of the energy transition, are forced to accept. Although, both cases are very different in

¹ Martin J. Pasqualetti, Paul Gipe, and Robert W. Righter, "A Landscape of Power," in *Wind Power in View: Energy Landscapes in a Crowded World* (London: Academic Press, 2002), 3-16.

² G. Verbong, *Een kwestie van lange adem: de geschiedenis van duurzame energie in Nederland* (Boxtel: Aeneas uitgeverij van vakinformatie b.v., 2001), 37-40.

³ Adrian Smith, Andy Stirling, and Frans Berkhout, "Governance of Sustainable Sociotechnical Transitions," *Research Policy* 34, 1 (2005): 1491-1510; Jan Rotmans, Rene Kemp, and Marjolein van Asselt, "More Evolution than Revolution: Transition Management in Public Policy," *Foresight* 3, 1 (2001): 15-31.

⁴ For the complete index see: "Share of energy from renewable sources 2004-2016," Eurostat, accessed March 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Figure_1-Share_of_energy_from_renewable_sources_2004-2016.png

nature, they present clear instances of social movements rising in opposition of policies being sustained or implemented within the context of energy production, transport, and use.

In this context, the term social movement is used to refer to the grouping of individuals and/or organisations that struggle to attract the attention of policymakers and effectively strive to be involved in, and influence the, policy-making process of one specific topic, such as gas extraction or wind farm construction.⁵ When two or more groups in society, referring to citizens, companies, as well as the government, exhibit the belief that they have incompatible goals, conflict arises. Referring to the groups in society that are concerned, this form of conflict is called social conflict.⁶ The energy transition involves choices about the means, speed, and direction of change, and is therefore prone to create a division amongst people with different wants and needs. Interests about the use of the available space or values attached to the landscape play an important role in this, but also more basic concerns about the costs and the price of energy are expressed. Considering fair distribution of burdens and benefits, fair decision-making procedures, and fair representation of individuals and their viewpoints, social conflict poses a significant challenge for policy-making and planning of energy projects.⁷ Although social conflict is mainly a way for social groups to express their dissatisfaction with certain developments and policies, and their goal is generally to influence public policies, the implications of social conflicts are mostly overlooked in transition policy analysis. Works on the energy transition often focus on the formal decision-making mechanisms that shape transition policy.⁸ By placing public authorities at the centre of the analysis, transition studies scholars attempt to explain how industrialisation, capitalism, and neoliberalism affect the energy transition. In this attempt they offer valuable suggestions for more effective policy actions.

Scholars who adopt an approach that focusses more on society, have reflected on the nature and role of community energy and the significance of local energy initiatives

⁵ Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 8-9.

⁶ Louis Kriesberg and Bruce W. Dayton, *Constructive Conflict: From Escalation to Resolution*, 3d ed. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, Publishers Inc., 2012), 2-4.

⁷ Andy Stirling, "Pluralising Progress: From Integrative Transitions to Transformative Diversity," *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 1, 1 (2011): 82-88; Kirsten Jenkins et al., "Energy Justice: A Conceptual Review," *Energy Research & Social Science Volume* 11, 1 (2016): 174.

⁸ Smith, "Governance of," 1491-1510; Rotmans, "More Evolution."

(hereafter: LEIs) in the energy transition.⁹ Their contributions discuss the economic, social, and environmental benefits that LEIs have on their members and communities. Economic benefits are found not only for the members of the LEI but, at the same time, strengthen the local economies by increasing employment and creating business opportunities. By bringing together individuals who share common goals, and by the democratic decision-making process employed by these groups, LEIs have been found to increase social cohesion. The environmental benefits are found in the LEIs contribution to the public acceptance of renewable energy projects and in their role in raising awareness of responsible energy consumption.¹⁰

Some scholars have attempted to unify both state and society focussed approaches. For example, Antonia Proka, Derk Loorbach, and Matthijs Hisschemöller bring the dialogue between state and society to the centre of the analysis by discussing the LEIs potential to transform the Dutch energy regime.¹¹ Likewise, focusing on the cooperation between state and society, Rene Kemp, Jan Rotmans, and Derk Loorbach seek to explain the potential of social participation in policy development.¹² Although the state is still considered the key actor in their analysis, different social groups, who have problems to be solved or would be positively or negatively affected by the outcome, are included in the analysis. These approaches, which tend to focus on organised interest groups as social actors outside the state, place emphasis on the influence of social groups on energy policy and planning. Nonetheless, they mainly tend to focus on invited participation. When participation is invited, it refers to the process and procedures that are set up by, for example, governments,

⁹ See for example: Marieke Oteman, Henk-Jan Kooij, and Mark A. Wiering, "Pioneering Renewable Energy in an Economic Energy Policy System: The History and Development of Dutch Grassroots Initiatives," *Sustainability* 9, 4 (2017): 1-21; Tineke van der Schoor and Bert Scholtens, "Power to the People: Local Community Initiatives and the Transition to Sustainable Energy," *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews* 43, 1 (2015): 666-675; Mustafa Hasanov and Christian Zuidema, "The Transformative Power of Self-Organization: Towards a Conceptual Framework for Understanding Localenergy Initiatives in the Netherlands," *Energy Research & Social Science* 37, 1 (2018): 85-93; Gabriella Dóci and Eleftheria Vasileiadou, "'Let's do it Ourselves' Individual Motivations for Investing in Renewables at Community Level," *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Review* 49, 1 (2015): 41-50.

¹⁰ Antonia Proka, Derk Loorbach, and Matthijs Hisschemöller, "Leading from the Niche: Insights from a Strategic Dialogue of Renewable Energy Cooperatives in the Netherlands," *Sustainability* 10, 11 (2018): 1-21.

¹¹ Antonia Proka, Matthijs Hisschemöller, and Derk Loorbach, "Transition without Conflict?: Renewable Energy Initiatives in the Dutch Energy Transition," *Energy* 10, 6 (2018): 1-19.

¹² Rene Kemp, Jan Rotmans, and Derk Loorbach, "Assessing the Dutch Energy Transition Policy: How does it Deal with Dilemmas of Managing Transitions?" *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning* 9, 3 (2007): 315-331.

companies, or academia, to engage in an organised form of dialogue with interested parties. In contrast, self-organised participation is participation in which interested parties organise themselves.¹³ Scholars have argued that invited participation is not real participation.¹⁴ For example, in a theoretical survey of social conflict, Eefje Cuppen demonstrated that, while participation is vital to the transition process, energy policy and planning involves choices which can only be successfully integrated when opinions outside of the political arena are weighed in the decision-making process. Although, in principle, this is also the goal of invited participation, policymakers often fail to include these choices in the resulting policy. Social conflict, she argues, is a useful tool to ensure the inclusion of different normative beliefs in the decision-making process. These beliefs not only help explain the conflict that emerges around energy projects but at the same time they also hold a part of the solution. Therefore, she argues, we should pay more attention to self-organised forms of participation such as social conflict.¹⁵

Transition research tends to be forward-looking, diligently trying to solve the problems of tomorrow. However, history and historical thinking also take an important position. Many transition scholars make use of historical perspectives to frame their research. Some rely on traditional chronologies of technological development, describing the evolutions in energy from water, wood, peat, and coal, to oil, gas, electricity, nuclear, and renewable energy. Others place the transition in the context of a larger historical process of modernisation within societies. Critical scholars reflect on the political and ideological struggles that shaped past energy regimes or focus on economic cost and benefits of earlier energy systems in order to understand present difficulties.¹⁶ Yet, specific social historical factors driving structural change have often been neglected.¹⁷ In this thesis a contribution to this lacuna is made by focussing on the development of citizen participation in the

¹³ Brian Wynne, "Public Participation in Science and Technology: Performing and Obscuring a Political-Conceptual Category Mistake," *East Asian Science, Technology and Society* 1, 1 (2007): 99.

¹⁴ See for example: Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari, *Participation: The New Tyranny* (London: Zed Books, 2001); Sybille van den Hove, "Between Consensus and Compromise: Acknowledging the Negotiation Dimension in Participatory Approaches," *Land use Policy* 23, 1 (2006): 10-17; Alfons Bora and Heiko Hausendorf, "Participatory Science Governance Revisited: Normative Expectations Versus Empirical Evidence," *Science and Public Policy* 33, 7 (2006): 478-488.

¹⁵ Eefje Cuppen, "The Value of Social Conflict: Critiquing Invited Participation in Energy," *Energy Research & Social Science* 38, 1 (2018): 28.

¹⁶ J. Donald Hughes, *What is Environmental History?*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 3-14.

¹⁷ Michael Gismondi, "Historicizing Transitions: The Value of Historical Theory to Energy Transition Research," *Energy Research & Social Science* 38, 1 (2018): 194.

Netherlands. Furthermore, a contribution to the research on self-organised participation is made by testing Cuppen's claim that social conflict, as a form of self-organised participation, serves as a source for identification and inclusion of normative appraisals in energy policy and planning.

Following this normative perspective, social conflict is enacted through social movements as a form of political engagement. It is a claim to political representation from social groups that cannot take part in decision-making mechanisms through formal procedures.¹⁸ Therefore, social conflict in planning of energy projects plays out in the informal arena. Due to the spatial impact of, for example, wind parks and solar parks, energy projects generally play out on a local level, between citizens and local civil servants, or energy companies, amongst others.¹⁹ By expressing their concerns and interests, in the form of social conflict, social movements challenge existing institutions. However, there is often a gap between the concerns and preferences expressed by citizens on the one hand, and the adoption of these claims by planners or project developers on the other.²⁰ By analysing the relation between policy and planning and social movements more extensively, a greater understanding of this gap can be gained. There is a two-way relation at play: policies may generate social movements, while social movements may lead to the formation of new policies.

Social movement literature focuses on how and to what extent social movements may influence public policies. However, how social movements emerge and affect the policy process and its consequences, is among the basic study fields of public policy analysis. In the field of public policy the influence of social movements are considered relatively small, as they generally focus on the state as the central actor in the policy analysis.²¹ However, social movement scholars in the United States have begun to attempt to integrate social movement

¹⁸ J. Craig Jenkins, "Social Movements, Political Representation, and the State: An Agenda and Comparative Framework," in *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 14-36.

¹⁹ Nanke Verloo, "Learning from Informality?: Rethinking the Mismatch between Formal Policy Strategies and Informal Tactics of Citizenship," *Current Sociology* 65, 2 (2017): 167.

²⁰ Udo Pesch et al., "Energy Justice and Controversies: Formal and Informal Assessment in Energy Projects," *Energy Policy* 109, 1 (2017): 825-834.

²¹ Peter Knoepfel et al., *Public Policy Analysis* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2007), 5.

theory with public policy approaches in order to analyse the impact of social movements on public policies more extensively.²²

In this thesis, the public policy approach in conjunction with social movement theory is applied. The combined use of both theories is helpful in understanding the role of social conflict in the formation and change of policy and planning. A social movement's ability to influence policy in line with its demands, depends on both internal and external factors. Earlier studies tended to highlight one of these factors, while ignoring the other.²³ In order to fully understand the implications of social movements, recent studies have demonstrated the importance of the interaction between both factors.²⁴ Internal factors relate to the social movement itself. The first of these factors is the demands voiced by the movement, focus here is on what these demands were. Second are the strategies and tactics (collective actions) employed by the movement. In social movement research a distinction is made between conventional protests (e.g., meetings, reports, petitions, press conferences, and procedural complaints) and non-conventional protests (e.g., demonstrations, sit-ins, and occupations).²⁵ The third internal factor is the support the movement enjoyed, for example from professional and non-professional organisations, other groups within the country or across the borders, the state, or the wider public. The external factors relate to the context in which the movement operated.²⁶ This context is especially important for the emergence of social conflict in relation to energy policy, as it reveals information about the political environment where the movement emerged.²⁷ Important in this, similar to the internal factors, is the reactions of actors that wanted to develop or maintain a certain policy or project, their interests, tactics, and support base.²⁸ To assess the impact the movement had on the energy policy and

²² See for example: David S. Meyer, Valerie Jenness, and Helen Ingram, *Routing the Opposition: Social Movements, Public Policy, and Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

²³ See for internal factors: J. Craig Jenkins, "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements," *Annual Review of Sociology* 9, 1 (1983): 527-553; see for external factors: Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

²⁴ See for example: Marco Giugni, Doug McAdam, and Charles Tilly, ed. *How Social Movements Matter*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

²⁵ For more information on convention and non-conventional protests see: Tarrow, *Power in Movement*; Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in Information Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²⁶ Giugni, *How Social Movements Matter*, xviii-xx.

²⁷ Cuppen, "The Value of," 30.

²⁸ Giugni, *How Social Movements Matter*, xviii-xx.

planning, additional variables should be taken into consideration. The focus here is on the movement's success in attaining its goals, in other words answering questions as: was policy effectively changed, was the intended problem solved, or the opposed party's attitude or the public's opinion influenced, and what are the short-term negative or unintended consequences of the movement's actions.²⁹

The research presented in this thesis into social movements is particularly well suited for a comparative approach, since this approach allows for the identification of factors important in determining the success or failure of movements to influence policy that would otherwise be missed.³⁰ By adopting a comparative approach, this thesis investigates why social conflict, as a form of self-organised participation, influenced policy and planning in the extraction of natural gas in Groningen but not in the development of wind farms in Drenthe. Although both cases are not 'representative' for the entire Dutch energy policy, they provide valuable cases to test hypotheses. Besides presenting clear instances of social conflict, both originate from different sides of the debate, from the difficulties presented by both fossil and sustainable energy. This not only makes the comparison between both cases all the more interesting, but also makes it all the more relevant to the larger transition debate.

Data employed in this thesis has been obtained from various sources consisting of websites of local protesting organisations, of government and professional organisations, and media outlets. Although different daily newspapers were used in the analysis, articles published in the regional newspaper *Dagblad van het Noorden* were extensively examined via NexisUni.³¹ Of interest are mainly the members of *Groninger Gasberaad* the umbrella organisation of groups involved in the movement in Groningen collectively described as the anti-gas movement in this thesis, and the members of *Tegenwindveenkolonien* the partnership organisation of the movement in Drenthe that in this thesis is collectively described as the anti-wind farm movement.³²

²⁹ Kate O'Neill, "The Comparative Study of Environmental Movements: Theory, Practice, and Prospects," in *Comparative Environmental Politics: Theory, Practice, and Prospects* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012), 125.

³⁰ Marco Giugni and Sakura Yamasaki, "The Policy Impact of Social Movements: A Replication through Qualitative Comparative Analysis," *Mobilization: An International Journal* 14, 4 (2009): 467-468.

³¹ See Appendix A.

³² For an overview of involved groups see: "Belangengroepen gaswinning in Groningen (en Drenthe)," Groninger Gasberaad, accessed June 2019, <https://gasberaad.nl/belangengroepen/>; "Home," Tegenwindveenkolonien, accessed June 2019, <http://www.tegenwindveenkolonien.nl/>.

In order to operationalise the factors mentioned above, and in order to analyse the newspaper articles as well as the other sources, a qualitative text analysis was conducted, in pursuit of exploring discourses, practices, and relationship networks that the protest movements attempted to influence. Doing so provides insight into the respective policies' proponents and their responses in line with the movements' demands.³³ The impact of a movement is assessed by the extent a policy changes overtime in line with the demands the movement voiced before changes occurred. A reconstruction of events, based on the texts both parties of the conflict produced, is therefore necessary. The method employed for the analysis of the texts is an adapted version of Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. Fairclough argues that three dimensions should be taken into consideration when performing a discourse analysis. The first refers to the text itself and focuses on what the text says. Followed by the second, the discursive practice, in which the focus is on by whom, where, and for whom the discourse is set up, and how it is spread and reproduced. The third dimension is about the context of the text, it focuses on the connection of the discourse within the social and political context and structure in which the text was written.³⁴ Where Fairclough places the language of each individual text at the centre of the discussion, in this thesis the different texts are not discussed individually in respect to the language used. Instead, the discourses about natural gas extraction and wind farm development produced by the social movements and the opposed parties, how they set up and spread these discourses, and the context in which these discourses were developed, is investigated. The analysis does not only aim to identify the influence of social conflict on gas and wind farm policy and planning in Groningen and Drenthe. By taking these cases as a starting point, an attempt is made to explore the patterns of interaction between social conflict and policy and planning.

Before turning to the cases, in the first chapter the political environment, and the attitude of politicians and bureaucrats towards citizen involvement in the policy-making process in general, and more specifically in the energy transition in the Netherlands, is discussed. In conclusion of the first chapter specific attention is given to the development of gas and wind energy policy in the Netherlands. This provides the necessary context to explain why the movements in both cases emerged. In the following two chapters each case is

³³ David Silverman, "Analyzing Talk and Text," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000), 821-834.

³⁴ Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 2010).

analysed in three parts. In the first part, the emergence of the respective movements is analysed against the development of the gas and wind energy projects. The second part covers the discourses and actions of the movement in relation with the discourses and practices of the actors at the other side of the conflict. In the third part, the influence and impact of the movement are discussed, with special attention to the long-term effects. In the final chapter both cases are compared, after which in the conclusion the implications and contributions of the findings of social conflicts on policy and planning are presented. I argue that, while it is difficult to assess the influence of social conflict on policy and planning in both cases with complete certainty, a winning combination of factors can be given: if the public opinion is favourable towards a movement, it contributes to the support the movement enjoys, with enough support the movement is able to expand its actions, these actions should include legal procedures, if ruled in favour of the movement, success is inevitable. Furthermore, I conclude that in order to fully incorporate the value of self-organised participation, the top-down structure of energy policy and planning should be reassessed.

Chapter 1

Citizen Participation in the Netherlands

The State, Public Policies, and Social Movements

How and by whom public policies are formulated and implemented in the Netherlands naturally depends on the policy and the conditions of the period in which the policy is formulated. As the result of social, political, and economic changes, ‘participation’ has become an important feature of the policy process in the Netherlands. In a participatory process, public policies are planned by political and bureaucratic actors and are implemented by central or local bureaucratic mechanisms, but non-state social groups are generally allowed a voice in the policy process.³⁵ In this sense, the involvement of citizens and citizen organisations seems to be a given, however, they are often overlooked. The attitude of politicians and bureaucrats towards citizen involvement in the policy-making process can be traced back to the 1960s. In this first chapter, in order to define the political environment in which Dutch energy policy has developed during the last decades, the development of participation in the Dutch policy process is discussed in general, followed by a more specific analysis of the influence of participation on energy policy and planning. In the last section of this chapter, the influence of participation on the emergence of protests in the gas and wind energy sectors is discussed. In this chapter, I argue that although citizen participation has become part of the policy process in the Netherlands, the implementation of its results remains problematic. In turn, this helps explain why social movements emerge, as with the anti-gas movement in Groningen in chapter two and the anti-wind farm movement in Drenthe in chapter three, within the political environment of the Netherlands.

³⁵ See: Rinie Est et al., "The Netherlands: Seeking to Involve Wider Publics in Technology Assessment," in *Participatory Technology Assessment: European Perspectives* (London: Centre for the Study of Democracy, 2002), 108-125; Bas Denters et al., *The Rise of Interactive Governance and Quasi-Markets* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003); Tjitske Akkerman, Maarten Hajer, and John Grin, "The Interactive State: Democratisation from Above?" *Political Studies* 52, 1 (2004): 82-95; J. Edelenbos, "Institutional Implications of Interactive Governance: Insights from Dutch Practice," *Governance* Jurian Edelenbos, "Institutional Implications of Interactive Governance: Insights from Dutch Practice," *Governance* 18, 1 (2005): 111-134; Jurian Edelenbos, "Institutional Implications of Interactive Governance: Insights from Dutch Practice," *Governance* 18, 1 (2005): 111-134.

1.1 Citizen Participation in 'Depillarised' Dutch Society

Citizen participation in the Netherlands roughly emerged in the 1960s when the segregation of Dutch society known as the 'pillarisation' came to an end. During this era the attitude of Dutch citizens could be characterised as passive. The dismantlement of the pillarised system, the 'depillarisation', took place against the backdrop of a broader movement for democratisation, anti-traditionalism, and resistance to authority. This movement originated from the youth cultures of Western European cities and put an end to the passive attitude of Dutch citizens. As a result, new forms of participation arose outside of the political arena.³⁶ The environmental protests in the Netherlands of around the same time provide valuable insight into the general indifferent attitude of politicians and bureaucrats towards self-organised participation. Before the 1960s concerns were primarily expressed by early ecologists, philosophers, and scientists. Now a wider public started to show their concerns about the damaging effects of polluting companies. From the 1970s onward, energy became the subject of heavy protest, starting with nuclear energy. Between 1973 and 1975 concerns about nuclear energy spread widely among Dutch citizens, leading to mass demonstrations, sit-ins, and blockades. Gradually a majority was opting against nuclear energy. Although radical groups had started the opposition, more general civil society organisations, such as trade unions, political as well as ecclesiastical organisations, soon joined in their critique. Their wish was to bring both sides closer to each other through a rational discussion. It was only now that the authorities were willing to listen. While more and more citizens voiced their opinions, both political and bureaucratic elites maintained a distant and wary attitude towards citizen participation.³⁷

Due to the focus on internal performance of both the central and local governments little changed in this distant attitude until the municipal council elections of 1990. In a number of municipalities voter turnout decreased significantly, forcing politicians to recognise the need for reform. A wide variety of interactive policy tools were meant to close the gap between politicians and citizens. Participation became a necessary aspect of the policy-making process. The dominant top-down way of working was no longer considered sufficient. Instead, interactive tools were adopted. Opportunities for citizen participation

³⁶ Jan W. van Deth and Vis, Jan C. P. M, *Regeren in Nederland: het politieke en bestuurlijke bestel in vergelijkend perspectief* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2000), 144-150.

³⁷ Verbong et al., *Een kwestie van*, 37-48; van Deth, *Regeren in Nederland*, 144-150.

increased significantly, as citizens, social organisations, and companies became increasingly involved in defining policy problems, in seeking policy solutions, and in policy implementation.³⁸

It is obvious that citizen participation in the policy-making process has significantly increased since the 1960s. However, this does not mean that the attitude of politicians and bureaucrats changed along the same lines. As Ank Michels argues in his theoretical overview of citizen participation in the Netherlands, the increasing role of citizens in the policy process did not lead to the actual acceptance of participation, it was simply viewed as a useful instrument to accommodate unrest and was mainly aimed at creating support and consensus for policy decisions.³⁹ Jurian Edelenbos and Erika-Hans Klijn comparatively examined participation in policy-making in six local policy projects that were concerned with planning and zoning decisions in the Netherlands between 1995 and 2002.⁴⁰ They found that in all six projects the process managers exhibited a too rigid attitude, holding on firmly to the process design. This attitude was found to negatively influence the actual implementation of the participants contribution, rendering the process largely unsuccessful. Later research added to this, by identifying a lack in commitment to the process by the process initiators. The authors found that this attitude was an important reason for the failure of the participatory process.⁴¹ When commitment was lacking, the link between the policymakers and the participators was found to be weak, leading to the omission of the contributions of the participants from the end product. Bureaucrats and politicians hold all the power in the process, as another study into power in the Dutch policy process underlines, and, as those in power decide on how something is to be discussed, they often leave an extremely marginal role for citizens and neglect to inform them about the policy result.⁴²

³⁸ Ank M. B. Michels, "Citizen Participation and Democracy in the Netherlands," *Democratization* 13, 2 (2006): 327-330.

³⁹ Michels, "Citizen Participation."

⁴⁰ Jurian Edelenbos and Erika-Hans Klijn, "Managing Stakeholder Involvement in Decision Making: A Comparative Analysis of Six Interactive Processes in the Netherlands," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16, 1 (2005): 417-446.

⁴¹ Jurian Edelenbos, Pieter-Jan Klok, and Jan van Tatenhove, "The Institutional Embedding of Interactive Policy Making: Insights from a Comparative Research Based on Eight Interactive Projects in the Netherlands," *The American Review of Public Administration* 39, 2 (2009): 125-148.

⁴² Jan van Tatenhove, Jurian Edelenbos, and Pieter-jan Klok, "Power and Interactive Policy-Making: A Comparative Study of Power and Influence in 8 Interactive Projects in the Netherlands," *Public Administration* 8, 3 (2010): 609-626.

Although efforts have been made to include citizens and citizen organisations into the institutionalised mechanisms, minimising tensions between the state and its citizens, there are still citizens that organise in order to voice demands through non-institutionalised political instruments. In general policymakers still display a distant attitude towards these movements. By analysing the larger body of public administration literature, Eva Wolf and Wouter van Dooren explain that this attitude results from policymakers' view that conflict is irrational and thus negative and unproductive. Policymakers are therefore prone to avoid conflict.⁴³ As a consequence, citizens are side-lined in the policy process, raising 'anti-political' sentiments. Consequently, besides creating an environment in which citizens feel disregarded, policymakers support, albeit unknowingly, an exclusive and volatile situation.⁴⁴ In contrast, this tendency to 'ignore' challengers of a policy or policy process, does not mean that these movements are actively being repressed. In the Netherlands protesting is a constitutional right, which can only be restricted when the safety of protesters and others is at risk, or in order to prevent public disorder. In fact, these movements can actually count on informal facilitation by the state, in the form of public recognition, consultation, and even subsidisation.⁴⁵ Self-organised participation has radically changed since its emergence in the 1960s, however, the wary and distant attitude of bureaucrats remained.

1.2 Citizen Participation in Energy Policy and Planning

In the Netherlands the bulk of the energy policy and planning activities of the last two decades have taken place within the framework of the energy transition.⁴⁶ Central to the transition policy was the focus on realizing better cooperation between government, market parties, and social organisations, and, furthermore, between government bodies.⁴⁷ As Geert

⁴³ Eva E. A. Wolf and Wouter van Dooren, "Conflict Reconsidered: The Boomerang Effect of Depoliticization in the Policy Process," *Public Administration* 96, 1 (2018): 286-301.

⁴⁴ Colin Hay and Gerry Stoker, "Revitalising Politics: Have we Lost the Plot?" *Representation* 45, 3 (2009): 225-236.

⁴⁵ Hanspeter Kriesi, "The Political Opportunity Structure of the Dutch Peace Movement," *West European Politics* 12, 3 (2007): 295-312

⁴⁶ Rene Kemp and Jan Rotmans, "Transitioning Policy: Co-Production of a New Strategic Framework for Energy Innovation Policy in the Netherlands," *Policy Sciences* 42, 4 (2009): 313, 323.

⁴⁷ For a more complete overview see: Rotmans, "More Evolution," 15-31; René Kemp and Derk Loorbach, "Transition Management: A Reflexive Governance Approach," in *Reflexive Governance for Sustainable Development* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2006), 103-131; Erik Laes, Leen Gorissen, and Frank Nevens, "A

Verbong argues in his report on the opportunities of the energy transition, the political and bureaucratic elites came to understand that inclusion was important. Reforming the energy system was a task that could not be undertaken by the state alone, it required the inclusion of a diverse group of actors.⁴⁸ Indeed, reports to parliament by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs (hereafter: EZ), in 2004 suggest that 'society' was being involved in the transition programme.⁴⁹ However, the research of Carolyn Hendriks on inclusion and network governance in the energy transition demonstrates that many were excluded from the process.⁵⁰ By conducting in-depth interviews with actors involved in the transition programme Hendriks mapped the different groups involved. He found that participants were mainly drawn from business and research organisations. The selection was primarily based on their profile, connections, expertise, autonomy, and power. In general, normal citizens did not possess the right qualities, and were not expected to do so. Citizens could participate in rethinking and reducing their own energy consumption, but their role was reduced to that of consumers.

1.3 The Structuring of the Gas and Wind Power Industries and the Emergence of Protest Movements

A similar gap between state and citizens in the Netherlands is found in the formation process of the gas policy in post-depillarised society. By the time the political system had begun to change, and citizens began to actively voice their opinions, the gas industry was already firmly embedded in the Dutch economy. The sizeable gas revenues, mostly derived from the Groningen gas field, provided the means for a generous welfare state, and was therefore met with little resistance.⁵¹ Around the turn of the century the Dutch government took steps to restructure the gas sector. In line with its neoliberal agenda, the gas market, along with the

Comparison of Energy Transition Governance in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom," *Sustainability* 6, 1 (2014): 1129-1152.

⁴⁸ Geert Verbong, *Biedt de energietransitie kansen voor de Nederlandse industrie?: Kansen en keuzen vanuit een lange termijn perspectief* (Eindhoven: Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, 2004).

⁴⁹ Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, *Innovation in Energy Policy* (The Hague: Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2004), 6, 19, 20.

⁵⁰ Carolyn M. Hendriks, "On Inclusion and Network Governance: The Democratic Disconnect of Dutch Energy Transition," *Public Administration* 86, 4 (2008): 1009-1031.

⁵¹ Joost Jonker, "'The Netherlands and the Polder Model'-Nederland En Het Poldermodel'," *Low Countries Historical Review* 129, 1 (2014): 88-89.

rest of the energy system, was liberalised. Consequently, the now privately owned, profit-driven gas supply system changed the tolerant and unquestioning attitudes of Dutch society. According to Dutch property law, when sub-soil resources, such as gas, are concerned, the national government decides about how they will be used. In order to object to or influence the policy, citizens must petition the national government. Local governments can reject or join citizens' petition but the final decision is made by the national government.⁵² The movement against gas, started with local protests against the storage of CO₂ in a depleted gas field in Barendrecht, and was followed by gradually evolving national protests against shale gas explorations.⁵³ The earthquakes in Groningen, caused by depletion of the gas field, were the straw that broke the camel's back. Increasingly citizens were confronted with the costs of the gas wealth. While the government wished to retain its gas policy, at least until a suitable replacement was found, much of Dutch civil society turned against it.⁵⁴

In his paper on the Dutch energy system, Maurits Kreijkes states that many do not understand the fundamental systemic role gas has in Dutch society and energy supply. Gas is not easily replaced because its vast infrastructure is deeply embedded in the Netherlands' energy-intensive economy.⁵⁵ Aad Correljé examined the relation between resource management and civil society from 1959 to 2010, and found that after 2000 an expanding number of actors, voicing arguments related to economics, climate change, safety, geopolitics, local environmental protection, ecology, and safety complicated the relation between resource management and civil society.⁵⁶ According to Correljé, one of the major challenges for Dutch resource management today is finding ways unite these many different opinions. The opposition that emerged in Groningen became a movement that largely went

⁵² Elisabeth Dueholm Rasch and Michiel Köhne, "Hydraulic Fracturing, Energy Transition and Political Engagement in the Netherlands: The Energetics of Citizenship," *Energy Research & Social Science* 3, 1 (2015): 108.

⁵³ For a more complete overview see: Eefje Cuppen et al., "How Stakeholder Interactions can Reduce Space for Moral Considerations in Decision Making: A Contested CCS Project in the Netherlands," *Environment and Planning* 47, 9 (2015): 1963-1978; Remco de Boer, *Tussen hoogmoed en hysterie: vijf jaar strijd tegen schaliegas in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Veen Media, 2015).

⁵⁴ For a more complete overview see: Margriet Brandsma, Heleen Ekker, and Reinalda Start, *De gaskolonie: van nationale bodemschat tot Groningse tragedie* (Groningen: Uitgeverij Passage, 2016).

⁵⁵ Maurits Kreijkes, *Looking Under the Hood of the Dutch Energy System* (The Hague: Clingendael International Energy Programme, 2017).

⁵⁶ Aad Correljé, "The Netherlands: Resource Management and Civil Society in the Natural Gas Sector," in *Public Branpower: Civil Society and Natural Resource Management* (Cham: Springer Nature, 2018), 181-201.

beyond local boundaries, creating a tremendous impression at the national level in terms of the social groups it mobilised as much as the demands it voiced.

A likewise complicated situation is true for policy on onshore wind power. Local planning for wind projects was problematic from early on. Shortly after the oil crisis of 1973, wind energy became part of a larger project to restructure the energy system in the Netherlands. Until the 1990s, a major role was awarded to the energy sector, which proved to be unsuccessful in realising wind projects. The situation improved when policies opened the way for private entrepreneurs. However, the main developers were not used to practices of local involvement in project development, causing unrest in the local communities.⁵⁷ The unequal distribution of costs and benefits proved difficult to overcome. The costs, in the form of the spatial impact, were carried by the local community, while the developers, ranging from small private investors to large energy companies, and society at large, collected the benefits.⁵⁸

The responsibility for the expansion of the Dutch wind energy network is carried by the national government. Its set policy focusses primarily on the fast and cheap development of a small number of large-scale wind farms. Provinces have executive power over the policy. Each province has the freedom to establish its own policy in order to realise its share of the national goal. However, granting permits necessary for the construction of wind farms is a municipal matter.⁵⁹ In Dutch law, arrangements are made to side-line both the provinces and municipalities in decision making.⁶⁰ When projects of more than 100 Megawatts are concerned, the Dutch government has decision making power. Susanne Agterbosch and Sylvia Breukers comparatively researched the socio-political embedding of onshore wind power in the Netherlands and North Rhine-Westphalia and found that different interests of and approaches by different levels of government often hinder the process, confuse investors, and aggravate local resistance.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Sylvia Breukers and Maarten Wolsink, "Wind Energy Policies in the Netherlands: Institutional Capacity-Building for Ecological Modernisation," *Environmental Politics* 16, 1 (2007): 92-112.

⁵⁸ Maarten Wolsink, "Windpower and the NIMBY-Myth: Institutional Capacity and the Limited Significance of Public Support," *Renewable Energy* 21, 1 (2000): 49-64.

⁵⁹ Susanne Agterbosch and Sylvia Breukers, "Socio-Political Embedding of Onshore Wind Power in the Netherlands and North Rhine-Westphalia," *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management* 20, 5 (2008): 633-648.

⁶⁰ art 9b. lid 1. sub a. Elektriciteitswet 1998

⁶¹ Agterbosch, "Socio-Political Embedding."

1.4 Conclusion

Since the 1960s large changes have been made to include citizens in the policy-making and planning process. However, time and again, it has been proven difficult to successfully incorporate insights gained from the participatory process into the resulting policy. Especially where energy policy is concerned, citizens are often side-lined. As a result, disgruntled citizens turn against new or already implemented policies or try to influence them by resorting to protests. These protests demonstrate some of the most important struggles of energy policy, relating to spatial planning, safety, and the distribution of cost and benefits. In the following two chapters a more detailed account of these struggles is given, as self-organised participation in first the gas policy in Groningen and second in the wind farm policy in Drenthe is discussed.

Chapter 2

The Case of Gas Extraction in Groningen

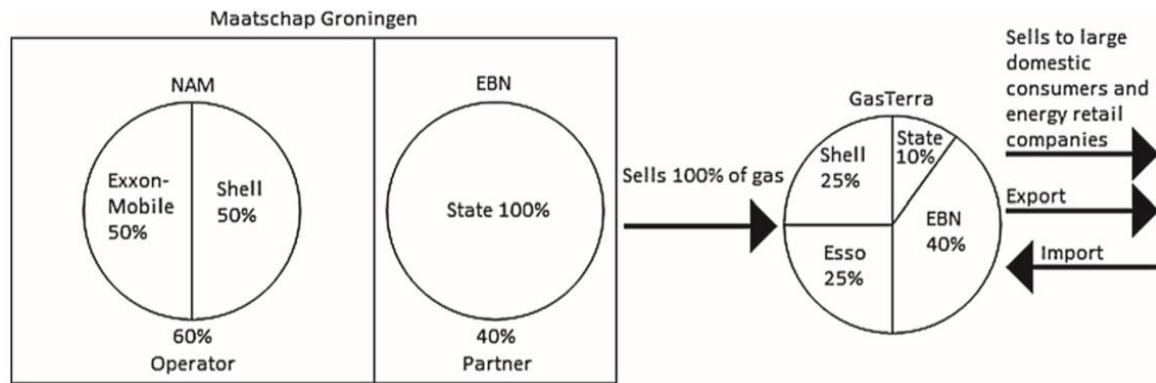
The Anti-gas Movement and Shareholders as Stakeholders

"It was a big blow. I thought a tractor had fallen over, but there was nothing to be seen outside. Damage settlements and reinforcements never come. You do not feel safe here anymore."⁶²

Most of the gas consumed by Dutch households is extracted from the field in the Dutch province of Groningen. In the past, the field's geological characteristics allowed for large scale production, that could be increased when necessary, allowing for considerable production flexibility. In 1991, the first earthquakes resulting from the gas extraction hit the province. In the following years, the limits of the Groningen field became more and more clear, as pressure levels increased resulting in increasing seismic activity in the region. The fields potential flexibility rapidly declined, prompting policymakers to impose increasingly severe annual production caps.⁶³ In the past ten years, resistance against the gas extraction has increased significantly. In this chapter the influence of the resistance, in the form of the anti-gas movement, on policy and planning, is analysed. First, by reviewing the interests, tactics, and support base of the proponents of the existing gas policy. Followed by a review of the emergence of the anti-gas movement, the demands it voiced, the support it gained, and the strategies it employed. Finally, the impact of the movement on policy and planning, in line with its demands, is analysed through a reconstruction of the events that transpired between the emergence of the movement in 2003 until the movement had reached its apex in 2019. The case of gas extraction in Groningen demonstrates that a movement is able to influence policy in line with its demands if it is successful in gaining a broad support base and its demands are legally well founded.

⁶² Inki de Jonge and Chris Bakker, "Reactie op nieuwe aardbeving Garrelsweer: 'Ik wil hier wel een keer weg, ik ben het zat'," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2019, NexisUni; translated by author.

⁶³ H.G.J. Kamp, *Kamerbrief over advies SodM over seismiteit Groningenveld* (The Hague: Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2017), 1-2; Dutch State Supervision of Mines, *Seismisch risico Groningenveld: beoordeling rapportages & advies* (The Hague: Dutch House of Representatives, 2015), 1-50.

Figure 1: The actors involved in Groningen gas production

2.1 External Factors: Interests of Private and Public Stakeholders in the Groningen Gas Field

The actors that played a major role in shaping the gas extraction policy, and wanted to maintain it as it was, primarily consisted of the shareholders of the Groningen gas field. After the discovery of the gas field in 1959, an arrangement between the Dutch state, Shell, and ExxonMobile (hereafter: Exxon) was made. The Dutch oil and gas exploration and production company, *Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij* (hereafter: NAM), owned by the two commercial partners, became responsible for the extraction of the gas. Together, Shell, Exxon, NAM, and the state would form the board of *Maatschap Groningen*, the centre of operational decisions. The entire chain of gas extraction, transport, and sale of gas was, and still is today, divided between these parties. Although many companies became involved in the Groningen gas field (see Figure 1), there are three main actors: the state, Exxon, and Shell.⁶⁴ However, since the commercial partners agreed to communicate through NAM, and since EZ represents the state, it can be argued that the primary actors involved in developing the discourse in favour of the extraction policy were NAM and EZ.

From early on, both actors had a strong interest in the continuation of the gas extraction activities. Their mutual interest was to produce as much gas, and thereby income, as possible. However, to ensure the longevity of the project, production caps were

⁶⁴ “Kennispartner Nederlands olie en gas,” Energie Beheer Nederland, accessed March 2019, <https://www.ebn.nl/kennispartnernederlands-olie-en-gas/>; Energie Beheer Nederland, *Akte Van Statutenwijziging Energie Beheer Nederland B.V. (Na Statutenwijziging: EBN B.V.)* (Amsterdam: Energie Beheer Nederland, 2011), 1-16; “Over Gasunie,” Gasunie, accessed March 2019, <http://www.gasunie.nl/over-gasunie>; “Bestuur,” Gasunie, accessed March 2019, <http://www.gasunie.nl/over-gasunie/bestuur>.

implemented. Through its operating licence, NAM became the owner of the gas resources in Groningen. For these rights NAM would pay a royalty to the state, further increasing the latter's financial interests. In addition to money flowing in through its share in the gas production and distribution chain, and the royalties received from NAM, the state collected revenue from taxes and fees.⁶⁵ The extent of the financial interests of both parties is underlined in reports published in 2015 and 2017 by the Dutch safety board: *Onderzoeksraad voor Veiligheid* (hereafter: OVV).⁶⁶ After incidents such as disasters or major accidents this non-departmental agency is responsible for the investigation and reporting on the consequences of the incident in question. As such OVV followed-up on the risks and consequences of earthquakes in Groningen.⁶⁷ In its report of 2015, OVV determined that in the decision-making process the concern of the primary shareholders to maximise profit, usage, and continuity of the operation was placed above the safety of residents.⁶⁸

In order to temper resistance, the proponents spread leaflets and organised information gatherings. When this proved insufficient to bring proponents and objectors together, because tensions had run considerably high, small decreases in the amount of gas extracted were arranged to ease the situation. However, decreasing the gas extraction was considered to be a half measure. As reports predicted, and new earthquakes proved, the policy was ineffective. Arguments pointing out the value and necessity of the gas for the Dutch economy and the Dutch nation at large, did little to convince objectors and their supporters.⁶⁹ Due to its financial interest, the national government was perceived to have a

⁶⁵ Nick van der Voort and Frank Vanclay, "Social Impact of Earthquakes Caused by Gas Extraction in the Province of Groningen, the Netherlands," *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 50, 1 (2015): 3-5; B. G. Taverne, "The Concession Groningen: A Lawyer's View," *Netherlands Journal of Geosciences* 80, 1 (2011): 113-119.

⁶⁶ Onderzoeksraad voor Veiligheid, *Aardbevingsrisico's in Groningen: onderzoek naar de rol van veiligheid van burgers in de besluitvorming over de gaswinning (1959-2014)* (The Hague: Onderzoeksraad voor Veiligheid, 2015), 1-140; Onderzoeksraad voor Veiligheid, *Aardbevingsrisico's in Groningen: stand van zaken opvolging aanbevelingen* (The Hague: Onderzoeksraad voor Veiligheid, 2017), 1-35.

⁶⁷ "About," Onderzoeksraad voor Veiligheid, accessed March 2019, https://www.onderzoeksraad.nl/nl/about_

⁶⁸ Onderzoeksraad voor Veiligheid, *Aardbevingsrisico's*, 57.

⁶⁹ "'Loket voor schade door gaswinning NAM stelt niks voor'," *RTVNoord*, 2012, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/114451/Loket-voor-schade-door-gaswinning-NAM-stelt-niks-voor>; "NAM stuurt Groningers brief om 'vertrouwen terug te winnen'," *De Volkskrant*, 2013, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/nam-stuurt-groningers-brief-om-vertrouwen-terug-te-winnen~b0758a83/>; "'Ik kan de mensen niet geruststellen'," *RTVNoord*, 2013, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/117849/Woordvoerder-NAM-Ik-kan-de-mensen-niet-geruststellen>; "Permanent gasloket Loppersum," *NOS*, 2013, <https://nos.nl/artikel/474639-permanent-gasloket-loppersum.html>; "Aardbevingsmeldpunt NAM in gemeentehuis Loppersum," *RTLNieuws*, 2013,

conflict of interest, which was incompatible with its role to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its citizens.⁷⁰

Due to the structure of the production agreements, the interests in the gas field were limited to its shareholders. According to a study into the social impacts of earthquakes caused by gas extraction in Groningen, the province did not receive any direct (financial) benefits from the gas production.⁷¹ Although, some indirect benefits can be named. For years now the companies involved with headquarters in Groningen, such as Gasunie and GasTerra, and headquarters nearby, such as NAM, have provided valuable employment opportunities. In general, however, there are few benefits to the local community. The province, which is free of financial involvement, is widely trusted by its citizens. With declining trust in the national government, citizens turn to local and regional governments to protect their interests.⁷²

2.2 Internal Factors: A Reserved People Fighting for Safety and Compensation

Although the consequences of the gas extraction had been known for some time, the anti-gas movement in Groningen started relatively late and grew slowly. The earliest signs of the movement surfaced in 2003 with the mobilisation of local citizens worried about three consecutive earthquakes in the countryside village Loppersum.⁷³ However, it was not until 2011 that the movement grew and became more vocal. Resulting from the repeated earthquakes and difficulties with compensation for damages suffered, the dissatisfaction with first and foremost NAM increased. However, besides NAM, the government was also found lacking in its understanding and resolve. The minister of EZ, Henk Kamp in office from 2012

<https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nieuws/artikel/2773111/aardbevingsmeldpunt-nam-gemeentehuis-loppersum>;
“Informatiepunt NAM in gemeentehuis Loppersum,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2013, NexisUni; “Minister Kamp brengt opnieuw bezoek aan gaswinningsgebied,” *RTVNoord*, 2013,
<https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/119395/Minister-Kamp-brengt-opnieuw-bezoek-aan-gaswinningsgebied>.

⁷⁰ Gerdt van Hofslot, “Groningers willen weg,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2016, NexisUni.

⁷¹ Voort “Social Impact of,”

⁷² Voort “Social Impact of,” 3-5.

⁷³ Mick van Wely, “Onrust over aardshokken: burgemeester van Loppersum benadert KNMI en NAM om uitleg aan bevolking te geven,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2003, NexisUni; Correspondent, “Groningen heeft weer: Seismologen voorspellen krachtiger schokken,” *Algemeen Dagblad*, 2003, NexisUni; Rob Schoof, “Moet nog zien of je iets terugkrijgt”: Groningers bezorgd en boos over afhandeling schade door gaswinning en bevingen,” *NRC Handelsblad*, 2003, NexisUni.

Figure 2: Protesters holding signs against gas extraction activities in Groningen, stating (from left to right): “waiting for the plan”, “stop natural gas extraction, make your own energy”, “gas money isn’t more important than Groningen”, and “safety is not negotiable” (2014).



to 2017 and Eric Wiebes after him, in particular was blamed.⁷⁴ The slow and late emergence of the movement is often attributed to the reserved nature of the Groningers, however, the recurring earthquakes and the lack of solutions eventually prompted a response.⁷⁵

The movement, which is still active today, managed to build up an oppositional discourse that voiced various demands and mobilised a relatively reserved social group consisting of the people in the affected areas, and, to a lesser extent, those outside of it.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Gerdt van Hofslot, “Breekvlak Groningen,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2011, NexisUni; Bas van Sluis, “De grond beeft,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2012, NexisUni; Greta Riemersma, “‘Alsof er een dik beest uit de grond kwam’: Groningers uiten tijdens informatieavond in Middelstum zorg over aardshokken Aardoliebedrijf NAM belooft schade te zullen vergoeden,” *de Volkskrant*, 2003, NexisUni.

⁷⁵ Eefje Oomen, “Een Groninger stapt niet in ene bus om actie te voeren,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2013, NexisUni; Jean-Paul Taffijn and Mick van Wely, “Bewoners wennen er aan, het was een beste deze keer!,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2006, NexisUni.

⁷⁶ Henk Wollerich, “Schade door mijnbouw soepeler afgewerkt,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2001, NexisUni; Theo Elsing, “Hoe verder na de aardbeving,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2012, NexisUni; Jantina Russchen and

Although the movement consisted of various individuals and groups, such as the well-known *Groninger Bodem Beweging* (hereafter: GBB), *Stichting Waardevermindering door Aardbevingen Groningen* (hereafter: WAG), and *Schokkend Groningen*, the anti-gas movement as a whole articulated a series of shared demands. These were: the full and fair compensation of the damages caused by the extraction activities, the recognition and compensation of the depreciated home prices in the area, and safety in the region.⁷⁷ Local politicians and citizens emphasised that the NAM wasn't handling damage claims fast enough. The movement warned that the situation might escalate, which was in no one's interest. Experts found that often damages were only covered cosmetically, leaving structural damages unrepaired.⁷⁸ This could potentially be dangerous for residents, not to speak of the misery caused and loss in quality of life. The demands voiced against the government were simple, as less gas would lead to fewer earthquakes, the movement demanded the gas extraction would be reduced to a safe amount.⁷⁹

In 2012 the movement gained pace following an earthquake of a magnitude of 3.6 on the Richter Scale in the village of Huizinge. In the following years the movement's support grew considerably. A number of professional groups, such as lawyers, academics, housing associations, entrepreneurs' and employer' organisations, and environmental organisations, affiliated themselves with the movement. Where the opposition had started with concerns about the compensation for property damages, house prices, and safety in the region, other groups associated the movement with issues such as reputational damage, loss of income, and disruption of the investment climate. Along with the people's local demands, various actors began to voice a number of national demands, such as environmental protection and more extensive measures against climate change.⁸⁰

Johan de Veer, "Bezoek mensen en zorg dat wij veilig kunnen wonen", *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2013, NexisUni.

⁷⁷ See for example: "Standpunten," Groninger Bodem Beweging, accessed March 2019, <https://www.groninger-bodem-beweging.nl/standpunten/>; "Schokkend Groningen," Facebook, accessed March 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/schokkend.grunn?ref=hl>; "Stichting WAG", Stichting Waardevermindering door Aardbevingen Groningen, accessed March 2019, <https://www.stwag.gr/>.

⁷⁸ Wollerich, "Schade."

⁷⁹ Elsing, "Hoe verder."; Russchen, "Bezoek mensen."

⁸⁰ Jan Brouwer, "Gaswinning moet wel zorgen baren," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2013, NexisUni; Frank von Hebel and Johan de Veer, "Vaarwel, land van Richter," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2013, NexisUni; Erik de Waal, "NAM, geef Noord-Groningen een toekomst!," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2013, NexisUni; Frank. von Hebel, "Industrie: miskend in gasbesluit," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014; Johan de Veer, "Zware boodschap aan Tweede Kamer," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014, NexisUni.

The movement staged both conventional and unconventional forms of collective action in order to make their demands heard by public opinion and relevant authorities. In the early years, the actions of the movement consisted primarily of different activities organised by separate organisations within the movement, with minimal cooperation between them. For example, one more radical group sought to further the movement by creating a shockeffect on twitter through caricatures and coarse language, which was condemned by a second group. This second group relied more on peaceful protests and tried to further the movement through dialogue. Part of this second group were those who tried to reach their goals by court decisions.⁸¹ As the movement grew, and with the situation becoming more pressing, it also became more unified and was able to stage larger and more successful protests. However, struggles remained due to strict party politics, functional limitations, and inexperience. Besides, big players such as the university, hospital, and the municipality of Groningen largely operated separately, undermining the strength of the movement.⁸²

The support of different social groups became influential in the multi-diversity and effectuality of the movement's collective actions. Local politicians conducted lobbying activities. Engineers and academicians published reports and issued publications pointing to the risks, threats, and the long-time negligence of the NAM and the government. Together with the people in the affected region they organised a series of activities.⁸³ One striking example is a torchlight procession in Groningen in 2018, which was organised by the movement but found widespread support from both local and national organisations (see Figure 3). From all over the Netherlands people marched in support of the Groningers in what became one of the biggest manifestations of social conflict in the Netherlands since the

⁸¹ Bas van Sluit, "'Schokkend Groningen uit de bocht met Borst-tweet'," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014, NexisUni; Gerdt van Hofslot, "'Spullen van NAM vernielen is echt oliedom'," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014, NexisUni.

⁸² Mannus van der Laan, "'Vertrouwen is verder weg dan ooit'," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2015, NexisUni; Jan Schlimbach, "Waarom bijna niemand de noodklok nog hoort," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2016, NexisUni; Gerdt van Hofslot, "'Nu zakendoen in Den Haag'," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2017, NexisUni; Johan de Veer, "Verdeeldheid van regio gevaar in strijd om versterking," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2018, NexisUni.

⁸³ Gerdt van Hofslot and Johan de Veer, "Roep om nieuwe onderhandelingen," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014, NexisUni; Hofslot, "'Nu zakendoen.'"; Hilbrand Polman, "Gasegemeenten op de barricaden," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2018, NexisUni; Martin Scholma, "Een manifest van geschokt Groningen," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2018, NexisUni.

Figure 3: Torchlight procession in Groningen with people holding banners stating “Groningen is fed up. Enough=enough” (in the front) and “safety first, also for our tenants” (in the fourth row) (2018).



1980s.⁸⁴ Although support ebbed and flowed due to the extended period of unrest in the province, the urgency of the earthquakes and the successful collective actions returned the movement to the public eye. These activities attracted great interest of both national and foreign media, adding considerably to the interest and sympathy of the general public.⁸⁵

2.3 Impact Factors: Fixing the Situation or Postponing the Inevitable

Given the strong interest of the shareholders of the Groningen gas field, the mitigation efforts were slow. Yet, as time progressed the movement and its support grew, and its impact increased along similar lines. As discussed above, the movement formulated demands that

⁸⁴ “Fakkeltocht: ‘Indrukwekkende ring van vuur en fakkels,’” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2018, <https://www.dvhn.nl/groningen/Fakkeltocht-%E2%80%98Indrukwekkende-ring-van-vuur-en-fakkels%E2%80%99-22837396.html>.

⁸⁵ See for example: Jurre van den Berg, “Diepe scheuren in het vertrouwen,” *de Volkskrant*, 2017, NexisUni; Wubby Luyendijk, “Dan moet de massa het maar doen,” *NRC Handelsblad*, 2017, NexisUni; Senay Boztas, “Enslaved to a fear of earthquakes from gas extraction,” *The Daily Telegraph*, 2018, NexisUni; Raf Casert, “Quakes force Dutch to end gas extraction in northern region,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 2018, NexisUni; Sonja Stössel, “Risse im Energiefundament: In den Niederlanden bebt die Erde, weil so viel Gas gefördert wird. Der Protest der Betroffenen zwingt die Regierung zum Umdenken,” *Die Welt*, 2019, NexisUni.

can be categorised into three types, relating to property damages, house prices, and safety in the region. It is worth noting that different segments of the movement strived for one or more demands at a time, more or less separately, but thereby helped the movement in its totality.

The first of the demands made by the movement was about the procedure for the compensation of damages, suggesting it was too much of a hassle to obtain appraisers and contractors, that there were long waiting times, that cases were too easily dismissed, and that the objectivity of the damage assessments was lacking.⁸⁶ Between 2012 and 2014 around twenty thousand claims were submitted to NAM. By 2013, NAM had completed the handling of under five thousand cases.⁸⁷ In January 2013, the NAM announced that it had created a fund to establish a more efficient compensation procedure. The movement, spearheaded by GBB, felt that these measures were far from adequate. Especially concerns surrounding the objectivity of those managing the fund remained.⁸⁸ In 2014 Kamp promised to make money available for repairs. However, local politicians, in support of the movement, concluded that it was not far reaching enough. In particular dissatisfaction with the slow speed of the claim settlements led to increasing tension.⁸⁹

It was not until 2017 that a significant change to the claims handling was made. By decision of Kamp, NAM was removed from dealing with the settlements. From now on the government, through EZ, would have decision making power in all matters, even more so than before.⁹⁰ Now dealing directly with the national government, without the intervention of NAM, the movement was able to negotiate a new settlement protocol. It stipulated that

⁸⁶ “Loket voor schade door gaswinning NAM stelt niks voor,” *RTVNoord*, 2012, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/114451/Loket-voor-schade-door-gaswinning-NAM-stelt-niks-voor>; Jeroen Berkenbosch, “Diepe scheuren is zware draagbalken woonkamer,” *RTVNoord*, 2013, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/117838/Diepe-scheuren-in-zware-draagbalken-woonkamer>; Dagblad van het Noorden and Engima Research, *Rapportage Aardbevingsonderzoek* (Groningen: Enigma Research, 2013).

⁸⁷ Wubby Luyendijk, “NAM haalt dit jaar recordhoeveelheid gas uit Groningse bodem,” *NRC Handelsblad*, 2013, NexisUni.

⁸⁸ “Woordvoerder NAM: ‘ik kan de mensen niet geruststellen’,” *RTVNoord*, 2013, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/117849/Woordvoerder-NAM-Ik-kan-de-mensen-niet-geruststellen>; “Groningers: geld NAM ondermaats,” *NOS*, 2013, <https://nos.nl/artikel/466596-groningers-geld-nam-ondermaats.html>.

⁸⁹ Jantina Russchen, “Putten bijna dicht bij Loppersum,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014, NexisUni.

⁹⁰ Goos de Boer and Bart Breij, “Acties en verkiezingsbeloften,” *RTVNoord*, 2017, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/174771/Aardbevingsnieuws-in-februari-2017-acties-en-verkiezingsbeloften>; Jelle van der Knoop, “Kabinet blijft Russische roulette spelen,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2017, NexisUni; Henk Nijboer, Sandra Beckerman, and Liesbeth van Tongeren, “Roer moet om, de Groningers verdienen het,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2017, NexisUni.

anyone who had suffered damages as a result of the gas induced earthquakes would be entitled to compensation payments.⁹¹ In theory far more people would be allegeable for compensation, however, the process remained as slow as it was before and affected people still felt like they were left hanging.

The movement's second demand was the compensation for declining house prices. Many people within the region felt that they should be compensated.⁹² In 2013, the minister suggested that there was indeed a decline in property value due to the earthquakes. As a result, some people were eligible for compensation.⁹³ At the beginning of 2014 the minister presented a compensation scheme. It stipulated that people who sold their houses after 2013 and lived in one of the eight earthquake municipalities would be allegeable for compensation. The procedure was meant to be fair for homeowners, as well as protect the NAM against improper claims.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, WAG did not agree with the way compensation was handled. WAG wanted it to happen in advance, while according to NAM only when a house was actually sold the decline in value could be determined. In 2015 the case was brought before a judge, who ruled in favour of WAG.⁹⁵ It would take until 2018 for NAM to start payments, after another judge forced it to do so.⁹⁶

The movement's demands about the full and fair compensation for property damages and compensation for declining house prices were all strongly connected to the movements third demand: reducing the gas extraction activities to a safe amount. A popular measure to prevent future property damages and to secure safety in the region would be to reduce the gas production drastically, as recommended by the overseer of the extraction of fossil fuels from Dutch soil, *Staatstoezicht op de Mijnen* (hereafter: SodM), in 2013.⁹⁷ Although it was

⁹¹ "Beving 3.4 in Zeerijp en nieuw schadeprotocol," *RTVNoord*, 2018, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/189824/Aardbevingsnieuws-januari-2018-Beving-3-4-in-Zeerijp-en-nieuw-schadeprotocol>.

⁹² Dagblad van het Noorden and Engima Research, *Rapportage Aardbevingsonderzoek* (Groningen: Enigma Research, 2013).

⁹³ H.G.J. Kamp, *Brief aan de Tweede Kamer: voortgang onderzoek inzake gaswinning Groningen* (The Hague: Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2013), 1-2.

⁹⁴ H.J.G. Kamp, *Gaswinning Groningen* (The Hague: Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2014), 1-25.

⁹⁵ For court ruling see: "ECLI:NL:RBNNE:2015:4185," *Rechtspraak.nl*, accessed March 2019, <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBNNE:2015:4185>.

⁹⁶ Gerdt van Hofslot, "WAG sleept NAM (weer) voor rechter over vermindering waarde huizen," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2018, NexisUni.

⁹⁷ State Supervision of Mines, *Reassessment of the Probability of Higher Magnitude Earthquakes in the Groningen Gas Field* (The Hague: State Supervision of Mines, 2013), 1-35.

expected the earthquakes would continue for a while, even if production would be completely stopped, in the long term this would be the safest measure. In the report, the SodM concluded that continued gas extraction would lead to more frequent and stronger earthquakes. It warned that there was a seven percent chance of an earthquake with a magnitude of between 4.0 and 5.0, even higher than the one that hit the province in 2012. In response, the minister promised that he would investigate.⁹⁸ However, little changed until the anti-gas movement forced the minister to come to a decision through a number of successful actions.

Together with citizens in the affected areas, local politicians brought the case before the Council of State in 2015, which ruled that the extraction activities in a part of the province should be ceased as soon as possible. Furthermore, the overall extraction activities were to be reduced drastically by 2020.⁹⁹ In the autumn of 2016, a new production cap was implemented. However, the province, municipalities, environmental organisations, and others objected to the decision. They argued that these measures were not enough to secure safety in the region.¹⁰⁰ After the parliamentary elections in 2017, in which earthquakes were an important topic, the minister further limited extraction. The new government that came to power in 2017 promised to pay more attention to the problems in Groningen.¹⁰¹ However, little actually changed until another earthquake, the eighth to hit the province since 2008 of a magnitude stronger than 3 on the Richter Scale (see Figure 4), forced new measures to be taken.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ “Minister Kamp bezoekt Groningen na onderzoek gaswinning,” *NOS*, 2013, <https://nos.nl/video/466994-minister-kamp-bezoekt-groningen-na-onderzoek-gaswinning.html>.

⁹⁹ “Gaswinning in Groningen voorlopig beperkt tot 27 miljard kubieke meter,” Council of State, accessed March 2019, <https://www.raadvanstate.nl/@8695/gaswinning-groningen/>; Council of State, *Press Release: Gas Extraction in Groningen Temporarily Limited to 27 Billion Cubic Metres* (The Hague: Council of State, 2015), 1-2; for court ruling see: “Uitspraak 201501544/1/A4,” Council of State, accessed March 2019, <https://www.raadvanstate.nl/@102047/201501544-1-a4/>.

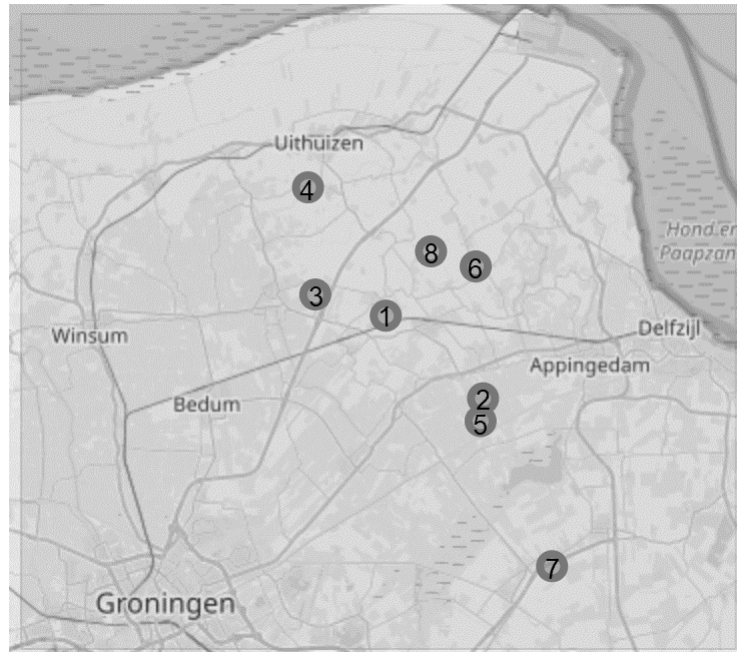
¹⁰⁰ Bart Breij, “Knokken tegen het gasbesluit,” *RTVNoord*, 2016, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/170827/Aardbevingsnieuws-in-november-2016-knokken-tegen-het-gasbesluit>.

¹⁰¹ Goos de Boer and Bart Breij, “Acties en verkiezingsbeloften,” *RTVNoord*, 2017, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/174771/Aardbevingsnieuws-in-februari-2017-acties-en-verkiezingsbeloften>; Jelle van der Knoop, “Kabinet blijft Russische roulette spelen,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2017, NexisUni; Henk Nijboer, Sandra Beckerman and Liesbeth van Tongeren, “Roer moet om, de Groningers verdienen het,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2017, NexisUni.

¹⁰² “Beving 3.4 in Zeerijp en nieuw schadeprotocol,” *RTVNoord*, 2018, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/189824/Aardbevingsnieuws-januari-2018-Beving-3-4-in-Zeerijp-en-nieuw-schadeprotocol>.

After the earthquake, the minister decided to follow two important recommendations of the SodM. The first was to further reduce the extraction activities as quickly as possible. The second was to close down the most dangerous gas wells swiftly and permanently to reduce the risk of more severe earthquakes.¹⁰³ The movement, still not assured of an improvement in the situation, responded with new protests.¹⁰⁴ Against all expectations, the government then decided to end all extraction activities by

Figure 4: Earthquakes registered from 2008 up to 2018 of a magnitude (*M*) above 3.0 on the Richter Scale: (1) Loppersum, *M*3.2 (2008); (2) Garrelsweer, *M*3.0 (2011); (3) Huizinge, *M*3.6 (2012); (4) Zandemeer, *M*3.2 (2013); (5) Garrelsweer, *M*3.0 (2013); (6) 't Zandt, *M*3.0 (2014); (7) Hellum, *M*3.0 (2015); (8) Zeerijp, *M*3.4 (2018).



2030.¹⁰⁵ At the end of 2018 the definitive gas extraction decision stated that gas extraction in Groningen would end five years earlier than expected. In 2025 no more gas was to be extracted in Groningen. However, as a consequence, the repairs and the compensation would be delayed as a result. Furthermore, earthquakes are expected to continue to hit the province at regular intervals for some time even after 2025.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ State Supervision of Mines, *Advies over aanvulling op winningsplan Groningen 2016* (The Hague: State Supervision of Mines, 2018), 1-10.

¹⁰⁴ Yfke Eijgelaar, "Overheidsfalen is onder Wiebes verworden tot overheidsoverheersing," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2018, NexisUni.

¹⁰⁵ "Gaswinning stopt in 2030, maar fracken mag," *RTVNoord*, 2018, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/192311/Aardbevingsnieuws-maart-2018-Gaswinning-stopt-in-2030-maar-fracken-mag>.

¹⁰⁶ "Gaskraan kan vijf jaar eerder dicht dan verwacht," *RTVNoord*, 2018, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/203157/Aardbevingsnieuws-december-2018-Gaskraan-kan-vijf-jaar-eerder-dicht-dan-verwacht>.

Although the movement's demand for safety in the region was fulfilled, their efforts before 2019 had some unintended side effects. At large the situation had led to a reconsideration of the role natural gas played in the Dutch energy system and economy. It is, however, difficult to either ascribe these developments to the movement's efforts or to consider them a by-product of the earthquake problems in general. However, in the province itself the policies' proponents had tried to appease the movement by offering affected citizens to install solar panels on their homes. Although it had proven to be of little effect towards its intended purpose, a side effect was that the amount of sustainable energy generated in the region increased. Overall, the problems in the province, as bad as they were, and the movements efforts to change them, helped forward the energy transition both locally and nationally.¹⁰⁷

2.4 Conclusion

Much of the discontent in Groningen was rooted in the past. For example, people referred to the period, now nearly twenty-five years ago, when the operator insisted that the first earthquakes could impossibly be the result of the gas extraction activities. When a relationship turned out to exist, the first cracks in the credibility of NAM were a fact. The pattern of denial and credibility loss repeated itself time and again. For years the Groningen gas did not only play an important role in the Dutch economy but also in warming the homes of many. The conflict placed the national (economic) interest against the safety of citizens in the effected region. The authorities involved mainly focussed on maintaining gas production, taking into account what was necessary to maintain the income generated by the extraction activities only. In turn, this damaged the trust in the national government and especially in EZ and its minister.

Overall the movements influence is primarily to be found in securing safety in the region, and less so in securing full and fair compensation of the damages caused by the

¹⁰⁷ H.G.J. Kamp, "Regeling van de Minister van Economische Zaken van 13 maart 2017, nr. WJZ / 16152541, houdende regels over waardevermeerdering van woningen in verband met schade als gevolg van gaswinning Groningenveld (Regeling waardevermeerdering woningen gaswinning Groningenveld)," *Staatscourant*, 2017; "Nationaal Programma Groningen moet provincie toekomstbestendig maken," *RTVNoord*, 2018, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/199712/Nationaal-Programma-Groningen-moet-provincie-toekomstbestendig-maken>.

extraction activities, as it forced policymakers to shut down the gas extraction activities in the province. The movements efforts served not only to highlight the problems, but also as a catalyst for taking the necessary decisions in line with the demands it voiced. Why the movement was able to influence the existing policy is twofold. In the first place, due to its successful conventional and unconventional collective actions, and because of its willingness to reach a suitable solution, the movement managed to draw the attention of the general public, and of both national and foreign media. The support they provided the movement, secured its success as it increased the pressure on policymakers to change the existing policy. Second, the legal procedures started by the actors of the movement and its supporters, concluded against the existing policy. As a result, the majority of privileges granted to the gas extraction activities by the production and distribution arrangements made in 1959, at the cost of the environment and local people, were severely limited.

Chapter 3

The Case of Wind Farm Construction in Drenthe

Sustainability as a Curse and the Anti-wind Farm Movement

“Some objectors of wind turbines are very extreme in their resistance. Vandalism and arson occur, as well as threats of violence. The local resistance against wind turbines has become radicalised to such an extent that it can be called extremism.”¹⁰⁸

For some the transition away from fossil fuels presents great opportunities, for others it poses new threats. In Drenthe, a low populated and largely agricultural region in the north of the Netherlands, the transition is met with heavy resistance. In order to increase the amount of renewable energy consumed, all across the country onshore wind power projects are developed. In Drenthe, local citizens feel threatened by the possible effects of wind turbines on themselves and their surroundings. The case of wind farm construction in Drenthe in the form of the anti-wind farm movement, demonstrates how different visions about how to use available space can lead to heavy protests. Like in the previous chapter, the influence of the movement on policy and planning is analysed by first reviewing the interests, tactics, and support base of the project's proponents, followed by a review of the emergence of the movement, the demands it voiced, the support it gained, and the strategies it employed. Finally, the impact of the movement on policy and planning is analysed for each demand it voiced, through a reconstruction of the events that transpired between the emergence of the movement around 2000 and the construction of the first wind turbine in Drenthe in 2019. The case of wind farm construction in Drenthe suggests: that, due to the top-down structure of energy planning, there is little to no room for a movement, such as the anti-wind farm movement, to assert its influence.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, it demonstrates that the popularity of a

¹⁰⁸ Kirstel van Teeffelen, “Bedreigingen, intimidaties en vernielingen in het noorden om windmolens, *Trouw*, 2018, <https://www.trouw.nl/samenleving/bedreigingen-intimidaties-en-vernielingen-in-het-noorden-om-windmolens~ae932c1d/>; translated by author.

¹⁰⁹ For more examples of disastrous outcomes of top-down implemented policies see: James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

project, in this case wind energy, or the goal a policy is implemented for, in this case the production of renewable energy, can be detrimental to the support a movement enjoys.

3.1 External Factors: The Dutch State as Stakeholder in the Drenthe Wind Farm Project

In 2013, a plan for wind farm construction in the Netherlands, called *Structuurvisie windenergie op land* (hereafter: SvWOL), was drawn up by the national government.¹¹⁰ The objective of the plan was to create the ideal conditions necessary to ensure a capacity of at least 6000 megawatts (MW) of wind energy. In the document the Dutch government acknowledged that the ambitions for wind energy would result in an increased amount of space to be taken up. It was portrayed as a necessary sacrifice to reach the European goals for renewable energy set for 2020. In agreements made between the national and provincial governments, a share of 280 MW would be realised in Drenthe.¹¹¹ The provincial government would then employ private developers. Both these public and private actors combined were the primary actors involved in developing a discourse in favour of the wind on land policy in Drenthe.

Due to the structure of policy for wind energy on land in the Netherlands and because of Dutch law, the development of wind energy has been a top-down process. Especially one provision, called *Rijkscoördinatieregeling* (hereafter: RCR), is of importance here. According to RCR, when plans larger than 100 MW are concerned the national government has decision making power.¹¹² Because of this provision the provincial government, which was approaching the scale of wind farms with caution, was side lined by developers. In order to circumvent the provinces reservations and to speed up the process, different developers combined their plans to reach the 100 MW minimum stipulated in the RCR.¹¹³ While in fact both the provincial and national governments were responsible for the wind farm policy

¹¹⁰ Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, *Structuurvisie windenergie op land* (The Hague: Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, 2013), 1-48.

¹¹¹ Provincie Drenthe, Gemeente Aa en Hunze, Gemeente Borger-Odoorn, Gemeente Emmen, & Gemeente Coevorden. (2012). *Ontwerp Gebiedsvisie Windenergie Drenthe*. Provincie Drenthe.

¹¹² Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, *Memorie Van Toelichting: Wijziging van de Elektriciteitswet 1998, de Mijnbouwwet en de Gaswet in verband met toepassing van de Rijkscoördinatieregeling op energie-infrastructuurprojecten* (The Hague: Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2008).

¹¹³ Jaap Kiers, “Wel molens, maar geen wildwest-landschap,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2012, NexisUni.

discussed here, the decision-making power was in the hands of the developers and the responsible ministries EZ and the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. Furthermore, due to another law, *Crisis- en Herstelwet*, of 2010 the lower governmental bodies had lost the possibility to go against a decision made by the national government.¹¹⁴

The siting process in Drenthe involved a number of different actors with different interests. Scarcity of suitable locations and the provinces' zoning policy led to a 'wind rush' on the available land. The Dutch government aimed to speed up the planning process in order to reach the goals for 2020. The result was a very competitive environment in which developers had limited time for interaction with inhabitants because of the risk of losing their location to a competitor.¹¹⁵ Proponents, arguing that wind on land was a cheap and relatively easy way to make the necessary steps in the energy transition, placed the need for sustainable energy above the characteristics of the landscape.¹¹⁶

In order to take away resistance to the project, numerous consultation and communication moments were organised, and leaflets were spread. All in all, about a dozen meetings took place, spread over different rounds. Critics complained that participation in, and the outcome of, these meetings was too limited. The initiative for these meetings was mostly taken by administrators who no longer had any authority, such as deputies from the province and aldermen from the municipalities in which the turbines were to be realised.¹¹⁷ The responsible authorities, representatives of the ministries and initiators, were often absent. The feeling of not being taken seriously prevailed. The dominant strategy to overcome opposition was primarily based on the assumption that objectors needed to be educated out of their ignorance. By referring to the scientific consensus around man-made climate change, the low risk and high returns of wind turbines, and the broad public support for wind energy an attempt was made to legitimise the plans in the eyes of the objectors.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ "Crisis- en Herstelwet," Wettenbank, accessed April 2019, <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0027431/2019-01-01>; "De Rijkscoördinatieregeling," *Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland*, accessed April 2019, <https://www.rvo.nl/subsidies-regelingen/bureau-energieprojecten/rijksco%C3%B6rdinatieregeling>.

¹¹⁵ Jaap Kiers, "Windolens: redden wat er nog te redden valt," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2011, NexisUni; Nynke Smedeman, "Heibel in Den Haag over windmolens langs N33," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014, NexisUni.

¹¹⁶ Mannus van der Laan, "Windmolens, vloek of zegen?," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2012, NexisUni.

¹¹⁷ Jan Venema, "Over windparken in het veen is niet meer te praten," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014, NexisUni; "Kramp: Drenthe zit vast aan groene energie," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014, NexisUni.

¹¹⁸ Jan Venema, "Tegenstanders nemen info-avond windenergie over," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014, NexisUni.

While support for wind energy is, overall, high in the Netherlands, at the local level there is little support. The debate, electoral consequences, and responsibility are local matters, but critical decisions are taken at a higher level. Local citizens, organisations, and alderman feel excluded in the decision-making process. Little benefits flow directly back into the local community. However, sustainable energy and policy planning exceed the territory of a community. In the public eye the increase in wind energy is generally applauded. Nature and environmental organisations also place the benefits above the disadvantages. The current siting process does not encourage those partially or fully supportive of the project to come forward, however, even at the local level there is support. As long as only local resistance has to be overcome, the project is likely to continue.¹¹⁹

3.2 Internal Factors: Fighting against Wind Turbines and Tensions Running High

The protest movement in Drenthe, that started against the development of wind turbines in the province, emerged out of a smaller movement against wind farm development by the German government along the border.¹²⁰ Protests against construction in the province itself emerged relatively late.¹²¹ Around the turn of the century, when ideas for wind farms in the province started to pop up, the provincial government was opposed to large projects within its jurisdiction. However, due to pressure from the national government this rapidly changed in 2010 and was further expanded upon in 2013.¹²² In order to contain the national governments plans within reasonable proportions, the provincial government agreed to an increased capacity, and therefore more wind turbines, on the condition that the decision where to build the turbines would be up to the Provincial Council.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Bernd Otter, "Bijna 35 kilometer aan windmolens," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2010, NexisUni; Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, *Windpark De Drentse Monden en Oostermoer* (De Drentse Monden en Oostermoer: Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2016), 1-2; Rob Rietveld, "Vechten tegen windmolens is vechten tegen onbegrip," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2012, NexisUni; Elzinga & Oterdoom procesmanagement, *Verkenning windpark De Drentse Monden en Oostermoer: resultaten vraaggesprekken* (Haren: Elzinga & Oterdoom procesmanagement, 2015), 3.

¹²⁰ Jan Wierenga, "De stille kracht van zoevende rotorbladen," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2000, NexisUni.

¹²¹ Bernd Otter, "Hoe Drenthe aan zoveel windmolens komt," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2017, NexisUni.

¹²² Wierenga, "De stille kracht."; Otter, "Bijna 35 kilometer." Jantje Schuurman, "Gebiedsvisie Windenergie Drenthe wassen neus," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2013, NexisUni.

¹²³ "Drenthe vecht liever tegen windmolens," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2010, NexisUni.

At first, the prevailing sentiment was not fundamentally opposed to wind turbines. The main problem was the fear of massive wind parks in the area. However, due to the limited involvement of citizens in the policy planning process, the lack of influence on the location, size, and number of turbines, local opinion turned against it. Faced with a need to implement a policy with regard to wind turbines, the province opted for the concentration of wind turbines in the northern most

part of the province, called the Veenkolonieën. In turn, this led to resistance of the local population.¹²⁴

The movement, that emerged in response to the decision of the province, managed to develop a shared ‘oppositional discourse’ by emphasising similar demands and concerns in voicing their opposition.¹²⁵ When analysed in relation to the social demands raised, the movement mostly laid emphasis on the specific and natural characteristics of the region. The demand for its protection formed the base motive behind the mobilisation of local groups that together formed the larger anti-wind movement in Drenthe. The participants of the loosely organised movement opposed the wind farms on the grounds that it would damage the local environment, decrease liveability, and lower property value.¹²⁶ Objectors argued that they, as

Figure 5: Protesters holding signs against wind farm construction in Drenthe, stating (from left to right): “Wind turbines no, they belong in the sea!!”, “Wind Turbines no!!!”, “Green energy ok, wind turbines get rid of them”, and “soorly mistaken.... gone tourism!” (2018).



¹²⁴ Provincie Drenthe, *Omgevingsvisie Drenthe* (Assen: Provincie Drenthe, 2010), 1-102; Jaap Kiers, “Drenten voor windmolens,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2010, NexisUni; Jaap Kiers, “Niemand wil windmolens zien,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2010, NexisUni; Rietveld, “Vechten tegen windmolens.”

¹²⁵ See for example: “Standpunten,” Platform Storm, accessed April 2019,

<http://www.platformstorm.nl/standpunten>; “Home,” WindNee, accessed April 2019, www.windnee.nl.

¹²⁶ Bert Bontsema, “Oude en nieuwe molens in Westerwolde,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2003, NexisUni; Gerard de Kleine, “De zin en de onzin van windmolenparken,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2006, NexisUni;

well as many others, chose to live in Drenthe because of the open spaces and the peace and quiet. Wind turbines would disturb that.¹²⁷ Likewise, local entrepreneurs voiced their concerns. Arguing that a large-scale wind farm in the region would have far-reaching social, socio-economic, and economic consequences. Although generally not directly affected by the plans, they feared that tourism and economic initiatives would come to a standstill as a consequence.¹²⁸

The residents' and interest groups' resentment primarily revolved around two things: the choice of location and the distribution of the benefits and burdens. The decision to concentrate all wind turbines in one area evoked a sentiment of uneven distribution and made people wonder why the decision was made without their involvement. A common concern was for the burdens, which primarily related to hinderance such as noise pollution, shadow flicker, and top lights flashing at night.¹²⁹ Moreover, no clarity was offered about the allocation of the benefits. It remained unclear who would earn what and how much and no answer was given to the question as to how much the local population would receive. In response, the movement argued that both the provincial and national governments were ignoring their opinion and in fact were denying the interests of the local population.¹³⁰ Hence, in the discourse opposed to wind farm construction, while local groups raised particular demands towards protecting their region, the underlying goal or motivation seems to be inclusion in the decision-making process.

The movement, which was formed by the participation of concerned citizens, was loosely organised and counted on little support. Besides a number of affected organisations, locally operating action groups such as *Platform Storm* and *WindNEE*, and other objectors, the movement largely consisted of loosely connected individuals. The movement could count on the support of the governments of a few municipalities in the affected region. For

Maaïke Boersma, "'Al die dure windenergie helpt ons geen steek verder'," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2011, NexisUni.

¹²⁷ Provincie Drenthe, Gemeente Aa en Hunze, Gemeente Borger-Odoorn, Gemeente Emmen, and Gemeente Coevorden, *Nota van beantwoording: gebiedsvisie windenergie Drenthe* (Assen: Provincie Drenthe, 2013), 16.

¹²⁸ Martin van der Leest, Tjipke Paas, Henk Smid and Aize Bouma, "Windmolens maken veel kapot," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2013, LexisUni.

¹²⁹ See for the submitted views: "Windpark de Drentse Monden en Oostermoer – fase 1," Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland, accessed April 2019, <https://www.rvo.nl/subsidies-regelingen/windpark-de-drentse-monden-en-oostermoer-fase-1>.

¹³⁰ Jan Venema "Over windparken in het veen is niet meer te praten'," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014, NexisUni; "Kamp: Drenthe zit vast aan groene energie," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014, NexisUni.

example, in an effort to demonstrate to the provincial and national governments that support for the project was low, the municipalities Aa and Hunze and Borger-Odoorn hired an independent organisation to study public support. Which, of course, was found to be low. Although the permits necessary for the construction of wind farms is a municipal matter, due to the structure of Dutch law, higher tiers of government were able to side-line the municipalities.¹³¹ Support was found in anti-wind farm movements in other countries. Scholars affiliated with foreign anti-wind farm movements, produced articles that discredited wind energy and underlined the health risks of wind turbines. Although largely rejected by the scholarly community, these works were used by the movement in support of its claims.¹³² Besides the health risks other arguments related to the costs of wind turbines, which would far exceed the amount of energy it generated.¹³³ The use of these works, true or false, further alienated proponents and objectors.

The movement carried out both conventional and non-conventional forms of collective action. Especially through the latter, the movement succeeded in attracting attention of the national media and Dutch public. An example of such actions was the sabotage of the land on which turbines were to be built. A tactic mostly directed at local farmers who sold or rented a part of their land for the construction of turbines. Although these scare tactics were effective in scaring off (potential) developers (see Figure 6), in the long run they set back the movement at large by alienating it from the general public, more moderate objectors, and possible supporters. Furthermore, the authorities were forced to take legal action against the actors involved, drawing attention away from the problem at large.¹³⁴

The more moderate, conventional, actions carried out by the movement consisted of planning small scale protest gatherings, meetings and seminars, filing petitions, holding press conferences, conducting signature campaigns, and initiating legal processes.¹³⁵ Generally, these actions only attracted the attention of those already involved in the movement. Moreover, meetings were often held with administrators who no longer had any decision-

¹³¹ Enneüs, *Draagvlakonderzoek* (Groningen: Enneüs, 2014), 1-47.

¹³² Marieke Kwak, "'Duizelingen en hoofdpijn van windmolens'," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2012, NexisUni.

¹³³ Gerard de Kleine, "De zin en onzin van windmolenparken," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2006, NexisUni.

¹³⁴ Ed van Tellingen and Maaïke Wind, "Storm in de Veenkoloniën," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2016, NexisUni; "Hoogleraar: 'De overheid heeft het verzet tegen windmolens over zichzelf afgeroepen'," *RTVNoord*, 2019, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/206926/Hoogleraar-De-overheid-heeft-het-verzet-tegen-windmolens-over-zichzelf-afgeroepen>.

¹³⁵ Arnoud Bodde, "Klem tussen de windmolens," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2017, NexisUni; Harald Buit, "Elias de Haan, Ijsbaanrapport is geen afrekening," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2018, NexisUni.

Figure 6: *Wind turbine builder's house and car lit a fire (2018). Evidence points at anti-wind farm protester.*



making power. Those who did were mostly absent. However, when present, it turned out to only fuel dissatisfaction. For example, at one such occasion loud noises were made to deny proponents the opportunity to answer questions. The feeling of not being taken seriously played a dominant role in the unrest.¹³⁶ Furthermore, in general there was little to be gained in legal proceedings. When wind energy is concerned, the law gives free reign to the government to develop wind farms as it sees fit.¹³⁷

3.3 Impact Factors: Ploughing Ahead for a Sustainable Future

The impact of the early movement on wind farm construction in Germany serves as a precursor to the influence of the movement in Drenthe in the following years. At the time, around the turn of the century, the only real threat was the construction of wind turbines along the border. However, despite the outcry of the local population construction continued. In contrast to the people in Drenthe, overall the opinion of (local) Germans was favourable

¹³⁶ Jan Venema, "Tegenstanders nemen info-avond windenergie over," *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2014, NexisUni.

¹³⁷ Hermannus Broring and Albertjan Tollenaar, "Vechten tegen windmolens: falende inspraak," in *Behoorlijk Bestuursprocesrecht* (Den Haag: Boom Juridische Uitgevers, 2015), 8.

towards wind turbines.¹³⁸ In 2004, in Drenthe, agreements were made between landowners and the province to start similar projects. At the time municipalities were still enthusiastic about the promises of wind energy. This changed as local resistance increased. With the community siding against wind turbines, so did the municipality change its position. However, the position of the national government was clear: onshore wind energy should be realised sooner rather than later. The movement formulated two clear demands, as mentioned above, that came forth out of a concern for the region, and the people living in it. The first of these demands was, the protection of the specific and natural characteristics of the region. The second, the guarantee that the safety and health of citizens would not be at risk. However, as the objectors had clearly demonstrated, their demands could only be realised when the plans were completely off the table.

The first phase of the decision-making process took place in 2010. Faced with the obligation to implement the national policy, the provincial government decided to concentrate the wind farms within one specific area (see Figure 7).¹³⁹ Soon after the province presented its vision on wind energy, municipal authorities of the area in question openly sided with the protesters.¹⁴⁰ At the same time plans were made for the realisation of a second wind farm. In order to speed the process, the two parks were linked. The combined power exceeded the hundred MW minimum for RCR to take effect. Effectively, the municipal and provincial governments were side-lined.¹⁴¹ The result was that the influence of the local population dwindled. Public participation and other direct connections with the responsible authorities and initiators faded. The decision-making power came in the hands of the national government.

In 2013 plans were finalised in SvWOL.¹⁴² The objections to the construction of wind farms, including noise pollution and shadow flicker, were passed on to later decision-making moments. The distribution of the benefits and burdens was also left out of consideration.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Wierenga, “De stille kracht.”

¹³⁹ Kiers, “Drenten voor windmolens.”; Kiers, “Niemand wil windmolens zien.”

¹⁴⁰ Bernd Otter, “Windpark is niet tegen te houden,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2010, NexisUni; for the province’s vision on wind energy see: Provincie Drenthe, *Omgevingsvisie*, 1-102.

¹⁴¹ Otter, “Bijna 35 kilometer.”

¹⁴² Centraal Planbureau, *KBA Structuurvisie*, 1-20.

¹⁴³ Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, *Nota van antwoord: zienswijzen op het voornemen structuurvisie windenergie op land en het opstellen van een milieueffectrapport raadpleging reikwijdte en detailniveau van het milieueffectrapport* (The Hague: Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, 2013), 1-86.

Figure 7: Location of wind farm in Drenthe, near the town of Stadskanaal. On the map, forty five dots represent forty five turbines to be built starting 2019.



The many protests did not prevent the minister of EZ from giving the go-ahead in 2015. What was remarkable about the decision was that the arrangement of the turbines in the final plan deviated from the plans drawn up by the province. This plan, which was partly created by the participation of residents of the area, was thus portrayed as a sham. In the background, the minister had in fact drawn up his own plan.¹⁴⁴

To accommodate residents, the provincial government took the decision in 2016 to introduce a compensation scheme. A fund was made available for the betterment of the region, addressing one of the movements demands. However, this was not enough to temper resistance. The prevailing sentiment was that responsible authorities did not pay much attention to problems in the province. In fact, as long as regulations regarding noise, shadow

¹⁴⁴ Jaap Kiers, “‘Kamp wil kennelijk geen draagvlak’,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2015, NexisUni.

flicker, light glare, and safety were followed there was no immediate reason to do so.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, a lawsuit was brought before the Council of State in 2018. The ruling followed that same year. The council determined that, since all rules and regulations were abided to, there was no legal basis to block construction. Objections based on a lack of public support, were found to be insufficient.¹⁴⁶

Despite the efforts of the movement to change the existing policy, construction on the first wind turbine commenced early 2019.¹⁴⁷ Although the movement had clearly shown policymakers and developers their position on wind energy, resistance had done little to prevent the plans from being executed. Few alternatives were explored. A number of municipalities did start investigating possibilities of solar parks, albeit, in addition to, and not as a replacement for wind farms. This was a step towards the wishes of the movement. A step that may limit the number of wind turbines in the province in the future. However, the minister of EZ sees solar energy as a welcome addition to existing plans. After all, the energy transition does not end with wind energy, it is simply one step in a larger systemic change.¹⁴⁸

3.4 Conclusion

The wind farm dispute in Drenthe was, and still is, a conflict between actors who frame their interests as the conservation of a landscape which is threatened by the local, tangible impact of wind turbines and actors who frame the issue by stressing the global, imperceptible necessity of sustainable energy. Attitudes and behaviour towards wind farms are often rooted in values and emotions, placing proponents and objectors directly opposite each other with virtually no middle ground to be traversed. Since the emergence of the movement its demands were clearly rooted in the characteristics of the landscape and in the possible health risks caused by wind turbines. Even though the municipalities involved had increasingly

¹⁴⁵ “Windpark de Drentse Monden en Oostermoer – fase 1,” Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland, accessed April 2019, <https://www.rvo.nl/subsidies-regelingen/windpark-de-drentse-monden-en-oostermoer-fase-1>.

¹⁴⁶ “Windpark De Drentse Monden en Oostermoer mag worden aangelegd,” Dutch Council of State, accessed April 2019, <https://www.raadvanstate.nl/@9129/windpark-de-drentse/>.

¹⁴⁷ “Eerste windmolen Drentse Monden wordt gebouwd, ondanks verzet,” *RTVNoord*, 2019, <https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/206791/Eerste-windmolen-Drentse-Monden-wordt-gebouwd-ondanks-verzet>.

¹⁴⁸ Gerton Albers, “Zonneparkbouwen?,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2016, NexisUni; Jon van Schilt, “Een pijnloze energietransitie bestaat niet,” *Dagblad van het Noorden*, 2017, NexisUni.

distanced themselves from the states and provinces policy, and in turn the province from the states, the movement could count on little support. In general wind energy is looked upon favourably by the public. Besides, the controversial tactics of some members of the movement did not work to its advantage.

Overall the movement's influence was limited. Due to the top-down structure of energy planning there was no room for the anti-wind farm movement to influence the policy planning process. The proponent's position was strong. As it operated within its (legal) jurisdiction, objections against the existing policy could be disregarded. Legal procedures started by the actors of the movement concluded no legal base against the existing policy. The general public tends to look favourably on wind energy, as do nature and environmental organisations. Proponents could therefore count on a large support base. Support for the movement was little, as only people directly affected by wind turbines spoke out against the policy on wind-farm construction in Drenthe.

Chapter 4

Comparative Analysis

A Winning Combination

As discussed in the previous two chapters, the success of social movements can differ greatly. As they strive, they lay bare fundamental aspects of why social conflict as a form of self-organised participation can influence policy and planning. Comparing movements provides valuable insights into what the most important aspects for a movement to succeed in accomplishing its goals are. In this fourth and final chapter, a comparison is made between the anti-gas movement in Groningen and the anti-wind farm movement in Drenthe (for a schematic overview see Appendix B). Why movements are able to influence policy and planning is analysed by comparing the actors involved in support of the respective policies, their interests, tactics, and support base. Followed by, a comparison of the emergence, demands, support, and strategies of these movements. In the final section of this chapter, the impact of the two movements is compared along general lines with a focus on the movements success in changing policy, solving the intended problem, influencing the opposing party's attitude or the public's opinion, and the negative or unintended consequences resulting from its actions. In this fourth and final chapter, I argue that there is a specific combination which makes the success of a movement inevitable. Decisive in both cases was the public opinion, the movements support base, and the actions it employed.

4.1 External Factors: Defending their Interests

The influence of social movements on public policy results from the reactions of the advocacy coalitions established against these movements and in support of these policies. Even if the movement is “successful” in its actions, the way policymakers react or reformulate the existing policy is up to them, and can result in the movement failing to assert

its demands or in unforeseen and unwanted results.¹⁴⁹ In both cases this coalition was comprised of actors from the public and private sector. In Groningen the most important actors were NAM, representing the oil and gas companies, and EZ, representing the government. This same ministry was the most prominent actor in the wind farm policy in Drenthe as well. Here, wind farm developers represented the private sector. Although they had a hand in how the wind energy policy in the province was developed, it was only a minor one. The same goes for Groningen: the actor with the most influence was EZ.

While in the eyes of many in both cases, EZ, and its commercial partners, were only interested in financial gains, a broader interest can be reported. For years the Groningen gas has provided the country with the gas necessary to warm homes. The Dutch government holds a responsibility to its citizens in Groningen but also in the rest of the country. A similar case is presented in Drenthe. In order to increase the Dutch share of renewable energy, wind turbines play an important role. In both cases EZ was faced with conflicting interests. A number of reasons ensure that certain policies, or issues resulting from them, are given more attention than others. Decisive in this decision is the electoral relevance, the power at stake, and the national interest.¹⁵⁰

How the situation was handled in both cases seems to be directed at trying to convince citizens in the effected regions of the importance of the national interest. In order to do so, numerous meetings and information gatherings were organised. Efforts were not only aimed at convincing objectors. To some extent, more so in Drenthe than in Groningen, an effort was made to educate citizens about the benefits the respective policies had to offer. In the long run, this only proved to alienate proponents and objectors further from each other.

Another point, which the comparison of the two cases suggests, is that the interests defended by the coalition in support of these policies is a decisive factor in the support received by either the coalition or the movement. The actors involved in both cases are similar to each other. What differed between both was the interests they defended. During the industrial revolution a shift from local energy sources to fossil-fuels took place. The result was that energy was mined or drilled somewhere far away from residential areas. Fossil-fuels were considered to be the future. In recent years the public opinion has become less

¹⁴⁹ Hayriye Özen and Sükrü Özen, "Public Policies and Social Movements: The Influences of Protest Movements on Mining Policy in Turkey," *Review of Public Administration* 43, 2 (2010): 57-59.

¹⁵⁰ Hanspeter Kriesi et al., *New Social Movements in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2015), 82-110.

favourable towards these energy sources. However, the alternative, renewable energy, decreases the distance between citizens and energy production once more.¹⁵¹ While fossil-fuels, and their effects on the climate, have become a national issue in the Netherlands, the cost of renewable energy has become a regional one. In turn, this explains why support for wind farm construction is large, while EZ could count on little support where the gas extraction activities were concerned.

4.2 Internal Factors: Organising their Actions

In public policy literature it is understood that when the adverse implications of policies are directed towards a specific group, the said group will naturally resist.¹⁵² Indeed, the analysis of the protest movements against the gas extraction activities in Groningen and against wind farm construction in Drenthe reveal that the basic motive behind the emergence of the protest movements was the perception that the respective policies posed a serious threat to the local environment, local resources, and above all, to safety and well-being in the region. Although the mobilising events were very different, they were similar in nature. In Groningen the ever-present threat of new and more severe earthquakes caused people to fight for their safety. While in Drenthe, the future threat of wind farms caused similar sentiments. Of course, there were more basic demands voiced as well, such as compensation for already suffered or possible future damages. Besides, there was a strong sentiment in both provinces that the people and region only carried the burdens and didn't reap enough of the benefits, if any at all. However, not only did resistance emerge in response to a specific policy, the feeling of not being taken seriously served as a catalyst to further increase dissatisfaction in both cases.

The most striking difference between both movements is the amount of support they managed to mobilise. Although social movements are not homogenous and coherent, if successful they bring together a multiplicity of actors such as individuals, informal groups, political parties, unions, and national or international non-governmental organisations.¹⁵³ In

¹⁵¹ Yves Pepermans and Ilse Loots, "Wind Farm Struggles in Flanders Field: A Sociological Perspective," *Energy Policy* 59, 1 (2013): 323-324.

¹⁵² See for example: Merilee S. Grindle and John W. Thomas, "Policy Makers, Policy Choices and Policy Outcomes: The Political Economy of Reform in Developing Countries," *Policy Sciences* 22, 1 (1989): 213-248.

¹⁵³ Charles Tilly, "From Interactions to Outcomes in Social Movements," in *How Social Movements Matter* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 253-270; Dieter Rucht and Friedhelm Neidhardt,

Groningen, the anti-gas movement was able to steadily increase its support over the period it was active. The movement could count on a broad support base both locally and nationally. Supporters not only increased the amount and scale of successful actions, but also contributed to the cohesion of the movement. When compared to the anti-wind farm movement, the quality and the influence of the supporters highly differed. In Drenthe, the anti-wind farm movement could only count on the support of individuals directly involved, and to a lesser extent of local politicians. Although support was found in anti-wind farm movements in other countries, this only served to frame the local protests.

The difference in support between both movements can be attributed to the cause the movements were fighting for, but also to the different strategies and tactics they employed. Both movements employed conventional as well as unconventional forms of collective action in order to empower their oppositional discourse. These actions consisted of protest gatherings, petitions, conferences, etcetera. In Groningen these actions were generally peaceful and constructive, radical outbursts were swiftly condemned by the larger movement. Overall there was a willingness to solve the matter through constructive dialogue. In Drenthe more drastic unconventional methods were employed, and although not supported by the entire movement per se, these methods came to dominate the public's perception of the situation in the province. Although in social movement literature it is argued that destructive and violent protest activities are generally more successful in forwarding a movements demands, the adoption of radical outbursts in the anti-wind farm movement in Drenthe played an important role in losing the sympathy of the general public.¹⁵⁴ Despite all their concerns, the image created by these actions hindered the movement in gaining supporters.

4.3 Impact Factors: Fighting to be Heard

The analysis in chapter two and three demonstrates that the impact of both movements differs greatly. It would, however, be a simplification to judge the one movement as successful and the other as not. The case of the anti-gas movement in Groningen demonstrates that a movement can be successful in achieving one of its demands, the reduction of the gas

"Towards a 'Movement Society'?: On the Possibilities of Institutionalizing Social Movements," *Social Movement Studies* 1, 1 (2002): 7-30.

¹⁵⁴ See for example: William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, 2d ed. (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1990).

extraction to save amounts, but can be less successful in achieving another, the full and fair compensation for damages. In the long run, the movement's efforts resulted in an overall re-evaluation of the use of gas in the Netherlands. In comparison, the anti-wind farm movement in Drenthe demonstrates that, although the movement's efforts contributed to a diversification of sustainable energy sources in the province, its unrelenting stance in opposition to wind turbines did little to change policy.

Another point, which the comparison between both cases suggests, is that the intervention of the court can be decisive in the impact a movement has on policy. For example, in Groningen the Council of State ruled in favour of the movement's plight for safety in the region, and thereby forced the government to change its policy. In contrast, in Drenthe the Council of State could find no legal grounds to stop wind farm construction and thereby allowed the policy to be developed and, in 2019, implemented. In this sense, it can be said that instead of entering into dialogue and seeking reconciliation, the coalition in favour of the policy, in both cases, refused to change its stance until ordered by the court.

Following previous works that underscore the interaction between movement internal and external factors, the comparison of both cases suggests that the presence of powerful allies and favourable public opinion combined can force a policy change.¹⁵⁵ Some demands are less widely supported than others or are more difficult to reconcile with the ideas of the wider public. Some movements can therefore have a more difficult task than others.¹⁵⁶ In Groningen, the demands for safety resulted in many supporters for the movement and ensured that people looked favourably on the movement. Although support was for the broader movement, and not only for one specific demand, the demand for compensation was given less attention by the general public. In comparison, the anti-wind farm movement in Drenthe lacked both powerful allies and favourable public opinion. Although the provincial government and municipal councils, that spoke out in support of the movement, could be counted as powerful allies to some extent, the comparison between both would suggest that

¹⁵⁵ See for example: Daniel M. Cress and David A. Snow, "The Outcomes of Homeless Mobilization: The Influence of Organization, Disruption, Political Mediation, and Framing," *American Journal of Sociology* 105, 4 (2000): 1063-1104; Melinda D. Kane, "Social Movement Policy Success: Decriminalizing State Sodomy Law, 1969-1998," *Mobilization: An International Journal* 8, 3 (2003): 313-334; Sarah A. Soule and Susan Olzak, "When do Movements Matter?: The Politics of Contingency and the Equal Rights Amendment," *American Sociological Review* 69, 4 (2004): 473-497; Edwin Amenta, Neal Caren, and Sheera Joy Olasky, "Age for Leisure?: Political Mediation and the Impact of the Pension Movement on US Old Age Policy," *American Sociological Review* 70, 3 (2005): 516-538.

¹⁵⁶ Giugni, "The Policy Impact of," 469.

favourable public opinion is the more decisive factor or that both factors need to be present simultaneously. However, support allowed the anti-gas movement to expand its efforts and consolidated the movement at large, it would be inaccurate to undervalue its importance.

4.4 Conclusion

The disputes in both provinces are conflicts between two parties that strive for interests that are more or less incompatible. A variety of factors influence the extent to which the movements are able to decide a dispute in their favour. The most important differences between both movements are found in the support for the movement, the extent in which the public opinion was favourable towards its plight, and the legal grounds on which the movement's demands were based. As a result of these differences, the anti-gas movement in Groningen was more successful in its efforts to change policy than the anti-wind farm movement in Drenthe. Therefore, to generalise these findings, why a movement is able to influence policy and planning results in the following combination: if the public is favourable towards a movement, it contributes to the support the movement enjoys, with enough support the movement is able to expand its actions, these actions should include legal procedures, if ruled in favour of the movement, success is inevitable.

Conclusion

Participating in the Streets

The analysis, which has been conducted by making use of both public policy and social movement literatures, to explore why social conflict, as a form of self-organised participation, influenced policy and planning in the extraction of natural gas in Groningen but not in the development of wind farms in Drenthe, has shown that a set of specific factors constitute a winning combination. Behind the concept of self-organised participation lies a world of controversies and political struggles, between policymakers, bureaucrats, and other stakeholders. Over the past decades changes made to include citizens in the policy-making and planning process have time and again pointed out the difficulties surrounding citizen involvement, especially where energy policy is concerned. As a result, citizens feel unheard, misunderstood, or neglected, leading to social conflict. It is because of these difficulties that scholars have reached the conclusion that participation is only effective if it is self-organised.

In this thesis the claim that social conflict, as a form of self-organised participation, serves as a source for identification and inclusion of normative appraisals in energy policy and planning, was taken as a starting point. As both cases demonstrate, social conflict indeed leads to insights into which policy outcomes and related actions are desirable or permissible and which are perceived as undesirable or impermissible. However, most of this does not lie with the movement that is at the forefront of the conflict, its value lies in the support either the movement or the policies proponents enjoy. Since the emergence of the anti-gas movement in 2003, the popularity of the Groningen gas has severely decreased, this in combination with the need for more sustainable energy in the country, left the gas policy very unpopular. The large support base the movement managed to mobilise demonstrated this unpopularity to the policies' proponents on a local and national scale. In comparison, the anti-wind farm movement could count on little support, while the policies' proponents enjoyed a lot more. Here it is not the plight of the movement that is decisive but the goals the wind farm policy pursues. In both cases, support is given for the greenest option. Overall this can be considered as a statement of support for sustainable energy and the related policies.

It is in support that the answer to the main question of this thesis is found. I have explored this question by analysing three sets of factors: the external, internal, and impact

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factors. The comparison between both cases reveals that the most important differences are found in the support the movement enjoyed. In relation to the external factors, the interests the proponents defend (maximising profit, usage, and continuity of gas operation in Groningen and reaching sustainability goals in Drenthe) is important in the support they receive. The same seems true for the internal factors. In Drenthe the movement's stern position against wind turbines did not work in its favour. While in Groningen the movements willingness to reach a suitable solution for all parties involved and the relatable plight for safety awarded them with a lot of support. Therefore, the impact of the Groningen movement is largely to be found in changing the proponent's position and in winning the favour of the general public. For the movement in Drenthe this was not the case. Based on these findings the following aspects combined can determine success: if the public opinion is favourable towards a movement, it contributes to the support the movement enjoys, with enough support the movement is able to expand its actions, these actions should include legal procedures, if ruled in favour of the movement, success is inevitable.

Furthermore, the comparison of both cases reveals that we have to question the view in social movement literature, as already discussed, that destructive and violent protest activities are generally more successful in forwarding a movement's demands. In Drenthe, the drastic unconventional actions damaged the movements reputation. As attention shifted towards these actions, it moved away from structural issues, such as the top-down nature of the policy process, from which these actions had sprung. If in social movement literature it is understood that allies are important in a movements overall success, vandalism, arson, and threats of violence can hardly contribute to a movements success if these destructive and violent actions result in a loss of support.

Finally, a limitation that presents itself in social movement literature as well as in this thesis, is the use of theory proving a movement's success in influencing policy and planning. The success remains difficult to prove, as policy changes can be influenced by a variety of factors which have nothing to do with a movement's or the policies proponents' efforts. An example of such a factor, that has been left undiscussed in this thesis, is to what extent man-made disasters, such as the gas induced earthquakes in Groningen, contribute to the influence social conflict has on policy and planning. A comparison between two cases, or preferably more, in which policy was successfully changed in line with a movement's demands, might shed light on its effect. Moreover, the scientific knowledge resulting from research into social movements should contribute to the way policies are planned, implemented, and sustained in the Netherlands. This is crucial in a time where the implementation of new energy policies

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lead to decreasing distance between people and energy sources. If we are to increase the use of sustainable energy and speed-up the energy transition, it is necessary to overcome the problems and struggles that result from it. By doing so, we will be one step closer to solving the problems of tomorrow.

Appendix A

Newspapers (via NexisUni) and Websites

Newspapers (via NexisUni)

Dagblad van het Noorden

De Volkskrant

Die Welt

NRC Handelsblad

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

The Daily Telegraph

Websites

Algemeen Nederlands Planbureau:

<http://anp.nl>

Dutch Council of State:

<http://raadvanstate.nl>

Dutch government:

<http://rijksoverheid.nl>

Energie Beheer Nederland B.V.:

<http://ebn.nl>

Enneüs Onderzoeks en Adviesbureau:

<http://enneus.nl>

Eurostat statistics explained:

<http://ec.europa.eu>

Gasunie:

<http://gasunie.nl>

Groninger Bodem Beweging:

<http://groningerbodembeweging.nl>

Groninger Gasberaad:

<http://gasberaad.nl>

Nederlandse Omroep Stichting:

<http://nos.nl>

Appendix A

<i>Onderzoeksraad voor Veiligheid:</i>	http://onderzoeksraad.nl
<i>Platformstorm:</i>	http://platformstorm.nl
Province of Drenthe:	http://provincie.drenthe.nl
<i>Rechtspraak.nl:</i>	http://uitspraak.rechtspraak.nl
<i>Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland:</i>	http://rvo.nl
<i>RTLNieuws:</i>	http://rtlnieuw.nl
<i>RTVNoord:</i>	http://rtvnoord.nl
<i>Staatstoezicht op de Mijnen:</i>	http://sodm.nl
<i>Stichting Waardevermindering door Aardbevingen Groningen:</i>	http://stwag.gr
<i>Tegenwindveenkolonien:</i>	http://tegenwindveenkolonien.nl
Trouw:	http://trouw.nl
<i>WindNEE:</i>	http://windnee.nl
<i>Windpark Drentse Monden Oostermoer:</i>	http://drentsemondenoostermoer.nl

Appendix B

Comparison Table

In this table, every variable is briefly described for both cases as discussed in chapters two and three. As can be seen, the most important differences (in bold), are related to the support of either the movement or the proponents, the strategies employed, and the extent to which the movement was successful in influencing the opposing party's attitude or the public's opinion. These aspects together form the winning combination discussed in chapter four.

Factors	Groningen	Drenthe
<i>External factors</i>		
<i>Interests</i>	Maximising profit, usage, and continuity of gas operations	Reaching sustainability goals
<i>Tactics</i>	Leaflets, consultation and communication moments, and small decreases in amount of gas extracted	Leaflets, consultation and communication moments,
<i>Support base</i>	Little support only from organisations involved in gas activities	A lot of support from the general public , nature and environmental organisations
<i>Internal factors</i>		
<i>Emergence</i>	Relatively late and slow (ca. 2003)	Early on (ca. 2000)
<i>Demands</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Full and fair compensation of the damages caused by the extraction activities; 2. The recognition and compensation of the depreciated home prices in the area 3. Safety in the region 	1. No wind turbines in Drenthe

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<i>Support</i>	A lot of support from local politicians, engineers, lawyers, academics, housing associations, entrepreneurs' and employer' organisations, and environmental organisations, (and indirectly from the general public).	Little support only from involved municipalities, and anti-wind farm movements in other countries
<i>Strategies</i>	Generally peaceful and constructive conventional and unconventional actions	Conventional and drastic unconventional actions
<i>Impact factors</i>		
<i>Changing policy</i>	Compensation for damages is still handled slow and not fully, depreciated home prices is recognised and compensated, gas extraction will come to an end in 2025	Policy not changed and construction started in 2019
<i>Solving problem</i>	Earthquakes and attached problems persist and will likely do so for some time	Problem continues, situation is escalating
<i>Influencing opposing party's attitude or the public's opinion</i>	Opposing party has changed its position, general public favours movement	Opposing party has not changed its position, general public favours opposing party
<i>Negative or unintended consequences</i>	Reconsideration of use of natural gas in the Netherlands, and more sustainable energy generated in the region	Possibility of solar parks explored but in addition to not as a replacement of wind turbines

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Diagram of actors involved in Groningen gas production. Source: Voort, Nick. van der and Frank Vanclay. "Social Impact of Earthquakes Caused by Gas Extraction in the Province of Groningen, the Netherlands." *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 50, 1 (2015): 4, figure 4.

Figure 2: Photo of protesters in Groningen. Source: Tammens, Henk. "Fakkeloptocht als protest tegen gaswinning in Groningen." Fotomomentje. Accessed June 2019. <https://fotomomentje.wordpress.com/2014/12/17/fakkeloptocht-als-protest-tegen-gaswinning-in-groningen/>.

Figure 3: Photo of torchlight procession in Groningen. Source: "Fakkeltocht: 'Indrukwekkende ring van vuur en fakkels.'" Dagblad van het Noorden. Accessed June 2019. <https://www.dvhn.nl/groningen/Fakkeltocht-%E2%80%98Indrukwekkende-ring-van-vuur-en-fakkels%E2%80%99-22837396.html>.

Figure 4: Map of seismic activity in Groningen. Source: "Seismic & Acoustic Data Portal." KNMI. Accessed June 2019. <http://rdsa.knmi.nl/dataportal/>; modified by author.

Figure 5: Photo of protesters in Drenthe. Source: Labohm, Hans. "Onjuiste overheidsbeslissingen maken van brave burgers criminelen." Climategate. Accessed June 2019. <https://www.climategate.nl/2018/09/onjuiste-overheidsbeslissingen-maken-van-brave-burgers-criminelen/>.

Figure 6: Photo of wind turbine builder's house and car lit a fire. Source: Sluit, Bas van. "Piep. Een sms. 'Waarschuwing. Hierna beginnen we met jouw dierbaren'." Dagblad van het Noorden. Accessed June 2019. <https://www.dvhn.nl/drenthe/Piep.-Een-sms-voor-de-windmolenbouwer.-%E2%80%98Waarschuwing.-Hierna-beginnen-we-met-je-dierbaren%E2%80%99-22940062.html>.

Figure 7: Map of location of wind farm in Drenthe. Source: Sluit, Bas van and Maaike Wind. "Raad van State: Groen licht voor windmolens Drenthe." Dagblad van het Noorden. Accessed June 2019. <https://www.dvhn.nl/drenthe/Raad-van-State-Groen-licht-voor-windmolens-Drenthe-22931715.html>; modified by author.

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