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# Contentious governance around climate change measures in the Netherlands

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## ABSTRACT

Conflicts over mitigation measures involve processes of contentious governance in which governmental and non-governmental players contest policies proposed or implemented by other governmental players or their business partners. Comparing a case of carbon capture and storage (CCS) with that of a nearshore windfarm in the Netherlands, I ask: how did local governmental players and their non-governmental allies succeed in getting the CCS project in Barendrecht taken off the table, while unable to block plans for the nearshore windfarm off the coast of Katwijk, Noordwijk and Zandvoort? Focusing on persuasion, I find that rhetorical framing based on expertise and ‘not in my backyard’ (NIMBY) escapist framing did not make much difference in either case. In the CCS case, a process of scaling up procedural critique to the national level led to repeal of the plan. A similar process did not happen in the windfarm case.

**KEYWORDS** Contentious governance; strategic interactions; rhetorical framing; collective actions; persuasion; scale shift

## Introduction

Ever since environmental issues became politicized in the 1960s, social movement organizations (SMOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been involved in agenda-setting and policy design (Rootes 2004). Also familiar are citizens resisting risky facilities such as waste incinerators (Munton 1996) or onshore windfarms (Breukers 2006, Ogilvie and Rootes 2015). These collaborations or clashes reproduce the idea that environmental politics plays out along citizen versus government boundaries. However, current reactions to climate change policies challenge these boundaries. To reach ambitious goals, national governments have high expectations of renewable energy (Leung and Yang 2012) and of carbon capture and storage (CCS) (Meadowcroft and Langhelle 2009). Such mitigation measures produce substantial risks, economic consequences and changes in living conditions for local communities, sparking processes of

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‘contentious governance’. In such processes, governmental and non-governmental players together start resisting policymaking or implementation undertaken by other governmental players or their business partners (Verhoeven and Bröer 2015, Verhoeven and Duyvendak 2017).

We find contentious governance in various cases: for example bans on fracking in Germany, France, the United States (US) and the Netherlands, preventing processes of municipal amalgamation or the siting of mobile phone antennas in the Netherlands or sanctuary cities that protect unauthorized immigrants in the US and the Netherlands (Verhoeven and Bröer 2015, Verhoeven and Duyvendak 2017, Metze 2018). Here I empirically explore contentious governance in cases of mitigation measures in the Netherlands. For more than a decade the Dutch national government aspired to be among the EU’s frontrunners in mitigation: in 2007 it set the goal to reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions by 30% by 2020 (Tweede Kamer 2008-2009a), and since 2017 has aimed for a 49% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2030 (VVD, D66, CDA and ChristenUnie 2017, p. 37). Given these goals, two different administrations pushed for a CCS project and for the construction of a nearshore windfarm, respectively.

Responding to a government tender in 2008, Shell proposed a CCS ‘demonstration project’ to store CO<sub>2</sub> from their oil refinery in the port of Rotterdam in two depleted gas fields under the town of Barendrecht. The municipality in collaboration with a citizen action group successfully contested this proposal. A few years later, in 2012, the national government and forty Dutch civil society organizations agreed an ‘energy deal’ to develop 3450 megawatt (MW) of wind power at sea (Sociaal-Economische Raad 2013, pp. 70–73). The ensuing plans for a 1400 MW nearshore windfarm off the coast of Katwijk, Noordwijk and Zandvoort triggered contentious governance that did not result in a change of policy. Studying these two cases of mitigation measures is important since experts foresee that CCS and windfarms will grow substantially across the world (Meadowcroft and Langhelle 2009, Leung and Yang 2012). Both cases thus offer early insights into the processes of contentious governance that are likely to emerge.

Based on these considerations, my central question is: how did local governmental players and their non-governmental allies succeed in getting the CCS project in Barendrecht taken off the table, while being unable to block the nearshore windfarm off the coast of Katwijk, Noordwijk and Zandvoort? Using theoretical notions from public policy and social movement literature, I suggest studying contentious governance as strategic interactions in which the rhetorical framing of problems and possible solutions, as well as various tactics, play a central role. After elaborating these theoretical notions, I explain the case study and methods, followed by the findings and conclusion.

## Contentious governance, strategic interactions, rhetorical framing, and collective action

Most public policy scholars agree that processes of governing have changed over the last three decades. Governance theories in which governmental, civil society and business players are involved in governance networks that may stretch across multiple levels of governing challenge the idea of ‘the government’ as a unified system (Klijn 2008). In studying these networks, the literature mostly focuses on collaborative governance in which state players engage non-state stakeholders in ‘formal, consensus-oriented and deliberative’ collective decision-making processes geared towards making or implementing public policy (Ansell and Gash 2008, p. 544). With some exceptions (Klijn and Koppejan 2000, Metze 2010, Davies 2011, Griggs *et al.* 2014), governance literature overlooks the conflict potential, practices of hierarchy, and power dynamics of governance networks.

To address the role of conflict and power in governance networks, I use the contentious politics literature which views governmental players not only as ‘targets’ or ‘third parties’ to claims, but also as ‘initiators’ of claims seeking to alter or redress a problematic situation (Tilly and Tarrow 2015, p. 7). Social problem research indicates that initiating claims is common for governmental players as a strategy to *seek legitimacy* for their policies (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988). However, the contentious politics perspective suggests that governmental players also make less common claims such as ‘strident demands’ or ‘direct attacks’ to *contest the legitimacy* of policy claims made by others (Tilly and Tarrow 2015, p. 8). Building on these ideas, and as an antonym of collaborative governance, I define processes of contentious governance as: governmental and non-governmental players collaborating in the contestation of policy-making or implementation initiated by other governmental players or their business partners (Verhoeven and Bröer 2015, Verhoeven and Duyvendak 2017). This definition leaves open whether governmental or non-governmental players instigate contestation, which forms their contestation may take, whether they target policy proposals or ongoing implementation, and who their target is (other governmental players and/or businesses).

Jaspers’ work on strategic interactions (2006, 2011), in which simple players (individuals) or compound players (collective actors) are the driving force of change through collective action, offers a useful perspective for understanding the dynamics of contentious governance. During their interactions players (re)produce strategies over a longer time period: ‘you face other players who regard you strategically, just as you do them, and engage in a series of actions in response to others, anticipating their reaction in turn’ (Jasper 2006, p. 6). Such strategic behaviour requires figuring out what the other player’s next move will be, based on ongoing events and changing

circumstances such as political scandals, procedural mistakes, changes to plans, new players entering the situation or new forms of action (Jasper 2011). For governmental players these strategic interactions are complex since they are not single issue and consequently need to weigh the impact of their contention on existing relations with governmental opponents on issues apart from the ones they are resisting (Verhoeven and Duyvendak 2017). Moreover, governmental players depend and draw on the institutions in which they are embedded by interpreting, adapting, bending or resisting formal rules, informal rules and policy discourses (Lowndes and Roberts 2013, Verhoeven and Duyvendak 2017).

We can expect such strategic interactions to unfold against a background of uneven power relationships, since a lack of a level playing field induces lower tiers of government to collaborate with non-governmental allies to put pressure on national opponents (Verhoeven and Duyvendak 2017). Such power imbalances limit the range of policy tools that local and regional governments can use to get what they want. It is hard for these lower tiers of government to use regulation since they cannot pre-empt or override the plans of their adversaries. At most, local and regional governmental players can use zoning plans, permits or other place-bound requirements to frustrate their opponents' policies (compare Munton 1996 on facility-siting strategies). The alternative of public spending is inapplicable since they cannot buy off the unwanted policies by national governmental players. This leaves lower tiers of government and their non-governmental allies with only persuasion to make their opponents change their mind. Persuasion operates through communication and collective actions (Jones and Simons 2017), making it an attractive tool for contesting unwanted policies. By using persuasion, both governmental and non-governmental partners can provide arguments against policies and engage in collective actions such as negotiations, lobbying, protests or lawsuits.

The importance of persuasion for contentious governance points the empirical analysis in the direction of an interpretive public policy approach. Central to the interpretivist tradition is the idea of politics as a struggle involving multiple interpretations about what is true or not, what is valuable or not, what is likely to happen and about how to evaluate ideas, proposals, events or the legitimacy of other players' actions (Schön and Rein 1994, Stone 2012). To access these struggles over meaning, I employ a *framing* perspective which focuses on framing as an unfolding process based on interactions between players rather than focusing on the *frames* produced as time bound outcomes of this process (Hulst and Yanow 2014). My analysis will concentrate on the use of 'rhetorical framing', which is meant to persuade, justify and symbolically display meanings in policy debate (Schön and Rein 1994, p. 32). Since I focus on framing and not on frames, my empirical analysis will identify framing dynamics that constitute important elements of ongoing

strategic interactions. In addition to rhetorical framing, I will examine collective actions undertaken to persuade (supra)national opponents in processes of contentious governance.

## Methods and data

My empirical analysis uses a comparative design comprising two purposively selected cases of mitigation measures in which contentious governance exists. I used purposive sampling to ensure maximum variation between cases within the context of one polity, which saves comparing vastly different systems of government. My analysis focuses on the Netherlands where there are many instances of contentious governance related to fracking, mobile phone antennas, natural gas production, municipal amalgamation, CCS, sanctuary cities, windfarms, new airports, or trade agreements (Verhoeven and Duyvendak 2017). These cases not only include but also supersede mitigation measures. Within Dutch cases of mitigation measures, I made choices between solar energy, CCS and wind energy projects. Until now, solar energy projects have not contained processes of contentious governance. In the Netherlands, CCS was planned in two projects, and windfarm projects abound. I chose the Barendrecht CCS project, and the nearshore windfarm project off the coast of Katwijk, Noordwijk and Zandvoort; both are flagship projects in the government's ambitions to mitigate climate change, with high political stakes at national level that clash with local political interests. In addition, these cases vary in four elements that seem important for the development of contentious governance (see Table 1).

The kind of technology leads to differences in rhetorical framing processes within contentious governance; wind energy is much more accepted than CCS. Also, the opposing players involved and the intensity of their collaboration leads to variation in contentious governance. In addition, it matters which incumbent national government the opposing players are facing, since governments may vary in their preferences for specific mitigation measures. Finally, variation in outcomes matters for exploring how contentious governance plays out. Undoubtedly, two cases cannot capture the full breadth of contentious governance found in cases of mitigation measures, but the

**Table 1.** Variation across the CCS project and the nearshore windfarm.

| Element of Variation           | CCS project   | Nearshore windfarm                                   |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Type of measures               | Carbon Capture and Storage                                      | Wind energy  |
| Opposing players               | Local and regional governments + one local action group         | Three local governments + two regional action groups |
| Incumbent national governments | Balkenende IV: CDA, PvdA, CU; Rutte I: VVD, CDA, support by PVV | Rutte II: VVD, PvdA                                  |
| Outcomes                       | Plans were repealed by Rutte I                                  | Plans were accepted by parliament                    |

selection of sufficiently different cases provides valid insights into the variety of the rhetorical framing and collective actions involved in such processes.

My empirical material consists of newspaper articles, policy documents and semi-structured interviews. I analysed a total of 869 newspaper articles (561 for Barendrecht and 308 for the windfarm) from a selection of national and regional newspapers, based on peaks in reporting that coincided with peaks in contention. My analysis focused on peaks in reporting since a check of the intervening periods revealed that little happened. My policy material consisted of 405 documents (160 for Barendrecht and 245 for the windfarm) ranging from parliamentary documents and proceedings, ministerial documents, municipal motions, responses and letters to position papers and minutes from executive and council meetings. Finally, I conducted 13 interviews in the CCS case and 10 interviews in the windfarm case with aldermen, civil servants, council members, activist citizens and lobbyists.<sup>1</sup> Each interview lasted between one and two hours, and focused on local actors because their rhetorical framing and actions attracted less attention in media and policy documents than those of national actors.

My analysis of all empirical material relied on open inductive coding in Atlas.ti of actors, rhetorical framing processes, collective actions, the results achieved during the process and other factors that may influence these results. In a second round of axial coding, I clustered framing processes into the dynamics identified, and clustered some actions into processes of scale shift.<sup>2</sup>

### The Barendrecht CCS project

After setting a goal in 2007 of a 30% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2020, the Dutch government aimed for two CCS 'demonstration projects' to acquire practical experience with implementation (Tweede Kamer 2008-2009a). Shell won one of the projects by proposing CCS in two depleted gas fields under the town of Barendrecht, about 17 kilometres south-east of their oil refinery in the Port of Rotterdam. As [Figure 1](#) reveals, in early 2008 Shell initiated an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and organized two information evenings for residents that led to concerns about safety and technical details amongst attending citizens and local politicians (Feenstra *et al.* 2010, Cuppen *et al.* 2015). As a response, in December 2008 the municipality of Barendrecht presented a 'review framework' consisting of 90 questions and 55 demands about safety, risk analysis, geological research, changes in property values, legal matters and monitoring in case CO<sub>2</sub> escaped. In February 2009 the municipality organized an information evening for residents attended by 1,000 people, followed by four expert meetings to obtain answers to the questions raised in the review framework (Feenstra *et al.* 2010, Cuppen *et al.* 2015).



Figure 1. A brief history of the Barendrecht CCS conflict.

Contentious governance increased substantially after Shell opened the EIA report for inspection in February-March 2009. The GreenLeft Party managed to mobilize 1,570 citizens to submit a response opposing the conclusions of the report that implementation of CCS under Barendrecht was safe, while the Municipal Executive (board of mayor and aldermen) also submitted a very critical response. In March 2009, the GreenLeft Party organized a protest march against the proposals. Several other political parties also turned against the proposals, eventually leading to the municipal council unanimously rejecting the plan on 29 June 2009. From this moment onwards, the municipality did everything within its power to prevent the CCS project. In [Figure 1](#) I mention some of the more visible municipal actions: the alderman fiercely criticizing three reports commissioned by the ministers; the organization of a public hearing where citizens could express their grievances against the plans to the responsible ministers; the sponsoring of a legal citizen's action group after national government pre-empted the municipality's legal action against the project; and the mobilization of citizens to submit a response to the ministers' plan. Throughout this process three different rhetorical framing dynamics unfolded.

### ***Dynamic 1: countering safety framing with framing through evidence***

Early on, the ministers of Economic Affairs and of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment started to employ safety framing, arguing that CCS is a tried and tested technique, that the Netherlands has ample experience with storage and transport, that research indicates the suitability of Dutch terrain for CCS, and that the EIA report concludes that norms for external safety are met (Tweede Kamer 2008-2009b). The ministers used such safety framing time and again throughout the whole conflict. After three reports providing answers to questions from the municipal review framework in October 2009, ministers concluded that 'the project can be safely implemented' (Tweede Kamer 2008-2009c). When the ministers decided in favour of the project on 18 November 2010, they continued their safety framing: 'I wanted to know for sure that it is safe, that no other location is possible. As a scientist<sup>3</sup> I was on top of it and now I stand by my decision' (De Volkskrant 2009a). This safety framing downplayed the risks of the CCS technology in order to legitimize the project and reassure the public (Stone 2012).

The municipality countered throughout the whole conflict with framing through evidence, which involves 'appealing to the rationality of one's vision via language that provides evidence for policy positions' (Wolf and van Dooren 2017, p. 452). Reflecting on the beginning of the process, the responsible alderman remarked:

Then I said ‘Let’s try to construct a reply based on FACTS and NUMBERS’ [strong emphasis by the alderman]. (...) Subsequently we agreed on two things with the council: a) we need to have sufficient budget to hire the best advisors for a second opinion (...), and b) let’s establish a review framework with help from our external advisors and all relevant data, in which we indicate which demands need to be fulfilled for us to say yes to the plans (Interview Zuurbier).

Framing through evidence soon became central to the municipality’s rhetoric. The local alderman and council members attacked the ministerial safety rhetoric whenever it appeared; they contested its knowledge base with the findings from the research they had commissioned. Their citizen counterpart action group CO2isNo (founded 29 October 2009, see [Figure 1](#)) also framed through evidence by looking into the utility of and the need for the project, the safety issues, the burdens on future generations, the accumulation of risks in Barendrecht, the idea that CCS does not provide sustainable solutions for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction and the extra energy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions required for CCS (interviews Brosens, Brantjes and Pieters). All in all, framing through evidence served to legitimate claims against the CCS project throughout the whole conflict (Stone 2012, chapter 14, Wolf and van Dooren 2017).

### ***Dynamic 2: NIMBY framing versus NIMBY-escapist framing***

A well-known feature of facility-siting controversies is that governmental players frame citizen protest as driven by self-interest, irrationality and a lack of knowledge, all coming together in a NIMBY (‘not in my backyard’) syndrome (Burningham 2000). Citizens mostly try to escape the NIMBY framing in various ways (Gordon and Jasper 1996). Ministers used NIMBY framing several times until they defended their decision to go ahead at the end of 2009. At the beginning of the process, both ministers underlined that the knowledge of the population required improvement for them to get a ‘realistic’ perspective based on factual information (Tweede Kamer 2008-2009b). After the municipal council became highly critical of the project early on in 2009, one of the ministers commented: ‘it is therefore important to get the facts about safety straight, because they determine the emotion in the end’ (Algemeen Dagblad/Rotterdams Dagblad 2009). The public hearing in Barendrecht on 1 December 2009 led one of the ministers to remark: ‘I can refer to ten independent reports (...). But we have moved beyond the facts, distrust prevails’ (De Volkskrant 2009b).

All the interviews with local politicians and with members from action group CO2isNo indicate that they realized the possibility of being framed as NIMBY. Hence, they worked hard to use NIMBY-escapist framing at several moments during 2009. The local politicians tried to avoid the NIMBY label by arguing that they would agree with the projects if all the questions and demands formulated in their review framework were answered and fulfilled.

We see another use of NIMBY-escapist framing in the politicians' critical response to the EIA report in March 2009 in which the municipality addresses the issue head-on:

Some of the most important objections by the municipality of Barendrecht against CO<sub>2</sub> storage in an empty gas field concern the choice of location. In such situations of course, quick references are made to the NIMBY, or perhaps in this case NUMBY (Not-Under-My-Back-Yard), phenomenon. As pointed out in the introduction of this response, it is beyond any doubt that the municipality of Barendrecht has proven in the past not to back out of the realization of supra-municipal spatial planning projects that have a significant negative influence on the living conditions of the inhabitants of Barendrecht (Gemeente Barendrecht 2009).

CO<sub>2</sub>isNo was also keen to escape NIMBY framing. In their mission statement, published at the end of October 2009, they explicitly stated: 'we strive to safeguard the Dutch terrain from the storage of hazardous wastes in general and CO<sub>2</sub> in particular' (CO<sub>2</sub>isNee 2009a), indicating they did not want CCS in anyone's backyard (Schaffer Boudet 2011). CO<sub>2</sub>isNo's first press release is another example, claiming to collaborate with worried inhabitants of other provinces. This claims that 'the resistance against plans for underground storage of carbonic acid gas is broadening' (CO<sub>2</sub>isNee 2009b), suggesting that concerns about CCS are not only a local issue (Gordon and Jasper 1996).

### ***Dynamic 3: political events trigger framing of the procedural critique***

The third type of rhetorical framing dynamic mainly came from the municipality and their ally CO<sub>2</sub>isNo in reaction to three political events at the end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010. CO<sub>2</sub>isNo countered the go-ahead decision by the ministers in mid-November 2009 by framing a procedural critique that questioned the validity of decision-making (Gordon and Jasper 1996). CO<sub>2</sub>isNo talked about 'underground dumping', 'the ministries and Shell coercing us', 'the people of Barendrecht as guinea pigs for the Minister', 'tunnel vision in the reports', 'CCS as a treatment of symptoms', 'stealing from future generations' and 'the polluter getting paid' (various documents such as speeches prepared for public enquiry procedures and press releases).

The municipality was initially cautious in its wording: 'this cabinet has been hijacked by Shell' (quote of responsible alderman Zuurbier in NRC Handelsblad 2009). This changed from February 2010 onwards when the municipality felt cornered by the Minister of Economic Affairs moving full speed ahead, even after the cabinet resigned in February 2010 due to a conflict over the military mission in Afghanistan (see Figure 1). The municipality also felt cornered by parliament adopting the Crisis and

Recovery Act, which pre-empted municipal legal action against the national government. Hence the municipality became more activist, and started to mobilize citizens to protest and to submit responses to the ministerial planning proposal based on framing of procedural critique: ‘The Hague [seat of national government] rumbles on: take action now!’ and ‘Local politics has been side-lined. It’s your move!’ (Gemeente Barendrecht 2010a). The newly appointed responsible alderman ter Borg remarked in a newsletter: ‘this is impossible to explain to the ordinary citizen (...). Nevertheless, they [the national government] organize public inspections and give inhabitants the impression that the project will be continued’ (Gemeente Barendrecht 2010b). Part of the municipal activism was to commission a survey of the population of Barendrecht, which indicated that about 86% found CCS under Barendrecht a very or rather bad plan. Based on this, the municipality included lacking public support in their framing of procedural critique (interviews Ter Borg and de Wild).

### *Scale shift carrying anti-CCS framing to other actors*

From the moment that the municipal council decided against the CO<sub>2</sub> project at the end of June 2009, local politicians and CO<sub>2</sub>isNo engaged in lobbying, initially with the provincial authority that needed to decide on a first permit in November 2009. By lobbying a higher tier of government, the opponents tried to achieve an ‘upward scale shift’ geared towards strategically scaling up the number and level of coordinated actions and actors in a conflict (Tarrow and McAdam 2004, Schaffer Boudet 2011, Rootes 2013). Scale shift may lead to certification, which is ‘(...) the validation of actors, their performances, and their claims by external authorities’ (Schaffer Boudet 2011, p. 789). Between June and November 2009, the municipality and CO<sub>2</sub>isNo presented their framing through evidence and NIMBY-escapist framing to provincial politicians. Ultimately, the provincial politicians decided unanimously against the plan on 11 November 2009, thus certifying the opponents’ claims.

After this successful scale shift to the regional level, the lobbying immediately focused on the national parliament, which had to take the ultimate decision. Supported by a specialized lobbying firm, the alderman and several municipal council members engaged in a coordinated lobbying effort to influence a rather divided parliament. The framing of procedural critique was key, particularly by using the argument of lacking public support for the plans amongst the citizens of Barendrecht. At first the opponents’ attempts seemed unsuccessful when parliament decided in favour of the project on 26 January 2010. However, after the cabinet fell in February 2010 (see Figure 1), the lobbying process was back on track. In the end, the new incoming government explicitly stated in its coalition agreement that the CCS plan would not be continued if there was a lack of public

support in Barendrecht (interviews Vink, ter Borg, de Wild). Scale shift this time went hand in hand with the cabinet literally certifying the procedural critique framed by the opponents, and eventually deciding on 4 November 2010 to cancel the project.

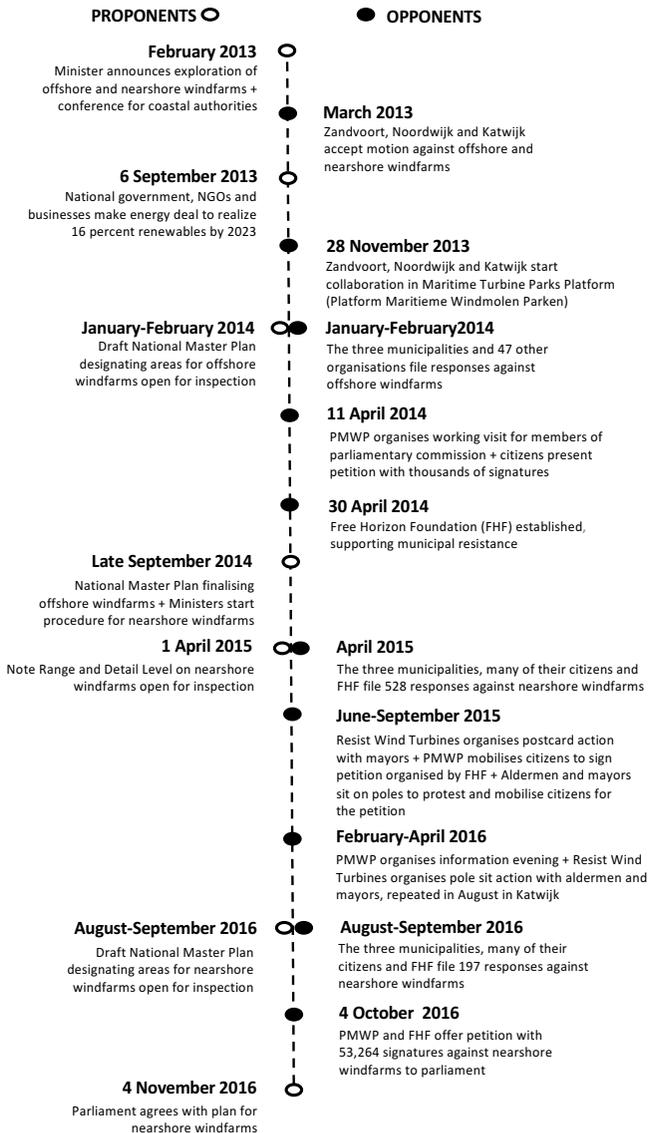
### The nearshore windfarm project

Based on the 2012 energy deal, the national government established a fast-track planning process for an offshore windfarm outside the 12-mile zone, and a long-term planning process for a nearshore windfarm inside the 12-mile zone where wind turbines would be visible from the coast (Sociaal-Economische Raad 2013, p. 70–73). One of the targeted locations for both was the coastline off Zandvoort, Noordwijk and Katwijk. These three municipalities, informed accordingly in February 2013, very quickly reacted by adopting unanimous motions to do everything possible to prevent construction of both offshore and nearshore windfarms. A few months later they joined forces in the Maritime Wind Turbine Parks Platform (Platform Maritieme Windmolen Parken, PMWP), which put up some resistance against the offshore locations but whose main concern was the planning procedure for the nearshore location from September 2014 onward.

The protest peaked in April 2015 (Figure 2) when the national government presented the Range and Detail Level Note, which gave first indications about the plans for several nearshore windfarms. The PMWP and the closely collaborating action groups Free Horizon Foundation (FHF, established 30 April 2014) and Resist Wind Turbines (RWT) filed responses to the Note and mobilized citizens to do the same. This resulted in 528 responses, 82% of which came from the three municipalities. Subsequently, RWT organized a protest where mayors sat behind a table on the beach to write large postcards to parliament and the cabinet. Over a one-year period beginning September 2015, RWT also organized four pole-sit actions where alderman, mayors and other well-known people sat on a large pole at the beach for six hours mobilizing citizens to sign a petition. After the publication by the national government of the Draft Master Plan in summer 2016, PMWP and the FHF filed responses. Just before parliament passed the plans in November 2016, one of the last actions by the municipalities and the FHF was to submit a petition against the plans to MPs, signed by more than 53,000 people. During the whole conflict two rhetorical framing dynamics unfolded.

#### *Dynamic 1: framing of costs versus scientific environmentalist framing*

Right from the start and throughout the planning process, ministers employed a framing of costs, which originated in demands for a ‘cost-effective roll out’ and for ‘innovations that reduce costs’ propagated in the



**Figure 2.** A brief history of the offshore and nearshore windfarm conflict.

energy deal (Sociaal-Economische Raad 2013, pp. 16–17). During the first meeting between the Ministry of Economic Affairs and coastal municipalities in February 2013, a senior civil servant from the ministry argued:

Wind energy at sea is at the moment one of the most expensive options. Our minister wants to meet the goal preferably without driving up expenses for

citizens. Hence, there is a preference for the most cost-efficient solutions on land or close to the coast (Ministerie van Economische Zaken 2013, p. 4).

This narrow perspective on cost efficiency was later broadened by weighing the economic costs of building the windfarm against the economic and social costs of having it in sight:

As the research on regional effects has shown, the uncertain and limited economic effects of contingent decreased beach and coastal visits on a national level do not equal the certain additional costs of placing these wind turbines further out to sea (Tweede Kamer 2015-2016a, p. 28).

The municipal counter-framing developed gradually. In the spring and summer of 2013, the municipalities focused on grievances regarding the deterioration of local circumstances. However, after they established collaboration in the PMWP at the end of November 2013, their strategy changed to one of scientific environmentalism, building on ‘robust scientific arguments and balancing opposition with proposals for alternative solutions’ (Pellizoni 2011, p. 768). Several respondents argued that to avoid NIMBY allegations they needed to ground their arguments in solid research and motivated challenges, and by presenting an alternative (interviews Kuipers, Brekelmans, Barnhoorn and Knaape). Their scientific environmentalist framing consisted of several elements.

First, the PMWP emphasized repeatedly that they were not against renewables or wind energy. One alderman remarked:

(...) you need to be incredibly careful not to be stamped as being against sustainability, because the majority is in favour of that. You need to say, we are all for sustainability, we have a stunning area, but not here (interview Brekelmans).

Second, the municipalities changed their naming of the problem. Once a name has been given, the problem is identified and that in itself limits what can be said and how people perceive the problem (Rein and Schön 1993, p. 153). In the early stages the municipalities often named the problem ‘horizon pollution’, which is a well-known complaint from protests against onshore windfarms (Breukers 2006, p. 90). After adopting scientific environmentalist framing at the end of 2013, PMWP replaced this negative term with ‘free horizon’ hampered by a ‘fence of wind turbines’ – both terms emphasizing the cultural and historic value of sea views:

The cabinet prefers locations close to the coast. This option will result in a fence of wind turbines – a fence that is visible from the coast during a large part of the year. (...) because of that, the current emptiness of the free horizon will get an industrial appearance along the full length of the Dutch coast (Platform Maritieme Windmolen Parken 2016, p. 3).

FHF also adopted the new naming of the problem. A notable exception was RWT which organized several protest campaigns relying on negative rhetoric: ‘Hundreds of spinning Euromasts’<sup>4</sup>; ‘preventing the hori-sin’; the minister and The Hague [seat of government] ‘being blind to horizon pollution’; and ‘stopping the minister and his disastrous plan’ (<http://www.verzetwindmolens.nl/>).

Third, the FHF was explicitly founded and financed by the municipalities to commission research aimed at uncovering mistakes and wrong approaches in the national government’s plans (interview Korper). One of the reports was about the consequences of visible windfarms for the local economy. The PMWP mixed some results into its scientific environmentalist framing, for example by claiming ‘serious negative economic consequences, such as a threat to tourism and employment in this sector’ (Platform Maritieme Windmolen Parken 2016, p. 3). The ministers largely ignored this aspect of their framing or countered with the results of a societal cost-benefit analysis the ministers had commissioned.

Fourth, and finally, the FHF developed proposals for other solutions. They commissioned several reports on the economic and technical feasibility of an alternative about 50 kilometres off the coast called ‘Ijmuiden far’. The Foundation’s chairman continuously espoused the benefits of this plan:

The minister can start at short notice with the required permits. The win for Netherlands PLC is retention of employment in the tourist sector and the creation of jobs in the wind industry. And retention of one of the last pieces of pure nature in the Netherlands, where many visitors seek and find quiet with a free horizon (Haarlems Dagblad 2014).

The PMWP also mentioned the alternative plan wherever they could, for example:

With the area of Ijmuiden far we have an excellent alternative at our disposal: a sizable and extremely suitable location for wind turbine fields, situated at a large distance from the coast [50 kilometres], and because of that out of sight, with more wind and more space for locating two-and-a-half times as many turbines as is possible in front of the coast. And this without complicated, delaying procedures. There is a choice (Platform Maritieme Windmolen Parken 2016, p. 2-3).

The ministers reacted to the Ijmuiden far proposal by commissioning their own research, which indicated that the alternative would be far more expensive than their proposal for a nearshore windfarm, leaving their broader version of cost framing intact.

### ***Dynamic 2: framing of participation versus framing of procedural critique***

From start to finish, the ministry framed the planning process as open and participatory. Hence, they organized meetings with the municipalities,

informed them of all procedural steps, offered them opportunities to voice their objections in responses to master plans, and commissioned additional research in reaction to municipal criticisms of the plan (Tweede Kamer 2012-2013).

The PMWP and the FHF countered this participatory framing with the framing of the procedural critique at various moments during the process. They argued that they were not being listened to or that national government was largely ignoring their arguments and research findings. Reflecting on this situation, the Foundation's chairman asserted that:

(...) joining in the conversation was not really joining in. So, we could come with arguments where we say 'go to IJmuiden far'. And there are a couple of really good arguments to start there, but they wouldn't do it. So, we felt listened to but not listened to (Interview Korper).

These complaints suggest that the local governmental players and their allies experienced the participatory practices as a form of tokenism, which is characterized by informing or consulting citizens (Arnstein 1969) instead of entering into debates on the issues they raised. The national government countered this framing with the argument that the whole process had been open and participatory (Tweede Kamer 2015-2016b).

### ***Failed attempts at scale shift***

Early in the process, local politicians realized that they needed to join forces, and did so in the PMWP, joined by several other municipalities on the coastline and local action groups. Nevertheless, attempts at scale shift to the regional level by lobbying the coastal provinces were unsuccessful. Consequently, PMWP's attempts at scale shift focused on lobbying several committees of the Dutch parliament and peers in national political parties. Even with the support of an experienced lobbyist they were not very successful. Parliament voted almost unanimously in favour of the nearshore windfarm at the end of November 2016 (see [Figure 2](#)). This same lobbyist attributed this unanimity to the broad coalition of the national government and civil society organizations involved in the energy deal. The promises made in this deal were firm, leading to closed ranks:

There was actually nobody (...) that wanted to take it upon themselves to mess up the energy deal and then you notice that you are too small as a couple of municipalities. You need more critical mass to get something done (interview Pennock).

In the end, the PMWP tried to achieve an upward scale shift of their rhetorical framing, without any success due to the closed political front in favour of the nearshore windfarm.

## Discussion

The two cases of climate change measures indicate that there are strong similarities in the attempts at persuasion in contentious governance. Collective action by opponents focused on negotiation, lobbying and various forms of protest. The oppositional intent of these actions shows that contentious governance not only in theory but also in practice is the antonym of collaborative governance with its orientation toward consensus-oriented decision-making (Ansell and Gash 2008).

In terms of framing dynamics, municipalities countered safety- or cost-framing by ministries with framing through evidence and scientific environmentalist framing. Furthermore, municipalities escaped NIMBY allegations by ministries by arguing that the local community had already taken on a lot of infrastructural and industrial burden (CCS case), or by re-naming the issues and coming up with an alternative plan (windfarm case). Finally, municipalities framed procedural critique against decisions taken on the national level (CCS case) and against framing of participation by the Ministry of Economic Affairs (windfarm case).

Both actions and rhetorical framing dynamics bear great similarity to other (energy) controversies over unwanted facilities where citizens and governments are pitted against each other (Gordon and Jasper 1996, Della Porta and Piazza 2007, Schaffer Boudet 2011, Rootes 2013). We can explain this similarity by the restricted action repertoire that municipalities can draw upon. Negotiations and lobbying are quite familiar, while staging protests can be perceived as too activist by their national governmental opponents and can create problems in other policy domains in which municipalities and ministries are entangled. Similarly, action groups seem limited to protest and lobbying because of their collaboration with and sometimes also financial dependency on their governmental allies (Verhoeven and Duyvendak 2017).

In terms of rhetorical framing, we can explain the similarity by the limited number of environmental discourses upon which governmental players can draw. Proponents' safety framing, and opponents' framing through evidence and scientific environmentalist framing, draw upon institutionalized discourses of 'administrative rationalism', which emphasize the role of expertise and factual knowledge (Dryzek 1997). The same discourses partially lock in nongovernmental allies when they also use this framing, as happened in both cases. Cost framing by proponents draws upon discourses of 'economic rationalism' that reveal commitment to the deployment of market mechanisms and efficiency to achieve public ends (Dryzek 1997), while proponents' framing of participation draws upon discourses of 'democratic pragmatism' focusing on interactive problem-solving (Dryzek 1997). We can also explain the similarity by the deep cultural embeddedness of NIMBY framing and attempts to escape such framing in siting controversies (Gordon and Jasper

1996, Della Porta and Piazza 2007, Schaffer Boudet 2011). Finally, the similarity also seems to come from governmental opponents copying the framing of procedural critique from their allies, since such critiques are quite common amongst action groups (Gordon and Jasper 1996).

The main difference with citizens versus government conflicts seems to be that in processes of contentious governance the actions and rhetorical framing by governmental players and their non-governmental allies bears more weight in persuading governmental proponents of unwanted policies.

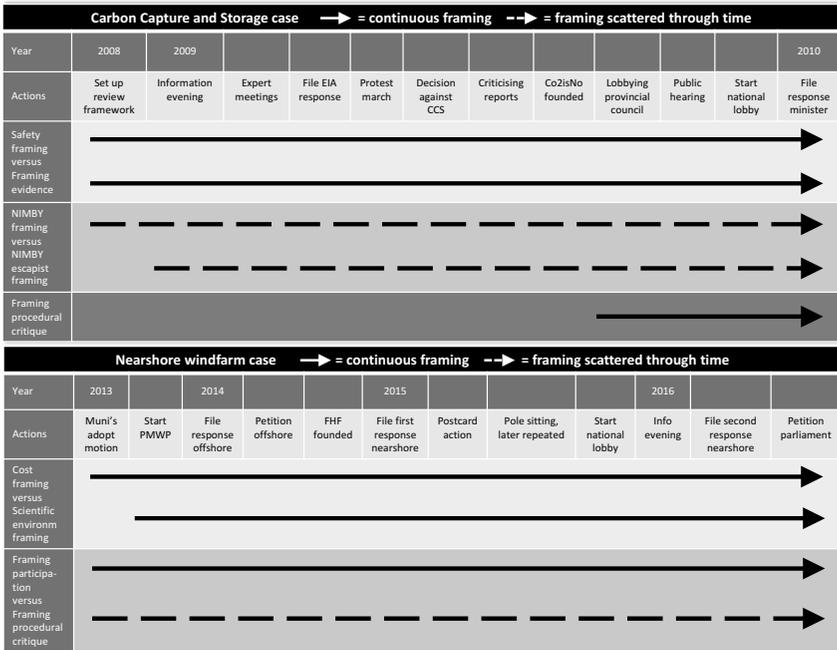
## Conclusions

I have analysed how local governmental players and their non-governmental allies got the CCS project taken off the table, while not being able to block the plans for the nearshore windfarm. The summary of the collective actions and rhetorical framing processes (Figure 3) partly explains the difference.

The safety framing and the framing through evidence (CCS case), and the framing of costs and scientific environmentalist framing (windfarm case) were continuous, while NIMBY framing and attempts to escape this framing appeared from time to time throughout the whole CCS case. These continuous or repeated framing processes seem rather ineffective with proponents and opponents talking past each other in terms of 'facts' (Stone 2012), and with proponents and opponents engaging in predictable processes of NIMBY framing (Cuppen *et al.* 2015). The same ineffectiveness seems to apply to many of the actions with which these framing processes co-occur. Filing responses to plans, protest marches, or petitions are so common that they can either be countered by providing answers that avoid addressing the complaints (reactions to responses), or by ignoring them (the protest actions).

A crucial difference between the cases is the well-timed lobbying based on the procedural critique that there was no local support for the CCS project. The upward scale shift of that critique made the difference, through constant lobbying by local politicians and members of CO2isNo, and its certification by the provincial authority and later on by the new national government. The fall of the cabinet and the shift in the power balances between important political parties provided a window of opportunity (Kingdon 2014) that was used optimally. In the windfarm case the national government could ignore the lobbying and the scattered use of procedural critique by emphasizing the framing of participation applied throughout the whole process (see Figure 3). A tight political consensus due to the energy deal also prevented a successful lobby at the national level and hence an upward scale shift of the procedural critique.

Introducing the concept of contentious governance emphasises the importance of not overlooking the agency of lower tiers of government in



**Figure 3.** Actions by (non) governmental opponents and framing dynamics between proponents and opponents per case.

the resistance to mitigation measures. Particularly if the technology itself is contested and if political parties at the national level are divided on the issue, conditions are ripe for politicization by local or regional governmental players and their non-governmental allies. This seems to be a conclusion that only applies to political systems based on coalition government. However, we can also see this type of dynamic appear in majoritarian federal systems such as the US, where a political party can have a majority at the federal level while another party has a majority at the state or local levels. As a result of such differences, lower levels of government may oppose the federal level, which actually happened with bans on fracking and with sanctuary cities. Of course, more analysis across political systems is necessary to produce stronger conclusions on the political conditions for contentious governance.

My contribution is a first step in theory development on contentious governance in mitigation cases by revealing various rhetorical framing processes and collective actions. To aid further theory development, research on deviant or outlier cases could be fruitful since such cases tend to produce outcomes unanticipated by existing theories. Another step in theory development is to test the validity and scope conditions by looking into cases in which contentious governance is most or least likely to be found. Also

comparative research including other mitigation measures related to solar or geothermal energy, and comparisons with other types of energy conflicts (fracking, liquefied natural gas facilities, natural gas production), or with conflicts outside of the energy domain, can further contribute to theory development. These and other avenues for research abound, since we have only just begun exploring contentious governance in cases of mitigation measures and beyond.

## Notes

1. A list of respondents is available upon request.
2. Space limitations preclude detailed presentation of the coding, but more details available on request.
3. This quote is from Minister Cramer of VROM, an academically trained biologist who held several professorships before she became a minister.
4. Referring to the Euromast in the city of Rotterdam, which is 185 metres high.

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