



# Political meta-governance and democratic legitimacy in interactive climate-governance processes

A CASE-STUDY ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL META-GOVERNANCE  
STRATEGIES IN THE CASE OF THE DUTCH NATIONAL  
AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE

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The logo of Erasmus University, featuring the word "Erasmus" in a stylized, cursive script.

## ABSTRACT

*This study explores the theoretical and empirical relationship between political meta-governance and democratic legitimacy in governance networks concerned with interactive climate governance. Being a single-case study, the study draws on theoretical insights derived from theories on network governance and meta-governance, and empirical insights derived from the case of the Dutch National Agreement on Climate ('Klimaataakkoord'). Accordingly, the aim of this study is to address the influence of political meta-governance strategies on the democratic legitimacy of the governance network concerned with the Dutch National Agreement on Climate. It finds that, although disparate political meta-governance strategies are applied, a clear interrelatedness with the democratic legitimacy is hard to be discovered. The case studied shows an emphasis on state-centred, administrative meta-governance rather than political meta-governance.*

### Theoretical assumptions underlying this study

Western democracies witness the emergence of interactive policy arenas in which mutually dependent actors, be it public, private or societal, 'co-govern' societal issues. These clusters of actors are the result of increased societal fragmentation and the dispersion of resources and power within society. Furthermore, the particular notion of 'wicked problems' tends to cut across formerly separate domains and disciplines, causing interdependencies between actors that need one another to effectively address these problems. Accordingly, top-down decision making is argued to fall short, and modes of decision making based on collaboration and interaction increased to emerge. There is little controversy in referring to this as network governance or interactive governance.

This development, however, has consequences for the way democratic anchorage of decision making is organized. Indeed, governance networks operate relatively autonomous. Although governmental institutions often play an important role in governance networks, they are rarely in the position to exercise authority over them. Accordingly, governance networks are no longer primarily focused on the political realms of public sector government, which holds important implications for their public legitimacy and accountability. Governments are faced with a paradoxical situation in which they have to rely on network-based solutions and collaboration to solve societal issues on the one hand, while they are obliged to be publicly accountable on the other. Hence, the intrinsic link between power, politics and network governance calls for closely scrutinizing the democratic performance of governance networks. One of the lenses through which the tense relationship between governance networks and existing political institutions can be further understood is meta-governance. This study assumes a relationship between the application of meta-governance strategies by political actors, that is, elected officials, and the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate-governance processes.

### Methodological approach

Accordingly, this study further defines meta-governance and democratic legitimacy in governance networks in operational terms. Democratic legitimacy, here, is defined in terms of accountability, voice and due deliberation in the different phases of the governance process – input, throughput and output. Meta-governance, then, is defined as political meta-governance, being an instrument which enables politicians to exercise state-power in a decentered polity in which power is dispersed among networks of actors.

Here, hands-on and hands-off meta-governance strategies are distinguished, being network-design, network framing, network management and network participation. These theoretical notions are applied on the case of the Dutch National Agreement on Climate. This study approaches this case twofold. On the one hand, raw data that provide insights in the role of Dutch Members of Parliament (MP's) in exercising meta-governance are examined. These are found by using Parliamentary resolutions and questions. On the other hand, this study draws on insights derived from interviews with MP's themselves and their policy advisers, and actors that are part of the governance network concerned with the Agreement on Climate.

### Main findings

This study underlines the theoretical assumption that governments seek to use network governance to address complex societal problems such as climate change. The state-centred character of network governance illustrates the usage of network governance as a rather instrumental, orchestrated approach, stressing a clear presence of a 'shadow of hierarchy', in which government retains significant authority over the governance network. Seeking to address the application of political meta-governance, this study finds that it is hard to bring about a full-fledged, deliberative and integrative meta-governance approach. Yet, disparate meta-governance strategies are reported.

The strong anchorage of the governance network in a broader, politically endorsed policy framework, however, is shown to not necessarily harm the 'primacy of politics'. This also leaves existing mechanisms concerning political accountability, and the division between the executive and controlling branches of government, relatively untouched. All in all, the role of political actors was not shown to differ strongly from the traditional functions they perform.

Whereas political role-innovation, the shift from elected official to political meta-governor, is concerned, several barriers are highlighted. As other studies already examined the problems confronting political role-innovation, this study provides further basis for discussion and critical reflection on this phenomenon.

Although democratic legitimacy concerning the Dutch Agreement on Climate in terms of accountability is considerably high, values concerning voice (inclusiveness) and due deliberation (transparency) perform relatively poor. Both can be understood as both theoretical and empirical dilemmas (inclusiveness vs. effectiveness and secrecy vs. transparency) that continue to confront network governance as such. Nonetheless, this study further justifies the close attention governance scholars and practitioners pay to the democratic values at stake when governing through networks, and calls for continuing to do so.

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# I INTRODUCTION

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GOVERNANCE

*Governance is en vogue. Regarding governance as a mechanism of collective action through which society and the economy are steered and controlled by means of common goals, however, the notion leaves plenty of space for misunderstanding (Levi-Faur, 2012). By introducing the New Public Governance-paradigm, Stephen Osborne (2006), further elaborated and specified the demarcation of governance as such, clearly differing it from other eras of public policymaking and service-delivery (Osborne, 2006). His notion of New Public Governance, or simplified as governance, has developed from a rather obscure niche in the field of public administration into one of the most commonly used concepts in both public administration, political science and beyond. Several particular 21st century developments propelled the proliferation of governance as such, particularly in Western liberal democracies.*

*This introduction aims to illustrate developments that lead to the introduction of governance in the context of 21st century, Western democracies and highlight its unique characteristics and context in the 21st century. In addition, forthcoming dilemmas are introduced.*

## Wicked problems, complexity and interactive governance

To further develop our understanding of governance in ‘the plural world that now comprises the environment of public services’, Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber provide a starting point by the elaboration of what they refer to as ‘wicked problems’ (Bernauer & Schaffer, 2012; Jentoft & Chuenpagdee, 2009; Rittel & Webber, 1973).

In accordance to their empirical experience in spatial planning, wicked problems are argued to be characterized by i.a the lack of a clear and shared problem-definition, the absence clear-cut solutions and mutually dependent stakeholders that may have radical different understandings of the problem at stake. Unlike earlier conceptions of societal problems, a wicked problem tends to cut across different domains, fields or policy-sectors, thereby making actors in different fields of expertise mutually dependent in order to come up with effective solutions. Nor the resources, nor the capacity, nor the scope of individual organizations is sufficient to effectively deal with the problem at stake, resulting in a network tied together by interdependencies in order to solve the problems at stake.

Accelerating the dynamics of wicked problems, contemporary Western liberal democracies are argued to become increasingly complex (Christensen & Laegreid, 2011; Morçöl, 2003; Peters & Pierre, 2016). That is, due to a wide dispersion of societal functions and far-reaching specialization of tasks, contemporary societies start to merge into webs of mutually dependent individuals and organizations that rely on one another for products and services they need in their daily lives.

The complexity that comes with the emergence of wicked problems that contemporary Western democracies are faced with, indeed calls for an increased focus on how this complexity is to be dealt with and which implications this has for public management (Christensen & Laegreid, 2011; Morçöl, 2003; Peters & Pierre, 2016; Schneider, 2012).

It is argued that, for complex issues to be dealt with effectively, top-down decision-making processes and traditional approaches towards public management based on government authority fall short, as resources, power and knowledge are widely dispersed among society (Hughes, 2003; Osborne, 2006; Peters & Pierre, 1998; Rhodes, 1994; Rhodes, 1996). Accordingly, the ability of state-centred governmental institutions to steer societal development, i.e., their ‘governability’, is limited. The state is even argued to get ‘hollowed out’ (Hernandez Ibarzabal, 2017; Jentoft & Chuenpagdee, 2009; Osborne, 2006; Peters & Pierre, 1998; Rhodes, 1994). Scholars in the field of public administration tend to refer to this shift as the ‘shift from government to governance’, which is indeed is subject to a wide consensus among governance scholars and practitioners (Levi-Faur, 2012).

In his quest to capture this pluralistic character of this 21<sup>st</sup> century governance, Osborne (2006) clearly demarcates New Public Governance of its predecessors Public Administration (PA) and New Public Management (NPM) by emphasizing inter-organizational relationships rather than intra-organizational aspects of governance. Both theoretical and real-life attempts to deal with the shortcomings of the government-based PA and NPM-paradigms resulted in a wide variety of governance-modes based on collaboration and interaction among mutually dependent stakeholders, in which state-based government relies on other actors in order to realize public policy and services (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Levi-Faur, 2012; Osborne, 2006; Provan & Kenis, 2008; Rhodes, 1996).

Although exact definitions may differ among scholars (Molin & Masella, 2016), modes of governance that fit the NPG-paradigm indeed assume the emergence of networks or arrangements of mutually dependent societal, private and/or public entities that operate autonomously, surround a policy problem or (public) service, and interact in order to exchange resources and make decisions together (Ansell & Gash, 2008; E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; Mayer, Edelenbos, & Monnikhof, 2005; Osborne, 2006; Torfing, 2012). As a result, these patterns of interaction give rise to an arrangement of actors concerned with a particular problem or service, which engages in a governance process based on interaction (Provan & Kenis, 2008; Rhodes, 1996; Torfing, 2012). This constellation of operational autonomous, but mutually dependent actors is often referred to as a 'governance network' (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). This constellation, thus, can henceforward be regarded as a governance network.

### Dilemmas of interactive governance: what about the public?

Whereas traditional top-down decision making assumed a predictable and relatively stable environment, the development of interactive governance processes that root from governance networks is highly uncertain (Teisman, 2000). Therefore, severe attention has been paid to attempts to manage and steer these processes, and keep track of their performance (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; Levi-Faur, 2012). Furthermore, due to their constellation of both public, private and societal actors that 'co-govern' societal issues, interactive governance structures are no longer primarily focused on political realms of public sector government, which holds important implications for their public legitimacy and accountability. Consequently, democratic values are at stake (E. Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; Kooiman & Jentoft, 2009; Mayer et al., 2005; Sørensen, 2006; Whitehead, 2003).

Whereas both the PA and NPM-paradigm stressed vertical lines of authority and were built on the 'primacy of politics', new modes of governance, such as governance through networks, illustrate the diminishing authority and sovereignty of government officials and political representatives as they operate beyond their hierarchical authority (E. Klijn & Skelcher, 2007). This indeed has paradoxical implications for existing democratic institutions in contemporary liberal democracies and the way legitimacy and accountability are organized. The inclusiveness, public transparency and accountability of interactive governance arrangements therefore pose a justified dilemma in the ongoing debate on interactive governance (Doberstein, 2013).

### Interactive governance and politics

The interactive processes of governance as introduced above thus confront existing political institutions in Western democratic practice with substantial dilemmas. As Haveri et al (2009) summarize the paradox governments are faced with, 'they have to rely on network solutions and collaboration' to solve wicked problems, while they, in the end, 'are obliged to be accountable'. Neglecting this paradox is, according to Torfing, Peters, Pierre and Sørensen, part of a *post-political vision* of contemporary society (Torfing, Peters, Pierre, & Sørensen, 2013b). They put forward that the conception of 21<sup>st</sup> century governance as a consensual and pragmatic tool for solving wicked problems in a pool of collaborating actors downplays 'the conflict- and power-ridden character of interactive governance' (Torfing et al., 2013b). Furthermore, interactive governance deals with the allocation of public means and values, thereby making it relevant from a democratic point of view.

As Mayer et al (2005) warn, 'if interactive policy development is introduced as an easy, cosmetic remedy for deep-rooted problems within the nation's political system, it is likely to prove counterproductive for representative democracy, further eroding support and aggravating political apathy.' Accordingly, the intrinsic link between power, politics and interactive governance calls for closely scrutinizing the democratic performance of interactive governance arrangements (Torfing et al., 2013b).

One of the lenses through which the tense relationship between interactive governance arrangements and existing political institutions can be further understood has been coined by Bob Jessop (1998) under the banner of *meta-governance*. The notion received attention as a way to bridge the gap between existing democratic institutions and interactive governance processes, and can be seen as the 'organization of conditions for governance in its broadest sense' (Jessop, 1998; Jessop, 2016; Sørensen, 2006; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Later definitions emphasized the importance of public officials that exercise meta-governance for political ends, and introduced 'steering' rather than simply 'organizing' (Molin & Masella, 2016). All conceptions have in common, however, that they illustrate attempts of existing political institutions to influence the interaction that takes place within certain governance networks (Bell & Park, 2006; Xiong Jie-chun & Zhao Xiao-lin, 2010).

### **Demarcating this study: meta-governance, democratic legitimacy and interactive climate-governance**

The first aim of this study is to provide insights in the theoretical and empirical relationship between political meta-governance and the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate-governance. In doing so, the first objective of this study is to contribute to the scientific debate on political meta-governance and its interrelatedness with the legitimacy of interactive governance arrangements.

Its second objective roots in widening up this debate by providing insights drawn from national-level climate policy, and therefore the field of renewable energy, which is relatively underexposed in the debate on interactive governance. Being a study within the scope of public administration, the societal relevance particularly roots from the perceived urgency of national-level climate policy in order to effectively address the mitigation of climate change, and a critical outlook on the inclusiveness, transparency and accountability thereof. Consequently, both the scientific and societal context of this study constitute a call for close and careful examination.

In sum, the current state of public administration research regarding interactive governance arrangements focuses on governability issues as well as normative dilemmas with regard to the rise of interactive modes of governance, based on networks or arrangements of collaborating actors (Molin & Masella, 2016). As illustrated above, both suggest an important role for the notion of meta-governance, defining it as efforts of legitimized public authorities to steer networked governance arrangements by using certain strategies (Molin & Masella, 2016; Sørensen & Torfing, 2016). The field of sustainable energy, and more specific, interactive climate governance, provides an important and relatively underexposed field of research.

Therefore, this research will depart from the following research question:

*What is the influence of political meta-governance on the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate-governance in the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate ('Klimaatakkoord')?*

In order to provide answer to this question, this research is structured according to several sub-questions.

First, this study aims to apply the lens of political meta-governance on national-level climate governance, which can be considered a consequence of global climate governance. In order to do so effectively, it is first necessary to address the following questions:

1. *What is interactive climate governance in the Netherlands?*
  - a) *How does interactive governance relate to climate policy in the Netherlands?*
  - b) *How can interactive climate-governance in the Netherlands be defined?*

Second, study examines existing literature on meta-governance and its interrelatedness with democratic legitimacy in governance networks. Therefore, the second and third sub-question are as follows:

2. *How can democratic legitimacy in network governance be defined?*
  - a) *What are sources of democratic legitimacy in governance networks?*
  - b) *What role for time in obtaining democratic legitimacy in governance processes?*

3. *How can political meta-governance be defined?*
  - a) *What is the theoretical relationship between meta-governance and democratic legitimacy?*
  - b) *What is the theoretical relationship between politics and meta-governance?*
  - c) *What is political meta-governance?*

Third, the study examines the empirical case of the Dutch National Agreement on Climate ('Klimaatakkoord'). Therefore, close examination of this case is needed. The fourth, fifth and sixth sub-question, therefore, addresses the occurrence of meta-governance in the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate:

4. *How can the democratic legitimacy of network governance in the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate be characterized?*
5. *What political meta-governance strategies are applied regarding the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate, and by what means?*
6. *What is the influence of political meta-governance strategies on the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate-governance applied in the case of the Agreement on Climate?*

## II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### CONCEPTUALIZING NATIONAL LEVEL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY AND POLITICAL META- GOVERNANCE

*This research departs from the assumption that contemporary society is characterized by a high dispersion of power, and therefore, the ability of political representatives to steer societal development is limited. Accordingly, one may be inclined to take on a rather normative stance on whether or not the primacy of politics is challenged by modern-day governance practices, and which implications this holds for the influence of political institutions on the particular pattern and speed of societal steering and control in terms of particular regulations, policies and governance in general.*

*This section briefly introduces interactive climate governance in the Netherlands. Thereafter it theoretically introduces the concept of meta-governance and explores the conceptions of public legitimacy in interactive governance. Hence, it relates to the legitimacy-dilemma regarding interactive governance arrangements as illustrated earlier. Accordingly, the notion of meta-governance is illustrated in relation to politics and potential meta-governors. Hence, this chapter addresses sub-questions 1, 2 and 3.*

## Conceptualizing interactive climate-governance in the Netherlands

Increasing energy-demand, weather-extremes, the exhaustion of fossil-fuel sources; all amount for an increased attention for the worlds' ability to move away from fossil-fuels, mitigate climate change and foster the application of renewable energy sources. As heralded with several international agreements regarding climate change mitigation, a global 'momentum' appears to have come about: within less than three decades, climate change mitigation has rose to the top of 21<sup>st</sup> century political agendas on all levels of government (Bernauer & Schaffer, 2012).

### A brief introduction of interactive climate-governance in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands a similar pattern of policy priorities emerged. Although the Netherlands are shown to be performing very poor compared to its neighbouring European Union-memberstates (Schoots, Hekkenberg, & Hammingh, 2017), the government installed halfway 2017 took up the challenges put forward by the international Agreement on Climate Change as signed in Paris, 2015, and reduce the emission of greenhouse-gas emissions (GHG) by 49% in 2030. This covers the Dutch contribution to arrive at a mitigated global temperature rise of max. 2 degrees Celsius. In the Dutch agreement signed between political parties, however, no concrete measures counting up to this goal are mentioned<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See Dutch coalition-agreement: 'Vertrouwen in de toekomst', 2017.

<sup>2</sup> See ProDemos, 'Politics in the Netherlands': <https://www.prodemos.nl/english/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/04/Politics-in-the-Netherlands-2013.pdf>

Although the Netherlands formally have a polity based on a representative democracy-system (formally regarded a constitutional monarchy)<sup>2</sup>, the Netherlands are characterized by the negotiation of complex societal issues that affect a wide variety of stakeholders (Van Dyk, 2006). That is, the approach of depoliticizing policy and delegate tough decisions to representatives of important societal stakeholders has been institutionalized in both informal (e.g. language<sup>3</sup>) and formal (e.g. laws and organizations<sup>4</sup>) institutions.

Following this renown Dutch approach towards vital societal policies based on interactive governance among affected societal actors (Mayer et al., 2005; Van Dyk, 2006), the Dutch government left the completion of GHG-reductions up to (orchestrated) negotiation among affected and involved actors, both public (e.g. governmental agencies, local governments), private (e.g. energy-companies, industries) and societal (e.g. interest-organizations and NGO's). The governance network which was ought to work towards a National Agreement on Climate ('Nationaal Klimaatakkoord'), was born.

### Facing up to the dilemma: the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate governance

In scrutinizing other cases of interactive governance arrangements and the consensus-based policies they produce, legitimacy appears a returning issue (Doberstein, 2013; E. Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; Sørensen & Torfing, 2016; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). The depoliticizing character of interactive governance through governance networks, indeed, is argued to be part of a 'post-political vision' of society (Torfing et al., 2013b).

<sup>3</sup> 'Polderen'; 'Poldermodel'

<sup>4</sup> The Social-Economic Council embodies a history of interactive governance through powerful stakeholders in society, such as employers and labor unions. See <https://www.ser.nl/en/>

As may be drawn from the predecessor of the National Agreement on Energy and Climate, the National Energy Agreement ('Nationaal Energieakkoord', 2013-2020), legitimacy is core to the critics casted upon both the process and the result. Bontenbal, for instance, asks 'whether branche-organizations, employers, employees and NGO's actually represent their assumed constituencies' (Bontenbal, 2014). Should it not be the national government which has the primacy in setting the framework for national energy- and climate-policy?

### Theoretical reflections on network governance

In order to provide a theoretical point of departure regarding both normative and empirical questions concerning network governance in relation to the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate governance in the Netherlands, first, let us turn towards state-of-the-art governance theory. As illustrated in the introduction of this research, contemporary societies are faced with an increase of wicked problems. This partly roots from societal specialization of functions, and therefore, societal fragmentation (Christensen & Laegreid, 2011). Resources and knowledge get increasingly dispersed among societal actors, which requires governmental institutions to develop and implement policy in new ways, based on interaction with affected stakeholders clustered within a governance arrangement or network, rather than top-down decision-making (E. Klijn, van Buuren, & Edelenbos, 2012; Matthews, 2012; Mayer et al., 2005; Osborne, 2006; Torfing, 2012). As this poses a challenge for legitimate and effective governance, scholars in the field of public administration developed strategies aimed at managing interactive processes of decision-making. Over time, two main schools of thought have emerged (Molin & Masella, 2016).

The '*Dutch school*' (e.g. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016) takes on a pragmatist, managerial perspective, viewing public managers as the main-actors concerned with managing a network of actors. Accordingly, those scholars show a tendency to regard interactive governance arrangements as 'governance networks' that are to be 'managed'. Therefore, the Dutch school is primarily concerned with strategies through which 'network managers' can safeguard the legitimate, efficient and effective performance of governance networks, e.g. by fostering trust among actors, enhancing deliberation and designing internal processes through which decisions are made (E. Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; E. Klijn, Edelenbos, & Steijn, 2010). These attempts, thus, are referred to as 'network management' (E. Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; E. Klijn et al., 2010).

The '*Danish school*' (e.g. Sørensen & Torfing, 2009; Sørensen, 2006), on the other hand, emphasizes that governance networks operate next to existing political institutions, thereby viewing political actors as the entities that are primarily concerned with the management of governance networks. It is argued that political actors are able to legitimize a governance network, and can be formally held accountable for its performance. Rather than viewing the governance network as something that is to be 'managed', this school distinguishes strategies that are concerned with influencing the direction of governance networks, both externally (hands-off) and by actual interference (hands-on). This is what these scholars refer to as 'meta-governance' (Molin & Masella, 2016).

Although it is clear that both network management and meta-governance concern attempts to enhance both effectiveness and democratic performance of governance networks, meta-governance explicitly addresses the role of political actors (Koppenjan, Kars, & van der Voort, 2011; Sørensen, 2006; Torfing et al., 2013b).



Accordingly, this study takes on a stance most similar to ‘Danish school’ scholars. Before turning to the role of meta-governance in steering governance networks, the next section further elaborates the specific dilemmas that underlie the democratic value of interactive governance.

### Conceptualizing democratic legitimacy in governance networks

Exercising the governance of public affairs through governance networks is important from a democratic perspective, as decision making in governance networks concerns the allocation of public values. Nonetheless, when assessing governance networks, many attention is paid to their effectiveness rather than the democratic values they embody (Klijn & Edelenbos, 2012). As Sørensen describes, the study of governance networks is dominated by a ‘getting things done’-mentality (Sørensen, 2013) The question whether governance networks contribute or threat institutionalized democratic values, however, is ‘an important normative and empirical question’, that is to be addressed by governance scholars (E. H. Klijn & Edelenbos, 2013).

### Different models of democracy and interactive governance

Democracy as such is an ambiguous concept. Most well-known, perhaps, is its conceptualization as representative democracy, in which political decision making is legitimized by ‘bottom-up delegation of power’, illustrating a delegation of power from citizen to political office-holder for a predetermined timeframe (Papadopoulos, 2016). Competing ideas on democracy, however, are as old as the main ideas that underlie representative democracy. Several scholars and philosophers, varying from De Tocqueville to Marx, argued that citizens do take more proactive attitudes towards public affairs, and indeed, have the ability to self-organize.

Accordingly, different forms of associative democracy and participative democracy, as, i.a., elaborated by scholars such as Paul Hirst and Anchron Fung, tend to emphasize values such as the inclusion of (groups of) individual citizens in the democratic process, be it by widening or deepening their participation in the governance of public affairs (Fung, 2006; Hirst, 2002).

Advocates of deliberative democracy, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the presence of open debate on solutions among affected stakeholders. Core to this belief is that ideas and opinions may change over time, and, echoing Habermasian values, the quality of is argumentation is decisive (E. Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; E. H. Klijn & Edelenbos, 2013).

Notwithstanding the importance of these values and ideas, contemporary Western democracies are dominated by institutionalized forms of representative democracy (E. Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; Sørensen, 2006). From a historical perspective, representative democracy is established to ensure the control of citizens over governmental bodies that exercise power over them (Sørensen & Torfing, 2016; Sørensen, 2006; Torfing, Peters, Pierre, & Sørensen, 2013a). What is more, is that representative democracy embodies countervailing powers that can limit the amount of power exercised by governments (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). The institutionalized exercise of authority in a democracy relies heavily on the elections of political representatives that are authorized to exercise sovereign rule (Sørensen, 2006), resulting in the term representative democracy. Due to this electoral mandate, the idea of the *primacy of politics* arose: those that are mandated to exercise power, should be primary in doing so. According to Klijn and Koppenjan (2016), this doctrine consists of the following characteristics:

- Elected political officeholders initiate policy agendas and set priorities;
- Elected political officeholders weigh and allocate values within society;
- Elected political officeholders define the general interest over societal value hierarchy;
- Elected political officeholders are in charge in a hierarchical structure and can be held accountable.

Governance through networks does not necessarily develop according to the principles illustrated here. Although democratic bodies, represented by for instance government officials or political representatives, often have a strong position in interactive governance processes, they rarely have the opportunity to exercise authority over them (Sørensen & Torfing, 2016; Sørensen, 2006). The interdependencies between state and non-state actors, thus, appear to spark different modes of decision making that might challenge the primacy of politics (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). However, it is not to say that governing through governance networks is by definition a threat for democracy as such (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). As Mayer et al (2005) point out, 'to a large extent, democracy consists of the definition of honest, fair and transparent rules; interactive policy development simply conforms to this model'. Nonetheless, the conceptualization of democratic legitimacy in interactive governance processes demands further elaboration (Aarsæther, Bjørnå, Fotel, & Sørensen, 2009; Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017; Doberstein & Millar, 2014).

### Towards a framework for democratic legitimacy in governance networks

On the one hand, it is widely agreed that governing through arrangements of interactive governance, or governance networks, is inevitable in contemporary society in order to keep the act of governing itself possible (Osborne, 2006; Papadopoulos, 2016; Sørensen & Torfing, 2016). It is argued that efficient governance requires the negotiated interaction between state and non-state actors (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Khan, 2013; Levi-Faur, 2012). As Aarsæther et al (2009) put it, 'governance theorists tend to agree that the central role of governance networks in the provision of public governance can be ascribed to the fact that they can help to get things done'. This may be regarded as the functional necessity of governing through governance networks.

On the other hand, it is questionable whether interactive modes of governance contribute to enhanced legitimacy of the way governance is enacted (Papadopoulos, 2003; Papadopoulos, 2016; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Whereas state capacity 'hinges upon its democratic authority and legitimacy', the rise of governance as such has been argued to lead to a 'bypass of the nation-state', and therefore, the marginalization of state authority (Matthews, 2012). As Papadopoulos (2003) correctly observes, 'this policy style tends to replace the influence of the 'demos' (exerted through the designation of elected representatives) with a combination of group representation and influence tied to sectoral or local expertise'.

Although, indeed, the emphasis scholars like Papadopoulos put on the influence of citizens is a justified one, it neglects the diversity of sources through which democratic legitimacy may be obtained (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Furthermore, new modes of governance may also be perceived as complementing existing modes of governance in a system wherein turn-outs of elections are decreasing and political apathy is significant (E. Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; E. Klijn et al., 2012; Matthews, 2012; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009).

The question whether new modes of governance threaten or complement existing institutionalized forms of democratic legitimacy and state authority, thus, sparked an extensive scholarly debate (E. Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; E. Klijn et al., 2012). Therefore, close attention to the democratic legitimacy of governance networks should be core to studying them.

### Democratic legitimacy from different sources

Following the conceptualization of associative, deliberative and representative democracies as illustrated above, several core-values of democratic legitimacy can be derived from these ideas (E. Klijn et al., 2012; E. H. Klijn & Edelenbos, 2013; Sørensen, 2013). In their elaboration of different models of democratic legitimacy in governance networks, Klijn & Koppenjan (2016) arrive at three main sources of legitimacy that are a recurring feature in all different models of democracy (also see Klijn et al., 2012; Klijn & Edelenbos, 2013).

First, the way *accountability* is organized is an important, if not the most important source for democratic legitimacy (Doberstein, 2013; E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Accountability, here, refers to the formal accountability of identifiable officeholders and procedures to hold them accountable (Aarsæther et al., 2009).

Second, *voice* is core to the democratic legitimacy of interactive governance processes. This refers to the possibilities of citizens and actors to actively participate in decision-making processes, and the procedure of decision making itself. As Papadopoulos puts it, 'considerations of transparency, equal access and such like are likely to prevail in the assessment of decisional procedures'. Elements such as fairness, openness and transparency can thus be considered elements of voice (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; Papadopoulos, 2003).

Third, *due deliberation* strongly refers to the quality of the interactive governance process and the process through which information and arguments are exchanged (E. Klijn et al., 2012; E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; E. H. Klijn & Edelenbos, 2013).

Thus, sources of democratic legitimacy in interactive governance arrangements can be found threefold; in accountability, in voice and in due deliberation. Sørensen, in studying the institutionalization of interactive governance, arrives at similar core-features, although formulated slightly different: democratic inclusion, democratic deliberation and democratic accountability (Sørensen, 2013).

### Democratic legitimacy at different stages in the governance process

Every governance process, in particular interactive governance processes, shows a strong development over time (Ansell & Gash, 2008; E. Klijn et al., 2012). Consequently, the different stages in which democratic legitimacy may be obtained are important to highlight. Papadopoulos, here, summarizes the democratic timeframe in the following question: 'Do appropriate procedures exist that allow my inputs to be considered, that make policy outputs mirror them, and if they do not, do any procedures enable me to express my dissatisfaction?' (Papadopoulos, 2003). First, *input legitimacy* may be perceived as embodying most of the traditional conceptions of democratic values. Indeed, centuries-old democratic systems like balloting and elections provide a mandate and therefore legitimized input for the governance process beforehand (Papadopoulos, 2003).

Positions and responsibilities, here, are thus organized in advance (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016).

Second, *throughput legitimacy* comes into play. The beliefs in procedural fairness, transparency, inclusiveness and deliberation can indeed be considered mainly as characteristics of the governance process rather than a provision beforehand or part of accountability afterwards (Ansell & Gash, 2008; E. Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; Mayer et al., 2005; Papadopoulos, 2003; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009).

Third, *output legitimacy* is ought to be based on a positive evaluation of governance outcomes by citizens (Papadopoulos, 2003). Thus, core to democratic legitimacy in this stage is the quality of the results and/or outcomes achieved consequential to the governance process.

By elaborating three sources of democratic legitimacy and three dimensions regarding the stage of the governance process, Klijn & Koppenjan (2016) are lead to a framework which incorporates nine criteria to assess the democratic legitimacy of a networked governance arrangement. This framework is captured in Figure 1.

	<i>Input legitimacy</i>	<i>Throughput legitimacy</i>	<i>Output legitimacy</i>
<i>Accountability</i>	Formal authority of representative bodies and organized interfaces in advance	Arranged feedback junctures to formal representative institutions	Formally organized authority for decision, actual involvement in the last stage
<i>Voice</i>	Regulations on access to the process; subjects at stake and level of decision-making	Opportunities for voice (organized and invited) and actual participation (number of stakeholders and intensity of participation)	Correspondence of proposals with stakeholders' ideas, stakeholders' satisfaction with the results
<i>Due deliberation</i>	Possibilities and limitation to enter information, debate etc; clear procedures	Actors' satisfaction with transparency, range of arguments (wide or narrow)	Actors' overall satisfaction with process, judgement of argumentation

Figure 1: Criteria for assessing democratic legitimacy in governance networks. Derived from Klijn & Koppenjan (2016, p. 222)

## Conceptualizing meta-governance

Scholars on meta-governance, as originally categorized in the ‘Danish school’ of thought, are in particular concerned with the emergence of modern-day governance logic and its consequences for existing political institutions (Bell & Hindmoor, 2009; Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017; Jessop, 1998; Sørensen, 2006). It is argued that state-centred governance diminishes and society-centred modes of governance, in which networks of numerous affected stakeholders make joined decisions, are on the rise. Merely relying on these governance networks, however, has shown to result in problems, e.g. regarding decision-making in the absence of hierarchy, the marginalization of elected officials, the legitimacy of policy-outcomes, impasses/decision-traps, transparency towards the public and the empowerment of already dominant stakeholders (Doberstein, 2013; E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Hence, ‘states need to learn the appropriate operating code which challenges past hierarchical modes of thinking’ (Matthews, 2012). According to ‘Danish-school’ theorists, meta-governance provides such an operating code (Jessop, 1998; Kooiman & Jentoft, 2009; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009).

The depoliticizing character of network governance hence comes at the challenge ‘to undertake a fundamental reappraisal of the normative underpinnings of state capacity’ (Matthews, 2012). Accordingly, Bell & Hindmoor put forward that governments remain to play an important role in the functioning of governance networks, using the metaphor of ‘cockpits’ through which these networks can be coordinated to address their weaknesses: indeed, there is little controversy in referring to this as the ‘governance of governance’, in other words, meta-governance (Bell & Hindmoor, 2009; Doberstein, 2013; Jessop, 1998; Sørensen, 2006).

When addressing the weaknesses of network governance, meta-governance may consequently be exercised in order to make networked governance arrangements more effective (Baker & Stoker, 2012; Christopoulos, Demir, & Kull, 2016; Qvist, 2017; Sørensen, 2006), or to make them more legitimate and assure their public accountability (Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017; Doberstein, 2013; E. Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; Kooiman & Jentoft, 2009; Sørensen, 2006).

## Towards a definition of meta-governance

Meta-governance was originally defined as ‘the organization of the conditions for governance in its broadest sense’ (Jessop, 1998). Conceptualizing meta-governance as a way through which existing political institutions are able to steer governance networks, it may be generally regarded as the ‘regulation of self-regulation’ (Damgaard & Torfing, 2011; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). ‘Danish-school’ governance-scholars such as Eva Sørensen and Jacob Torfing further elaborated the concept as ‘a reflexive and responsive process through which a range of legitimate and resourceful actors aim to combine, facilitate, shape and direct particular forms of governance in accordance with specific rules, procedures and standards.’ (Molin & Masella, 2016; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). They propose meta-governance as an instrument which ‘enables politicians and public managers to exercise state power in a decentred polity in which power is dispersed within complex networks bringing together public and private actors from different levels and policy areas.’ (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Emphasizing the importance of the legitimacy-issue, Carey Doberstein, in his examination of meta-governance in Canada, regards meta-governance as a notion that ‘captures the relationship and tension between the willingness of the state to engage with civil society representatives [...] via purpose-focused governance networks, while maintaining some degree of control over their activity consistent with traditional notions of democratic accountability’ (Doberstein, 2013).

This is in accordance with the work of Daugbjerg and Fawcett, who state that exercising meta-governance by state-actors is aimed at ‘ensuring that network outcomes correspond with its interests, and particularly, are legitimate’ (Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017).

### Meta-governance strategies

Regardless of the subtle differences in theoretical conceptualizations of meta-governance, its manifestation in practice appears to be a topic of a wider consensus. According to Bell & Hindmoor (2009), the core-functions of meta-governance are aimed at steering, effectiveness, mobilizing resources and ensuring fair, democratic and legitimate functioning of the network (Bell & Hindmoor, 2009; Doberstein, 2013). Complementing this conceptualization, Sørensen and Torfing emphasize the importance of framing and storytelling by governmental actors; that is, influencing the discourse surrounding the network (Sørensen, 2006; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009).

In elaborating different strategies that may be used in order to enact meta-governance, Sørensen and Torfing provide a fourfold categorization, and distinguish ‘hands-off’ and ‘hands-on’ meta-governance (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Hands-off and hands-on meta-governance strategies. (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009)**

<b>Distance to interactive governance arrangement</b>	<b>Meta-governance strategy</b>
Distant influencing: Hands-off meta-governance	<i>Network-design</i> : influencing through e.g. scope, character, composition, procedures
	<i>Network-framing</i> : influencing through e.g. political goals, legal basis, storylines
Direct interference: Hands-on meta-governance	<i>Network-management</i> : providing material and immaterial inputs to empower actors, resolve conflict, reduce tensions etc.
	<i>Network participation</i> : influencing e.g. the policy agenda, decision-making, negotiated outputs etc.

*Network design*, here, concerns attempts aimed at influencing the scope of the governance network, its composition in terms of participants, and the design of internal procedures and processes. *Network framing* concerns influencing the ‘political goals, fiscal conditions, legal basis and the discursive storyline’ of the governance network. Both can be considered ‘hands-off’ as they are deployed distanced from the governance network itself, and concern activities that surround the network rather than interfere in its operations (Fotel & Hanssen, 2009; Sørensen, 2006; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). ‘Hands-on’ strategies, on the other hand, show direct interference within the operations of the governance network. These strategies fall apart in two main categories: *network-management* and *network participation*.

The first concerns attempts to ‘manage’ the development of the network, such as reducing tensions among its members, empowering particular actors and lowering transaction-costs by providing certain inputs. Here, an overlap with the ‘Dutch school’ of network management can be witnessed (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). The latter, network participation, concerns the meta-governor becoming one among many network participants, while retaining a ‘reflexive gaze’ in order to influence its operations (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009).

Both hands-off and hands-on meta-governance strategies can be considered complementary, reinforcing one another when deployed deliberately (Sørensen, 2006; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Yet, Torfing et al (2013) put forward that politicians in particular are ‘in a privileged position as democratically legitimate exercisers of hands-off meta-governance through a legal, political and financial framing of interactive governance processes.’ When it comes to exercising hands-on meta-governance, their position is less fortunate as, e.g., participation may harm their independent status (Torfing et al., 2013a). Nonetheless, ‘how politicians can exercise meta-governance in a way that grants them both a certain level of involvement in and a fair amount of independence from interactive governance arenas’ remains a key question with regard to the role of politicians in processes of interactive governance (Torfing et al., 2013a).

The elaborated strategies are argued to contribute to both effectiveness and democratic legitimacy of governance networks (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Network effectiveness may be enhanced by, inter alia, determining deadlines, fostering goal-alignment, providing resources to lower transaction-costs and developing trust (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Network democracy may be enhanced by, inter alia, assuring the publicity of the network, monitoring its performance, promoting equality by empowering weaker actors and safeguarding transparency (Doberstein, 2013; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009).

The contribution of meta-governance to both effective and democratic network governance as identified by Sørensen and Torfing is summarized in Figure 2.

	Effectivity	Democracy
<b>Network design</b>	Keep a strict focus on objectives and innovative capacities when composing the network Define or negotiate clear deadlines for different forms of policy output from the network Terminate superfluous and unsuccessful networks	Ensure publicity about the formation of the network and the policy outputs it produces Ensure a broad inclusion of relevant and affected actors (avoid external exclusion) Create or support alternative and competing networks
<b>Network framing</b>	Ensure coordination and goal alignment through political framing and storytelling Create strong interdependencies among the network actors in order to stimulate resource exchange Share effectiveness gains arising from network governance with the network and network actors	Communicate the political, fiscal, legal and discursive framework conditions to the network Monitor the performance of the network in relation to the framework conditions Decide whether non-compliance should lead to sanctions or adjustments to the framework
<b>Network management</b>	Provide adequate resources that lower the transaction costs and empower the network actors Reduce destructive tensions through agenda control, arbitration, joint fact-finding and cross-frame learning Signal that a flexible adjustment of ends and means is acceptable in order to encourage innovation	Empower the weak and marginalized network actors in order to promote equality within the network Ensure transparency through the circulation of relevant information Probe whether the private stakeholders enjoy the support of their respective constituencies
<b>Network participation</b>	Facilitate sustained cooperation by producing quick victories and creating joint ownership of them Show trust in order to gain and build trust Institutionalize processes that work well and learn from those that do not	Maintain a broad policy agenda supported by a vaguely defined story-line (avoid internal exclusion) Insist on an open and responsive deliberation of alternative options Ensure that the network evaluates its own performance in relation to common democratic standards

Figure 2: Meta-governance and effective and democratic network governance. Derived from Sørensen & Torfing, 2009, p. 248

### State-centred meta-governance and society-centred meta-governance

Considering meta-governance as a way through which governance networks can be made more legitimate in terms of their input-throughput and output-legitimacy, indeed, the assumption that meta-governance may be deployed in order to do so caused scholars to examine its actual influence.

This sparked diverging ideas along a continuum of state-centred and society-centred governance (Baker & Stoker, 2012). *Society-centred* scholars are argued to focus on the fundamental change interactive modes of governance imply in the face of state-level government (see e.g. Sørensen, 2006), and the new governance-techniques that come along with a state that is dependent on non-state actors (Bell & Hindmoor, 2009).

*State-centred* scholars, on the other hand, suggest that strong governmental institutions are able to cast a ‘shadow of hierarchy’ over governance networks, causing networks to be well-aware of the presence of governmental institutions (Baker & Stoker, 2012; Best, 2011; Whitehead, 2003). Koppenjan et al (2011) refer to this mode of steering, relying on vertical hierarchy, as the ‘government of governance’. As Bell & Hindmoor (2009) suggest, ‘the involvement of a wider range of actors in the process of governing has not been at the expense of the pivotal role played by governments’. Indeed, Matthews (2012) underlines this as ‘the state is still routinely viewed as the main organ through which problems are solved and society is steered’ (Matthews, 2012). Accordingly, Bell & Hindmoor (2009) go as far as to argue that ‘governance in the absence of government remains the exception. Hierarchical governance through government is resurgent.’

Although society-centred and state-centred views might appear mutually exclusive, Baker & Stoker (2009) suggest that ‘neither society-centric nor state-centric theorists offer a sufficiently robust perspective for evaluating the challenges that governments may face when they seek to meta-govern’.

Indeed, they call for ‘a framework that can look at the capabilities of government to meta-govern but can also capture the full range of resources that could be used by governments—from legislation through to story-telling’. Consequently, Daugbjerg and Fawcett (2017) set out to develop a framework ‘that more systematically explores how and why governance outcomes vary between different network types.’ As they put forward, both input- and output legitimacy of a network depend on the states’ capacity to meta-govern and the relative exclusive or inclusive structure of the network, which was shown to differ among the cases in their analysis of organic food networks (Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017). Their heuristic in assessing meta-governance moves along the continuum of state-centred and society-centred typology of governance networks and is captured in Figure 3.

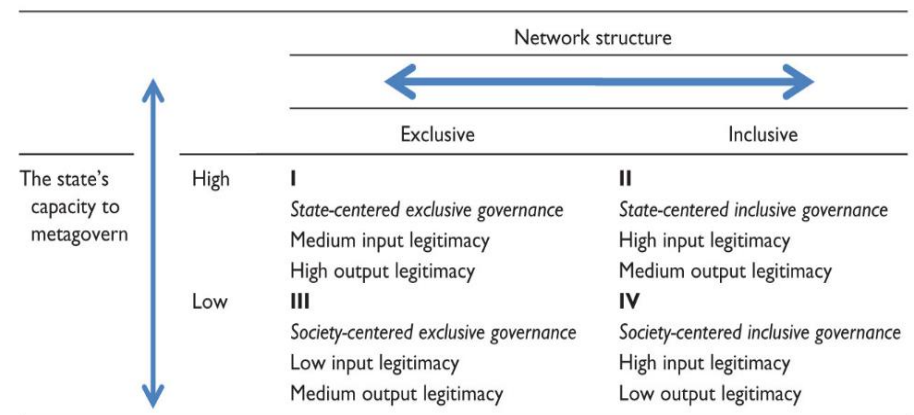


Figure 3: Four network typologies based on the state-society continuum and the structure of the network. Derived from Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017



Their empirical application of the heuristic indeed provides a helpful tool to illustrate the states' capacity to meta-govern and network structure, and how this produces different levels of input- and output legitimacy. In order to effectively evaluate the democratic legitimacy of governance networks, thus, one has to take into account both parameters. Therefore, all cells are briefly elaborated below.

*Cell 1* links a state-centred governance to a relatively exclusive network. It is assumed that state-actors play a central role in meta-governing the network by direct interventions, but keep the network limited to a relatively exclusive selection of actors (Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017).

*Cell 2*, then, links a state-centred governance to a relatively inclusive governance network. High input-legitimacy is obtained through the inclusivity of the network. Output legitimacy may show to be problematic, as the high number of involved actors makes it increasingly unlikely that consensus is achieved (Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017).

*Cell 3* assumes a network which functions distant from the state, and hence is considered as society-centred. The states' capacity to meta-govern is low. Relative exclusiveness of the network makes input legitimacy low, whereas output legitimacy is medium because non-state actors may obtain outputs that are beneficial for themselves (Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017).

*Cell 4*, then, indicates a network which is society-centred and inclusive. The inclusiveness makes up for a high input-legitimacy, whereas the difficulty to reach agreement over policy outcomes may amount for a low output legitimacy (Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017).

Altogether, meta-governance by public authorities is argued to contribute to both network effectiveness and democratic legitimacy (Koppenjan et al., 2011; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Yet, the ability to apply meta-governance techniques effectively is largely dependent on the positioning of the governance network along the state-centred and society-centred continuum.

### Meta-governance and politics

If network governance is perceived as part of a 'post-political vision' on society, as Torfing et al (2013b) put it, then what about politics? As Wilson, Morrisson and Everingham argue, 'much discussion within current governance literature revolves around the role and relations of political institutions in governance' (Wilson, Morrison, & Everingham, 2017). Regarding governance as merely a process of depoliticization largely neglects 'that it is politicians who make decisions about what functions should be depoliticized, and it is politicians who commonly retain significant indirect control mechanisms' (Matthews, 2012). Torfing et al (2013b) regard this as the 'power over governance': governments initiate, facilitate and manage interactive governance processes. Hence, governments rely on meta-governance techniques that aim to shape and influence interactive governance arrangements. Koppenjan et al (2011) warn that attempts to 'restore the primacy of politics' by applying governmental logics on network governance, the 'government of governance', and will encounter severe limitations. Nonetheless, their case-examination finds well examples of the application of meta-governance in a more horizontal manner, the 'governance of governance' (Koppenjan et al., 2011).

Meta-governance, thus, appears to break down the constructed divide between state-centred government and society-centred governance as illustrated earlier (Bell & Hindmoor, 2009; Whitehead, 2003). Kooiman and Jentoft (2009) even categorize meta-governance as 'third-order governance', differing from the day-to-day interaction of actors in governance networks (first-order) and the design of legislative frameworks for interactive governance processes to take place (second-order). Rather, meta-governance is the governance order where values, norms and principles are advanced according to which governance practices can be formed and evaluated, thereby making it political, rather than administrative, by definition (Kooiman & Jentoft, 2009).

Taking on a more pragmatist stance towards the actual influence of meta-governance by political actors, Fotel & Hanssen regard meta-governance as being 'one of the ways in which politicians can link the processes of networks to the established institutions of representative democracy.' (Fotel & Hanssen, 2009). Altogether, the conceptualization of meta-governance as a governance strategy through which politicians and public managers on all levels of government can influence complex arrays of governance arrangements evoked a scholarly debate concerning issues with regard to its effectivity and its implications for democratic values in modern-day governance approaches (Molin & Masella, 2016). Accordingly, governance-scholars engaged in a wide variety of empirical analyses on the role of political institutions on all levels of government in exercising meta-governance over governance networks. How does meta-governance occur, does it matter, and if so, what difference does it make?

Indeed, local governments show to be concerned with actively meta-governing; Haveri et al (2009), for instance, show 'how local governments' capacity to steer and exercise power is created through a combination of coercive and persuasive practices and narratives'. Yet, these tools are still under development, and often exercised by local government officials and experts rather than politicians (Haveri, Nyholm, Røiseland, & Vabo, 2009). In examining the regional development the Dutch Broekpolder-area, Edelenbos et al (2018) find that local officials act as meta-governors, thereby strengthening public representativeness of involved societal actors (Edelenbos, van Meerkerk, & Schenk, 2018). Lasting role-innovation on the side of political representatives, however, is shown to be problematic (Edelenbos, van Meerkerk, & Koppenjan, 2017). This underlines the findings of Baker and Stoker (2012) in their analysis of meta-governance in the field of nuclear energy.

They conclude that, although the state has more opportunities to meta-govern than society-centred scholars might suggest, it also needs to overcome more obstacles to do so effectively (Baker & Stoker, 2012).

In examining meta-governance in regional governance networks in Nordic countries, Trine Fortel and Gro Skandjaer Hanssen find a wide variation regarding the extent to which political actors use network participation as a meta-governance strategy (Fotel & Hanssen, 2009). They stress that political representatives on different levels of government use meta-governance differently. The capacity of governmental actors to meta-govern is furthermore shown to be not self-evident. Christopoulos, Demir & Kull (2016) underline that the state has a key-role in coordinating networks concerned with energy efficiency (EE), but other (private) actors are important as well.

Doberstein (2013) finds that the Canadian context is dominated by state-centred, administrative meta-governance, whereas several cases in Nordic countries show a tradition in which particularly local political representatives participate in the networks they meta-govern (Damgaard & Torfing, 2011). In multi-level meta-governance settings, Thuesen (2013) finds that actors on different levels exercise meta-governance differently. She finds that the closer to the actual networked arrangement, the more likely a meta-governor is to deploy hands-on meta-governance (Thuesen, 2013).

Tools of governing through networks are furthermore shown to be not that different from 'classical' public administration literature. Several studies find that, although meta-governance strategies indeed focus on 'soft' tools rather than 'hard' governance tools, they can be well-fitted within the NATO 'tools of government' framework as developed by Christopher Hood (1983) (Baker & Stoker, 2012; Vabo & Røiseland, 2012).

Still, however, the new skills and competences that Sørensen (2006) stressed to be adopted by political representatives are hard to actually come about (Edelenbos et al., 2017; Larsson, 2017; Sørensen, 2006).

### Conclusion: Towards political meta-governors in the Netherlands?

Altogether, the occurrence of meta-governance practices can be witnessed in a wide variety of governance strategies, both new and traditional, on all levels of government, in a wide variety of policy fields (regional development, infrastructure, energy, social care, transport, environment, security) and in a wide variety of countries, particularly liberal democracies (United States, Canada, Finland, Australia, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Croatia, United Kingdom, Sweden).

Yet, its application appears to be a difficult learning process. Hence, its contribution to democratically legitimate governance networks is challenging, still in development, and eventually problematic (Haveri et al., 2009; E. Klijn et al., 2012; Scourfield, 2015; Torfing et al., 2013b). Nonetheless, Torfing et al (2013b) perceive the anchorage of interactive governance in elected politicians as a self-evident contribution to their democratic legitimacy, as ‘government control over delegated policy decisions are in line with the popular will, expressed by the political majority of elected assemblies’. Accordingly, elected politicians ‘can lend democratic legitimacy to interactive governance arenas in so far as they control the formation, functioning and impact of interactive governance arenas.’ (Torfing et al., 2013b).

Consequently, the brief elaboration of democratic legitimacy in 21<sup>st</sup> century modes of interactive governance and the role for meta-governance to reconcile existing representative logics with emergent governance logics, call for further empirical examination and critical assessment of the democratic performance of governance networks. When one is to assess the democratic anchorage of governance networks in elected politicians, Torfing et al (2013b) propose the following questions to be addressed:

- To what extent are elected politicians aware of the presence, role, and character of interactive governance arena in question, and to what extent do they have access to information about it?
- To what extent do they assume the role of meta-governors of that particular governance arena?
- To what extent have politicians defined the objectives of their meta-governance, and are they combining different forms thereof?
- To what extent do the politicians take an active part in and cooperate closely with public administrators in developing and pursuing a joint meta-governance strategy?

Thus, after having addressed the context of interactive climate-governance in the Netherlands, forthcoming dilemmas regarding democratic legitimacy in processes of interactive governance, and the potential reconciliation of existing political institutions and interactive governance by the application of meta-governance strategies, this study proceeds by empirically examining the democratic anchorage of interactive governance in the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate.

### III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### TOWARDS AN APPROPRIATE RESEARCH APPROACH

*The theoretical framework as elaborated above provides the intellectual foundations of this study. Yet, the examined core-concepts should be related to one another in order to construct a causal model.*

*Governance networks were illustrated to be confronted with several problems. Literature has identified a main pathway through which political actors may exercise influence in this particular context. This is captured in the application of meta-governance strategies, as identified possibly hands-on and hands-off (Sørensen, 2006; Torfing et al., 2013a). Meta-governance was furthermore shown to be primarily concerned with the accountability and legitimacy of governance networks.*

*Acknowledging the relevance of this body of knowledge, this study thus draws on concepts derived from meta-governance theorists. Altogether, this is echoed in the research question of this study: ‘What is the influence of political meta-governance on the public legitimacy of national-level climate governance in the case of the Dutch National agreement on Sustainable Energy and Climate (‘Klimaatakkoord’)?’*

*In order to systematically address this question, this chapter proceeds by elaborating the methodological choices that underlie this study. First, the basic research model is elaborated. Second, the core variables included in the research model are further operationalized in measurable terms. Third, the chapter proceeds with an elaboration of the research strategy.*

## Research model: meta-governance and democratic legitimacy in governance networks

Literature suggests a causal relationship between political meta-governance and the democratic legitimacy of governance networks. The ability of state-level actors to meta-govern in the first place, however, is argued to be dependent on their distance to the governance network itself. Therefore, the first step in developing a causal scheme regarding meta-governance and democratic legitimacy would be to identify the position of the governance network along the state-centred and society-centred continuum. The relative inclusive or exclusive nature of the network, furthermore, was shown to produce particular levels of input- and throughput legitimacy. Second, the actual application of meta-governance strategies is ought to influence democratic legitimacy. Therefore, political meta-governance strategies are considered an independent variable. Third, the democratic legitimacy, considered along the stages of democratic legitimacy (that is, input- throughput and output-legitimacy) is considered a dependent variable. Figure 4 captures this line of argumentation in a conceptual model.

### Operationalization of core-variables

According to the framework as developed by Daugbjerg and Fawcett (see Figure 3), the capacity of state-actors depends to meta-govern depends on their distance to the network and the structure of the network. Their conceptualizations of the four different types of networks are used in this study, and hence applied on the case of national-level climate governance in the Netherlands.

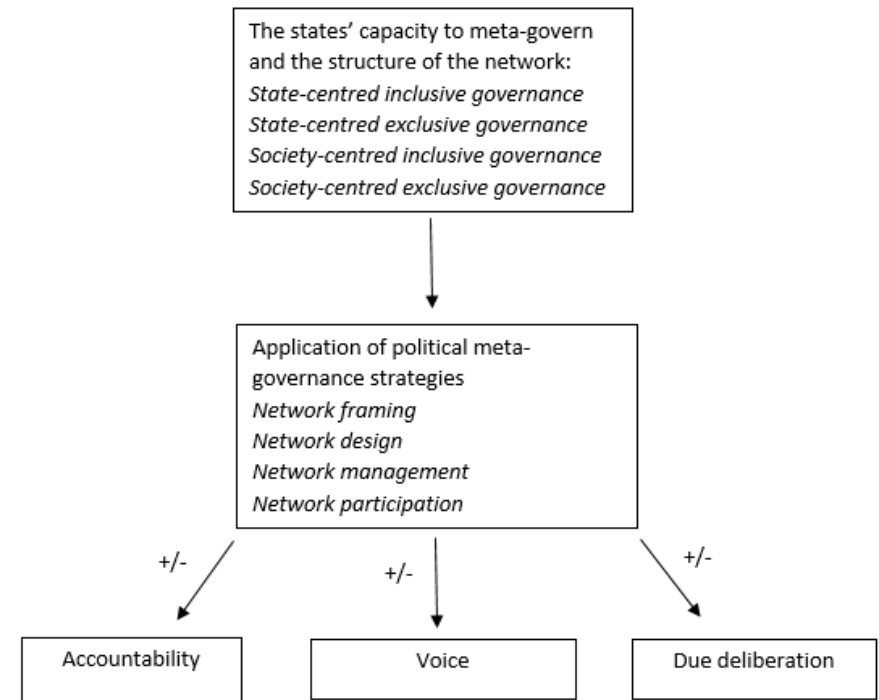


Figure 4: Modelling the influence of political meta-governance strategies on the democratic legitimacy of governance networks

### The states' capacity to meta-govern and network structure

The first variable is derived from Daugbjerg and Fawcett (2017) who, as elaborated above, developed a heuristic to explain different levels of democratic legitimacy by looking at the structure of the network and the capacity of the state to meta-govern. As these parameters precede the actual application of meta-governance, these elements will be taken into account when studying the democratic legitimacy of national-level climate governance in the Netherlands.

**Meta-governance strategies**

The operationalization of meta-governance strategies in terms of democratic legitimacy demands further integration of the different sources of democratic legitimacy (accountability, voice and due deliberation) and the different stages in which democratic legitimacy may be obtained (input- throughput and output-legitimacy). The first identified meta-governance strategy, *network design*, may enhance democratic legitimacy in several ways. Meta-governors may ensure public awareness regarding questions such as the formation of the network, what it is for, who are participating, setting internal procedures and how actors can be contacted (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). The second identified meta-governance strategy, *network framing*, may also contribute to network legitimacy. Foremost, the setting of a financial, legal and discursive framework provides an indirect measure elected officials may use to assure that the network proceeds in accordance with what is considered politically feasible and appropriate (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Monitoring the network can also be considered part of network framing. Third, *network management* is argued to enhance democratic legitimacy by selective empowerment of weaker actors to foster equality in deliberation. Internal transparency by assuring equal circulation of information can also be considered as fitting in the *network management* strategy (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Fourth, *network participation* may enhance democratic legitimacy by assuring an open agenda that is to be discussed and fostering internal deliberation by taking part in discussion (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). These meta-governance strategies, and the way they may be applied in terms of democratic legitimacy, are captured in Figure 5.

Meta-governance strategy	Operationalized	Indicator(s) for meta-governance strategies
<b>Network design and composition (hands-off)</b>	The meta-governor tries to influence rules and followed procedures  The meta-governor tries to influence the composition of the network	Proposals regarding the accountability of actors Proposals regarding the inclusiveness of the network Proposals regarding internal procedures and public transparency
<b>Network framing (hands-off)</b>	The meta-governor sets a legal, financial and/or discursive framework for the governance network The meta-governor monitors the performance of the network in terms of the surrounding framework	Proposals regarding legislation/regulations Proposals regarding financial means/budget Proposals to determine what topics are on the agenda Asking for information on the governance network
<b>Managing the network (hands-on)</b>	The meta-governor directly interferes by providing resources and empowering actors The meta-governor deliberately distributes resources and knowledge and assures fair circulation	Proposals regarding what information is to be used by whom Proposals regarding the position of particular actors within the network
<b>Participating in the network (hands-on)</b>	The meta-governor actively engages in interaction among actors within the governance network	Formal and informal meetings with negotiating actors Participation in meetings Participation in organized events

Figure 5: Operationalization of meta-governance strategies and forthcoming indicators. Derived and adjusted from Sorensen & Torfing, 2009.

**Democratic legitimacy of national level climate governance**

In terms of the democratic legitimacy of national level climate governance, indeed, indicators exist manifold. The theoretical framework put forward three sources of democratic legitimacy and three stages in the governance process in which they may be obtained (see Figure 1). Indeed, the nine indicators provide a comprehensive overview of the democratic legitimacy in national level climate governance.

Due to the limited scope and timeframe of this study, however, these nine indicators are summarized in three main indicators that are a returning feature of those provided by Klijn & Koppenjan (2016) and originally derived from Klijn & Edelenbos, 2013 (E. H. Klijn & Edelenbos, 2013). That is: the involvement of actors, the transparency and quality of the deliberation process and the way accountability is organized. These are captured in Figure 6.

In analysing the parameters of accountability, voice and due deliberation, attention will be paid to their respective role in the identified stages of the governance process (Figure 1). As the research process runs simultaneously to the governance process, however, the ability to do so systematically and regarding to all nine following criteria, will be limited. Particular the democratic legitimacy in the output-stage will be hard to assess, as the definite outcomes of the governance process won't be known at the end of the research process. Nonetheless, the phases of *input*, *throughput* and *output legitimacy* will be used as a guidance as far as possible in both the data-gathering and the analysis.

<b>Value of democratic legitimacy</b>	<b>Operationalized</b>	<b>Indicator(s) for democratic legitimacy</b>
<b>Accountability</b>	Allocated accountability throughout all stages of the process	Involved actors feel accountable towards existing representational institutions
<b>Voice</b>	Involvement of actors in all stages of the governance process	Involved actors perceive the governance network as inclusive rather than exclusive
<b>Due deliberation</b>	The quality of the deliberation at all stages of the governance process  The transparency throughout all stages of the governance process	Actors' satisfaction with the quality of deliberation (exchange of arguments)  Actors' satisfaction with the degree of transparency

**Figure 6: Operationalization of values of democratic legitimacy and forthcoming indicators. Derived and adjusted from Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016.**

## Research strategy

In order to answer the research question central to this study in a systemic, valid and reliable manner, particular choices in terms of research approaches are to be made. As this question illustrates, this study is in particular concerned with a highly nuanced and comprehensive mode of social behaviour. That is, the exercise of meta-governance techniques and their influence on the democratic legitimacy of national-level climate governance. This suggests to defy quantitative research approaches, as an exploration of the natural setting in which these behaviours occur is fundamental for understanding their actual emergence. Therefore, a qualitative method of research can be regarded as most appropriate for answering the question central to this study (Babbie, 2013).

## The case-study approach

Providing a comprehensive answer to the question central to this study demands a rich collection of data on behaviours, practices and policies from several perspectives. Therefore, *case study research* can be considered the most appropriate approach when executing this study.

A case study builds on ‘many features of few cases’ (Neuman, 2014). In doing so, both internal features as well as the context of the cases are examined. Indeed, case studies have shown to be particularly valuable in demonstrating causal arguments about social forces and their results (Neuman, 2014). A case study, thus, can be regarded as a strong method of research. Particular strengths are the following.

First, in collecting a rich variety of data, one of the strengths of a case study approach roots in its ability to include several sources of information on the specific case. These may involve observations, interviews and policy documents (Neuman, 2014).

Second, case studies examine the object of study in its natural context rather than an artificial setting provided by e.g. experiments and surveys-research.

Third, case studies have the ability to identify detailed social processes and causal mechanisms that underlie them (Neuman, 2014). Case studies are also criticized (Babbie, 2013). One main concern raised by critics relates to the limited ability of case studies to be generalized to other cases. This may be a concern when one is to compare several cases in order to draw lessons that are to be used across cases. This study, however, proceeds in an attempt to provide an extensive elaboration in one case. Although this indeed limits the external validity of this research, the qualities of the approach are considered to weigh out this effect.

The suggested strengths and considered critics of a case study as mentioned above altogether appear to provide an interesting approach when intending to answer the research question central to this study. As this study particularly aims at getting a deep and rich understanding of meta-governance and its influence on democratic legitimacy, the case study provides a well-suited approach.

## Proceeding the case study and considering validity and reliability

In choosing a comparative case study as approach for examining the research question central to this study, several criteria for measurement are incorporated (Babbie, 2013). First, *internal validity* is taken into account when using multiple sources of information to measure the same variable. This can indeed be regarded as measurement triangulation (Babbie, 2013; Neuman, 2014). Source triangulation is used twofold. On the one hand, parliamentary documents, which are publicly accessible documents, are used to provide insights in the actual behaviour of political meta-governors. This content-analysis will proceed as follows:



- **Parliamentary resolutions<sup>5</sup>:** Political meta-governors that are representative within a democratic system have the ability to govern through, i.a., budgeting and regulations. These consist of proposals, captured in parliamentary resolutions, which are voted for in parliament. Therefore, the first source consists of all parliamentary resolutions including the terms ‘Klimaataakkoord’ and ‘Klimaat-en Energieakkoord’. Here, a selection is made of those concerning the actual ‘Klimaataakkoord’ in the Netherlands, not to confuse with the global Paris-agreement (in Dutch also referred to as ‘Klimaataakkoord’). Since meta-governance concerns attempts, resolutions that got rejected by voting are also taken into account.
- **Parliamentary questions<sup>6</sup>:** An important instrument of political meta-governors to control the executive power consists of asking parliamentary questions. Hence, these questions provide a crucial overview of what information is asked for by political meta-governors, and since these documents are made public, also what is ought to be made transparent. In terms of democratic legitimacy, and in particular monitoring national level climate-governance, these questions thus incorporate highly relevant information. To capture all questions concerning the National Agreement on Climate (‘Klimaataakkoord’), the selection is based upon the same terms as mentioned above.

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<sup>5</sup> In Dutch: ‘Moties’

<sup>6</sup> In Dutch: ‘Kamervragen’

All documents mentioned above will be examined by using the online archive of the Dutch parliamentary organization, the ‘Tweede Kamer’. This can be found at [www.tweedekamer.nl](http://www.tweedekamer.nl). The formal starting-point of the interactive governance process has been 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, 2018<sup>7</sup>. Since attempts to provide a framework in advance may be at stake, all documents from the start of the parliamentary year after the January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, are taken into account.

To provide in-depth insights in the information found in both resolutions and questions, an additional source of this research will consist of interview-subjects. Triangulation in terms of interview-subjects is applied as well. Particularly note that political actors are relevant when it comes to the actual application of meta-governance strategies, and identification with the role of meta-governor, and negotiating actors are relevant in studying the way this is experienced by actors themselves. This manifests in a diverse array of interview-subjects, categorized as follows:

- **Political actors:** members of the Dutch parliament (‘Tweede Kamer’) or their direct policy-advisors in the domain of sustainability and/or renewable energy, and therefore concerned with the National Agreement on Energy and Climate (‘Klimaataakkoord’). As this research concerns politics, the division between right-wing and left-wing politicians may determine the politicians’ stance towards the agreement, as it concerns a political topic. Nevertheless, the focus on the process of governing rather than the content of the agreement is argued to cut across this traditional divide. As politicians may have a biased conception of their personal influence, other angles are included as well:

<sup>7</sup> See: ‘Kabinet geeft startschot voor Klimaataakkoord’, 23-02-2018: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2018/02/23/kabinet-geeft-startschot-voor-klimaataakkoord>

- **Negotiating actors:** Actors representing an organization in the actual negotiations on the National Agreement on Energy and Climate ('Klimaataakkoord').

The *reliability* of the study, that is, the extent to which it might be replicated, is dealt with by including systematic (semi-open) interview schemes and the use of systematic approach in analysing online content. To provide insights in what happened during the interviews, the interview transcripts are included in the appendix of this research. As this research relies heavily on perceptions and subjective interpretations, and these may be subject to change, this may influence the replicability of the approach ending up at the same results. Nevertheless, the advantage of rich and varied data derived from different points of view is considered to weigh out this disadvantage. Furthermore, the used parliamentary resolutions and questions provide a consistent background for these interviews to be replicated. To complement the reliability of the interviewing, an overview of the interview-subjects is provided in the appendix.

**Time**

The timeframe of preparing and executing this study concerns the period between March 2018 and July 2018. This is important as the subject of study, the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate, is running simultaneously. This process started in April 2018, and is estimated to continue until December 2018. Implementation of all agreed policies is expected to start by 2019. The timeframe of both processes is illustrated in Figure 7.



**Figure 7: Timeframe of this study and the subject of this study, the Dutch Agreement on Climate**

## IV RESEARCH FINDINGS

### NATIONAL-LEVEL INTERACTIVE CLIMATE GOVERNANCE, POLITICS AND ACTORS

*In this section, the theoretical conceptions of political meta-governance and its application in the case of interactive climate-governance in the Netherlands are empirically studied and applied on the case subject to this study.*

*First, the case of the National Agreement on Climate is further elaborated and explained by the usage of publicly accessible data, illustrating the governance process as a network, the substantive content of the network and its structure. In doing so, this part builds upon the conceptualization of interactive climate-governance as provided in the introduction of this study.*

*Second, more attention is paid to the way political meta-governance is exercised in particular regard to the democratic legitimacy of the National Agreement on Climate. Here, both data obtained from secondary data (Parliamentary questions and resolutions) are presented and interviews with both political and negotiating actors are presented.*

## Combating climate change: Advancing a wicked problem?

The introduction to this study introduced the notion of wicked problems as elaborated by Rittel and Webber (1973). They put forward several characteristics that are argued to be at the core of causing 'wickedness' in societal problems, thereby challenging the traditional approaches towards rational planning at that time (Levin, Cashore, Bernstein, & Auld, 2012; Rittel & Webber, 1973). Some scholars, however, question their conceptualization of 'wickedness', and call for a close scrutiny concerning its philosophical foundation (Turnbull & Hoppe, 2018). The term, so they argue, has been used in many different ways and leaves plenty of space for misunderstanding. Rather, Turnbull & Hoppe prefer to use the structure and political distance (variation among interests and ideas between involved actors) of the problem as continua along which problems can be characterized (2018).

Hence, it is important to examine whether the challenge to mitigate climate change can indeed be regarded a 'wicked problem'. Setting out to address this question, Levin et al (2012) arrive at the conclusion that climate change is not merely a wicked problem, but go as far as to characterize it as 'super wicked'. According to their conceptualization, they add to Rittel and Webber's characteristics (compare Peters & Pierre, 2012):

- **Time is running out:** significant impacts of climate change *will* occur and, over time, they become more *acute*;
- **Those seeking to solve the problem are also causing it:** individual and collective activities cause climate to change, causing virtually every individual to be involved in the solution;

- **No central authority:** climate change poses a global collective action problem, as there is a lack of centralized governance (compare Bernauer & Schaffer, 2012);
- **Policies discount the future irrationally:** the public and decision makers make decisions that reflect a short term horizon rather than a long term horizon, causing time-inconsistency.

Levin et al (2012) continue to emphasize 'winning coalitions in which a diverse set of stakeholders come to support the same policy intervention, initially for very different reasons.' They put forward that, perhaps even more important than substantive policy requirements, these winning coalitions are 'created, entrenched and expanded.' (Levin et al., 2012). Brian Head underlines their approach, arguing that there are several reasons for climate change to be characterized as a wicked problem (Head, 2014). Whether or not climate change, then, can be regarded as wicked, super wicked or characterized by high political distance between different actors, appears to be primarily semantics (Bernauer & Schaffer, 2012; Head, 2014; Levin et al., 2012; Turnbull & Hoppe, 2018). Indeed, the interactive character of approaches towards dealing with climate change, emphasizing the inclusion of a broad representation of interests, can be regarded as a call for interactive governance or network governance (Bulkeley, Harriet Schroeder, Heike Janda, Katy Zhao, Jimin Armstrong, Andrea Chu, Shu Yi Ghosh, Shibani, 2011; Khan, 2013).

## The National Agreement on Climate: Network context, content and structure

Taking on a similar, interactive approach towards mitigating climate change on a national level, the Dutch National Agreement on Climate fits a global momentum in which climate change has rose to the top of political agendas. Being partly the result of the global agreement to mitigate climate change, as signed in Paris, 2015, the National Agreement on Climate aims to provide substantive measures that mount up to reducing GHG-emissions by 49% by 2030. This ambition is partly the result of the politically negotiated coalition-agreement 'Trust in the future', as well as from the Paris-agreement as mentioned earlier.

Hence, the governance network, organized to arrive at the proposed GHG-reduction by 49% percent by 2030, can be regarded as a consequence of governmental policy, and therefore part of a broader governmental context. Formally, the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate is politically responsible for the execution of the coalition agreement in the field of climate-governance. The substantive content of the National Agreement is partly formulated in the coalition agreement 'Trust in the future':

**"There will be a national Climate- and energy-agreement. A Co2-reduction by 49% by 2030 provides the starting point of this agreement. If necessary, discounting and adjusting this objective will be included within this agreement"**<sup>8</sup>

The secondary aim of this agreement is to 'provide societal actors certainty about the long-term climate-policy in the Netherlands'. Furthermore, the agreement 'provides a platform for lasting conversation and enables adaptation to new (technological) developments'.

<sup>8</sup> See Dutch coalition agreement: 'Vertrouwen in de toekomst', 2017.

<sup>9</sup> See 'Organogram of the Climate Agreement'

Although the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate (Dutch: Economische Zaken en Klimaat, EZK) is politically responsible for executing the Coalition Agreement, the topic is considered broader than economic affairs and energy alone. Accordingly, specific tasks are formulated for different policy domains or sectors that play a role in the national composition of Co2-emissions. The following domains and forthcoming objectives (in Megatons Co2) are formulated in the proposition of the Agreement on Climate<sup>9</sup>:

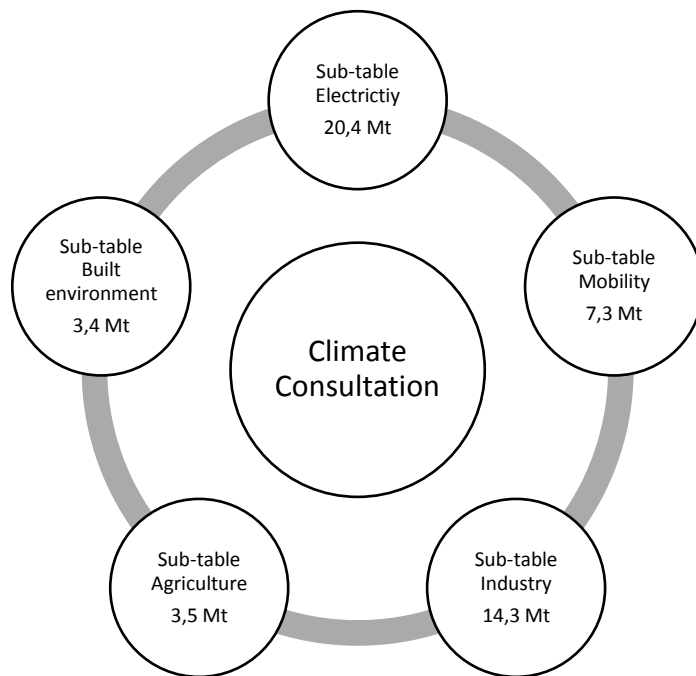
- Electricity: 20,2 Mt Co2-reduction
- Mobility: 7,3 Mt Co2-reduction
- Industry: 14,3 Mt Co2-reduction
- Agriculture and land-use: 3,5 Mt Co2-reduction
- Built environment: 3,4 Mt Co2-reduction

These objectives are echoed in the structure of the negotiation process and the identified 'sub-tables'. All tables are constituted by a particular subset of actors and lead by an independent, appointed chair. These tables consist of actors that are involved based on the following criteria<sup>10</sup>:

- They are able to contribute concretely to the transition within their sector;
- They bring in knowledge;
- They are able to make agreements based on a mandate.

The 'Klimaatberaad' table (Climate Consultation) safeguards the general progress of the governance process, and consists of all individual chairs of the sub-tables as well as the chair of the Agreement on Climate as a whole. This is visualized in Figure 8.

<sup>10</sup> See 'Approach towards an Agreement on Climate', March 2018. <https://www.klimaataakkoord.nl/documenten/publicaties/2018/03/21/aanpak-klimaataakkoord>



**Figure 8: The structure of the Agreement on Climate and substantive objectives per table (in Megaton Co2-reduction)**

## Introducing dataset 1: Parliamentary data

In order to systematically arrive at useful data that provide insight in the application of meta-governance strategies of political actors regarding national level climate governance in the Netherlands, the following overview provides insight in two simultaneously gathered datasets, consisting of parliamentary resolutions and parliamentary questions.

### Parliamentary resolutions

During political debates within the Parliament, the executive power (government) and the controlling power (parliament) come together. Additional to its function to control the executive governmental power, parliament has the ability to frame governmental action. That is, if the parliament demands particular actions from the side of the executive power, a parliamentary majority may express those demands by means of a resolution. When a resolution is adopted, the government has to execute what is dictated in the resolution. Hence, resolutions provide an instrument for parliament to exercise influence over the executive power. As follows, resolutions are always addressed to the Cabinet of Ministers that constitutes the executive power. An example is provided in the appendices.

Parliamentary resolutions thus contain relevant information whereas the exercise of meta-governance is concerned. Therefore, parliamentary resolutions concerning the National Agreement on Climate are incorporated in the dataset of this study. Figures 9 and 10 provide an overview of all submitted resolutions within the timeframe between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2018 and the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2018, when the gathering of data was exercised.

All resolutions are obtained by the use of the publicly accessible database of the Dutch parliament, the 'Tweede Kamer'<sup>11</sup>. In order to filter relevant resolutions, the following search-terms were used:

- 'Klimaatakkoord' (Agreement on Climate)
- 'Klimaat- en Energieakkoord (Agreement on Climate and Energy)

From the result that followed, all documents that included 'Paris' were separated, as the international agreement on climate signed in 2015, often referred to as 'Paris-agreement', carries the same Dutch term ('Klimaatakkoord'). As this study is concerned with the particular case of the National Agreement on Climate, resolutions concerning the 'Paris-agreement' were excluded of the dataset. The remaining resolutions are presented according to the following parameters:

- The document-code (which enables tracing the documents);
- The name and party of the petitioning Member of Parliament (MP);
- The name and party of MP's that supported the submission of the concerning resolution;
- The content of the request, that is, its 'dictum' or dictate;
- The indicator that manifests within the concerning resolution;
- What this indicator shows in terms of operationalized meta-governance strategies;
- What meta-governance strategy is manifested by the concerning resolution.

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<sup>11</sup> See the database and the section for resolutions via: <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/moties>

Document-code	Petitioner	Sub-petitioners	Content of request (dictate)	Indicator	Operationalized	Meta-governance strategy
30 196 Nr. 577	Van der Lee (Greens)	Moorlag (Labour) Sazias (50Plus) Wassenberg (Party for the Animals)	Requests the Cabinet to involve the financial sector in the Agreement on Climate and look for possibilities to enhance sustainable investment-portfolios	Proposals regarding the inclusiveness of the governance network	The meta-governor tries to influence the composition of the network	Network design and composition (hands-off)
34 723 Nr. 20	Jetten (Democrats)	Dik-Faber (Christian Union)	Requests the Cabinet to inform citizens about the sustainability of their heat-source; Requests the Cabinet to make agreements with the sector to enhance the sustainability of heat-supply	Proposals to determine what topics are on the agenda	The meta-governor sets a financial, legal or discursive framework for the governance network	Network framing (hands-off)
31 936 Nr. 450	Kröger (Greens)	Van der Lee (Greens)	Requests the Cabinet to stimulate that the Mobility-table, in relation to the Agreement on Climate, involves the Co2-reduction of the aviation sector in their negotiations	Proposals to determine what topics are on the agenda	The meta-governor sets a financial, legal or discursive framework for the governance network	Network framing (hands-off)
30 196 Nr. 595	Yesilgöz-Zegerius (Liberals)	Jetten (Democrats)	Requests the Cabinet to add a cross-sectional theme to the elaboration of the Agreement on Climate, 'obstructing regulations'	Proposals to determine what topics are on the agenda	The meta-governor sets a financial, legal or discursive framework for the governance network	Network framing (hands-off)
30 196 Nr. 585	Mulder (Christian Democrats)	Yesilgöz-Zegerius (Liberals) Jetten (Democrats) Van der Lee (Greens) Dik-Faber (Christian Union) Moorlag (Labour) Sazias (50Plus) Beckerman (Socialist Party)	Requests the Cabinet to, while elaborating the Agreement on Climate, provide the opportunity for citizens and small businesses to deliver inputs, e.g. by internet consultation	Proposals regarding the inclusiveness of the governance network Proposals regarding internal procedures and public transparency	The meta-governor tries to influence the composition of the network The meta-governor tries to influence the internal rules and followed procedures	Network design and composition Network framing (hands-off)
34 672 Nr. 34	Kops (Party For Freedom)		Requests the Cabinet to stop all payments regarding the energy transition and assure the energy-bill for households will decrease	Proposals regarding financial means and budget	The meta-governor sets a financial, legal or discursive framework for the governance network	Network framing (hands-off)
30 196 Nr. 580	Wassenberg (Party for the Animals)	Van der Lee (Greens) Moorlag (Labour) Sazias (50Plus) Beckerman (Socialist Party)	Requests the Cabinet to invite a sufficient amount of nature- and environmental organizations (NGO's) to the sector-tables in which the negotiations on the Agreement on Climate will take place	Proposals regarding the inclusiveness of the governance network Proposals regarding the position of particular actors within the network	The meta-governor tries to influence the composition of the network	Network design and composition (hands-off) Network management (hands-on)

Figure 9: Overview of resolutions concerning the Agreement on Climate, submitted between January 1st and June 11th, 2018 (1)



Document-code	Petitioner	Sub-petitioners	Content of request (dictate)	Indicator	Operationalized	Meta-governance strategy
34 627 Nr. 35	Kops (Party For Freedom)		Requests the Cabinet to proceed the conversations with third parties (e.g. NGO's, net-managers and companies) regarding the National Agreement on Climate in publicity	Proposals regarding internal procedures and public transparency	The meta-governor tries to influence the internal rules and followed procedures	Network design (hands-off)
30 196 Nr. 575	Van der Lee (Greens)	Yesilgöz-Zegerius (Liberals) Jetten (Democrats) Wassenberg (Party for the Animals) Dik-Faber (Christian Union) Moorlag (Labour) Sazias (50Plus) Beckerman (Socialist Party)	Requests the Cabinet to inform the Parliament halfway June regarding the constitution of the 'Climate-tables', working groups and the general progress regarding the National Agreement on Climate	Asking for information on the governance network	The meta-governor monitors the performance of the network in terms of the surrounding framework	Network framing (hands-off)
32 813 Nr. 176	Van Raan (Party for the Animals)		Requests the Cabinet to safeguard a certain degree of flexibility within the Agreement on Climate, in the case adjustments may be necessary to achieve the set climate goals	Proposals regarding internal procedures and public transparency	The meta-governor tries to influence the internal rules and followed procedures	Network design (hands-off)
30 196 Nr. 582	Wassenberg (Party for the Animals)	Moorlag (Labour) Van der Lee (Greens) Beckerman (Socialist Party)	Requests the Cabinet to explicitly address the shrinkage of the amount of cattle during the negotiations on the Agreement on Climate	Proposals to determine what topics are on the agenda	The meta-governor sets a financial, legal or discursive framework for the governance network	Network framing (hands-off)
30 196 Nr. 581	Wassenberg (Party for the Animals)	Beckerman (Socialist Party) Sazias (50Plus)	Requests the Cabinet to adjust the goals as formulated in the Agreement on Climate periodically if developments enable this	Proposals regarding internal procedures and public transparency	The meta-governor tries to influence the internal rules and followed procedures	Network design (hands-off)
30 196 Nr. 594	Sazias (50Plus)	Van der Lee (Greens) Moorlag (Labour) Beckerman (Socialist Party)	Requests the Cabinet to, during the elaboration of the Agreement on Climate, aim at a capacity-proportional divide of costs in society where possible	Proposals to determine what topics are on the agenda	The meta-governor sets a financial, legal or discursive framework for the governance network	Network framing (hands-off)
29 023 Nr. 234	Moorlag (Labour)	Van der Lee (Greens) Beckerman (Socialist Party)	Requests the Cabinet to include agreements on sustainability-criteria for production- and supply-companies of energy when those are privatized by shareholding governments	Proposals to determine what topics are on the agenda	The meta-governor sets a financial, legal or discursive framework for the governance network	Network framing (hands-off)
30 196 Nr. 596	Van der Lee (Greens)	Beckerman (Socialist Party) Moorlag (Labour) Sazias (50Plus)	Requests the Cabinet to stimulate that the transparency of the used calculations for assessing the Agreement on Climate, in particular by the Dutch Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), is as high as possible	Proposals regarding internal procedures and public transparency	The meta-governor tries to influence the internal rules and followed procedures	Network design (hands-off)

Figure 10: Overview of resolutions concerning the Agreement on Climate, submitted between January 1<sup>st</sup> and June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 (2)

## Parliamentary questions

As mentioned above, the role of the National Parliament in the Netherlands can be considered twofold: it performs a controlling function in order to control the executive power, and a framing function in order to steer the executive power. Whereas parliamentary resolutions are particularly concerned with the latter, the controlling function may be exercised in several ways. Hearings and oral questions provide examples of how the executive power, the Cabinet of Ministers, is controlled.

Another important instrument is the asking of written questions. Members of Parliament. These parliamentary questions are often triggered by news published in the media, or published reports, that concern governmental policy. The minister responsible for the dossier in concern is obliged to answer within a timeframe of three weeks, of which postponement with the same three weeks is possible once.

Hence, parliamentary questions express the topics that concern MP's, and furthermore provide a tool to make governmental information publicly accessible. After all, both the parliamentary questions and the formulated answers to them are published on the database of the Dutch parliament. Parliamentary questions may also be used to move the concerning minister and/or the civil servants operating in the responsible agency in a certain direction, e.g. because they need to study the subject of the questions. In that sense, parliamentary questions also provide a signalling function, aimed at promoting awareness with regard to a particular topic.

Here, again, the database of the Dutch parliament was used<sup>12</sup>. Documents between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January '18 and the 12<sup>th</sup> of June '18, the moment of data-gathering, are used.

In order to filter relevant questions, the following search-terms were used:

- 'Klimaatakkoord' (Agreement on Climate)
- 'Klimaat- en Energieakkoord (Agreement on Climate and Energy)

From the result that followed, a selection was made of all written questions ('Schriftelijke vragen'). Thereby answers of ministers are filtered out. The remaining documents were screened by using the operationalized codes mentioned earlier, and presented in Figures 11 and 12 according to the following parameters:

- The document-code (which enables tracing the documents);
- The title of the set of questions, always preceded by 'Questions of [name MP] to [name minister] about...'
- The name and party of the petitioning Member(s) of Parliament (MP);
- The content of the questions that are considered relevant (a set consists of an average of 10 – 20 individual questions concerning the same topic);
- The indicator that manifests within the concerning questions;
- What this indicator shows in terms of operationalized meta-governance strategies;
- What meta-governance strategy is manifested by the concerning resolution.

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<sup>12</sup> See the database and the section for parliamentary questions via: <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/kamervragen>

Document-code	Petitioner	Question title	Content of coded questions	Indicator	Operationalized	Meta-governance strategy
2018Z05436	Van Raan (Party for the Animals)	...about the scientific anchorage of the Agreement on Climate	7 Will measures concerning production volumes and behavioural change be discussed on the sector-tables or the Climate Consultation? If not, why? 9 Do you think the KNAW is more independent and therefore in a better position to make calculations concerning the agreement? If so, are you willing to give KNAW a role in the scientific anchorage of the Agreement on Climate? If not, why? 10 How is the scientific anchorage of the Agreement on Climate designed? Which institutions and scientists are involved, and on which moments? 11 How will be dealt with unexpected changes, for instance when scientific insights change or measures will fall short? What space is incorporated in the design?	Asking for information on the governance network Proposals regarding the position of particular actors within the network	The meta-governor monitors the performance of the network in terms of the surrounding framework The meta-governor tries to influence the composition of the network	Network framing (hands-off)  Network management (hands-on)
2018Z04049	Wassenberg (Party for the Animals)	...about the message 'Wood-burning in neighbourhoods should be stopped'.	8 Are you willing to let go the definition of biomass as a sustainable alternative for the generation of electricity or the heating of spaces within the Agreement on Climate and other Green Deals, and to quit subsidies for pellet stoves and biomass-kettles? If not, why?	Proposals to determine what topics are on the agenda Proposals regarding internal procedures and public transparency	The meta-governor sets a financial, legal or discursive framework for the governance network The meta-governor tries to influence the internal rules and followed procedures	Network design (hands-off)  Network framing (hands-off)
2018Z08677	Wassenberg (Party for the Animals)	...about the message that the co-firing of biomass causes a significant increase of particulate matter	8 Are you willing to let go the definition of biomass as a sustainable alternative for the generation of electricity or the heating of spaces within the Agreement on Climate and other Green Deals, and to quit subsidies for pellet stoves and biomass-kettles? If not, why?	Proposals to determine what topics are on the agenda Proposals regarding internal procedures and public transparency	The meta-governor sets a financial, legal or discursive framework for the governance network The meta-governor tries to influence the internal rules and followed procedures	Network design (hands-off)  Network framing (hands-off)
2018Z03953	Kröger (Greens)	...about wind turbines and Lelystad Airport	3 How are you going to prevent that the expansion of Lelystad Airport will interfere with the governmental ambitions to realize wind turbines in the region of Flevoland, and therefore hinders the already concluded Energy-agreement, and the yet-to-conclude Agreement on Climate?			

Figure 11: Overview of parliamentary questions concerning the Agreement on Climate, submitted between January 1st and June 12th, 2018 (1)

Document-code	Petitioner	Question title	Content of coded questions	Indicator	Operationalized	Meta-governance strategy
2018Z08358	Van der Lee (Greens)	...about the risks of overload of the electricity supply for the digital front-runners' position of the Netherlands	2 Is it true that there is a threatening shortage of electricity-supply on favourable locations for data-centres, e.g. Schiphol, Amsterdam Science Park and Amsterdam South-East? 10 Are you, concluding, willing to promote the discussion of these matters at the Electricity-table of the Agreement on Climate?	Proposals to determine what topics are on the agenda	The meta-governor sets a financial, legal or discursive framework for the governance network	Network framing (hands-off)
2018Z00805	Van der Lee (Greens) Diks (Greens)	...about the report 'Human rights in wind supply chains' by ActionAid and SOMO	6 How do you assure the incorporation of human rights in wind supply chains in future tenders and permit-requests for wind-energy and the National Agreement on Energy and Climate? 7 Are you willing to initiate binding agreements with the energy-sector, offshore construction and wind turbine producers concerning identification, prevention and mitigation of environmental and human rights-related risks, within the current process, or differently? If not, why? And if so, how are you planning to do so, and when will the parliament be informed on the progress?	Proposals to determine what topics are on the agenda Asking for information on the governance network	The meta-governor sets a financial, legal or discursive framework for the governance network The meta-governor monitors the performance of the network in terms of the surrounding framework	Network framing (hands-off)
2018Z00120	Snels (Greens) Van der Lee (Greens)	...about the demand of higher investment-criteria for loans regarding fossil investments	10 Are you willing – in European councils or outside - to express that the Netherlands are in favour of higher capital-criteria concerning loans for fossil companies? If not, are you at least willing to make these matters one of the subjects for negation during the National Agreement on Climate, which you hope to conclude with societal actors, including the financial sector, in 2018?	Proposals to determine what topics are on the agenda Proposals regarding the position of particular actors within the network	The meta-governor sets a financial, legal or discursive framework for the governance network	Network framing (hands-off) Network management (hands-on)

Figure 12: Overview of parliamentary questions concerning the Agreement on Climate, submitted between January 1st and June 12th, 2018 (2)

## Introducing dataset 2: Interviews with political and negotiating actors

As illustrated in the research strategy, the second and primary dataset of this study consists of interviews with political and negotiating actors involved at national level climate-governance in the Netherlands.

Political actors, here, are defined as Members of Parliament and/or their policy advisers that are concerned with the topics that are addressed in the governance-process to conclude the Agreement on Climate. Although these topics may cut across several portfolios, as MP's tend to divide subjects among specialized spokespersons, generally speaking, the following interviewees were invited:

- MP's and policy advisers concerned with environmental policy, infrastructure, mobility, emissions, air-quality and transport;
- MP's and policy advisers concerned with energy and climate-governance;
- MP's and policy advisers concerned with housing and built environment (energy-efficiency).

After a brief identification of the division of portfolios within all respective parties, interview-invitations were sent by e-mail to the publicly accessible e-mail addresses (published on the website of the Dutch parliament<sup>13</sup>), and when a reply did not come true, reminding calls were made to the secretaries of the respective spokespersons. In the case of a rejection, it was proposed to interview a policy adviser, which happened twice.

<sup>13</sup> For an overview of all e-mail addresses, see: [https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerleden\\_en\\_commissies/alle\\_kamerleden](https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerleden_en_commissies/alle_kamerleden)

Taking into account the limited timeframe of this study (some MP's were only available after the preferred period of data-gathering), a notable number of 5 interviews was arranged. All in all, this resulted in the following composition of the pool of interviewees:

Interview code	Party	Function	Date of interview	Remarks
ISNL01	Liberals (VVD)	MP, Spokesperson Infrastructure & Mobility	29 <sup>th</sup> of June	Interview by phone
ISNL02	50Plus	MP, Spokesperson Economic Affairs, Infrastructure & Environment	29 <sup>th</sup> of June	
ISNL03	Labour (PvdA)	MP, Spokesperson Energy, Climate, Agriculture and Nature	6 <sup>th</sup> of July	
ISNL04	Greens (GroenLinks)	Policy adviser Energy and Climate	12 <sup>th</sup> of July	Direct staff of MP, Spokesperson Energy & Climate
ISNL05	Christian Reformed Party	Policy adviser Energy and Climate	17 <sup>th</sup> of July	Direct staff of MP, Spokesperson Energy & Climate

**Table 2: Overview of interviewed political actors**

The second group of interviewees consists of negotiating actors. Negotiating actors, here, are defined as representatives of an organization which is directly involved in the interactive governance process which should lead to a National Agreement on Climate. This group of interviewees has been partly selected on the basis of the personal network of the researcher, since contact-details are not publicly accessible. This led to the following pool of interviewees:

Interview code	Representative of:	Function	Date of interview	Remarks
ISNL06	The Association of Electric Drivers	Representative	12 <sup>th</sup> of July	Interview by phone
ISNL07	Greenpeace Netherlands	Campaigner Energy & Climate	17 <sup>th</sup> of July	
ISNL08	Platform for young professionals Climate and Energy (KEK)	Table connector	19 <sup>th</sup> of July	
ISNL09	Nature&Environment	Project-leader Energy	23 <sup>rd</sup> of July	

**Table 3: Overview of interviewed negotiating actors**

As illustrated in Chapter IV, all interviews were conducted semi-structured. The results presented below follow the structure of the interviews content wise, and present citations that cut across both pools of interviewees as mentioned above.

### Network governance and political decision-making

Generally, political actors do recognize the governance-setting to arrive at a National Agreement on Climate as a process of interactive governance, based on interaction of autonomous actors. As the Labour-spokesperson on Energy and Climate remarks:

**“If you take a look at the process configuration, with the structure of those tables, the composition of organizations there. [...] So, yes indeed, I would certainly regard this as network governance.” (ISNL03)**

Some go even further, and regard this way of governing as inevitable. As the spokesperson on Energy and Climate of the elderly party (50Plus) remarks:

**“I really do see this [the negotiations on the National Agreement for Climate] as a comprehensive network activity. Which is inevitable, as when talking about climate, it affects us all, and everyone in society has to get in motion.” (ISNL02)**

She argues that *‘top-down decision making and dictating what should be done’* won’t be effective. Hence, a broad inclusion of public, private and societal actors is needed in order to arrive at fruitful and effective policy implementation whereas climate governance is concerned. The decision of the minister to engage in a process of interactive governance, is hence regarded as an instrumental decision, for which *‘he could have chosen different instruments, too’*. As the spokesperson on Energy and Climate of Labour (PvdA) explains:

**“That is driven by two motives...the exact know-how is allocated at those actors. And we need them in a cooperative stance, and their commitment, because those actors are crucial when it comes to implementing and executing policies. It makes a huge difference whether they’ll be pulling at the same end of the rope, or be throwing sand in the gears. The third element I would like to mention is that, well, one might say that this could be done within the public domain of the Parliament. Well, history shows us that extensive system-changes, transitions, barely succeed within the regular democratic process.” (ISNL03)**

To his taste, it is not only network governance which is at play, but also co-production, in which *‘government tries to develop plans together with representatives of societal organizations, companies and interest organizations’*. Indeed, this roots at the complexity that dominates the context of this policy domain. According to the policy-adviser Energy and Climate of the Christian Reformed Party:

**“...it’s such a high degree of complexity, as a government, you cannot make a few adjustments and then consider it all done. So in that sense, I completely understand the way this process is approached.” (ISNL05)**

And as a Member of Parliament further elaborates:

**“...so it has to do with complexity in two regards. First is complexity in terms of the nature of the problem, and the second complexity concerns the complex power play of actors and interest groups.” (ISNL03)**

Hence, complexity and mutual dependencies whereas policy implementation is concerned can be regarded to lead to an interactive process of governance. Although the process to arrive at the set goal of 49% Co2-reductions by 2030 is organized in a process which is based on interaction, the environment can be hostile and the negotiation can be tough. As a policy adviser of the Greens remarks:

**“It is all based on tough negotiations of conflicting interests. So I would not particularly regard this as shared problem-solving. In principle however, I regard it positive that so many parties take up their responsibility, all voluntary”. (ISNL04)**

Regarding the role of the National Parliament, particular changes are incorporated in comparison to the predecessor of the National Agreement on Climate, the Agreement on Energy (2013). As Liberals-spokesperson on Infrastructure and Environment illustrates:

**“Well, so in 2013 they arrived at the Agreement on Energy. Actually, as Parliament, it was swallowing or choking. In the end, we simply needed to tick the box. We learned that that is exactly what we do not want – so the current process is done differently, or at least, I hope so.” (ISNL01)**

This view is shared by several other interviewees. As a policy adviser remarks:

**“So there will be a calculation of all proposals, and then Wiebes (*The Minister of Economic Affairs and Climate, resp.*) will have a look at it all himself, and then there will be a parliamentary debate, and only then we will make the next steps. Hence, I do see a more explicit role for the National Parliament than during the Agreement on Energy.” (ISNL05)**

Accordingly, the position of the National Parliament regarding the process of arriving at a National Agreement on Climate is perceived stronger. This is underlined by the clear framework which is provided by the Coalition Agreement of the government. This framework includes the goal of 49% percent Co2-reduction by 2030, and also provides the basis for the interactive governance process to be organized. Furthermore, particular substantive choices have been made within this framework. As someone remarks:

**“In fact, the political representation does have the role of setting a framework. But regarding that, we need to admit that not all frames are fixed within the parliamentary debate...in fact, a lions’ share of policies is negotiated during the formation of the Cabinet. That occurred here as well...the goals and megatons, the objective per domain, the decision to use Carbon Capture Storage (CCS); those choices have been made within the coalition agreement.” (ISNL04)**

The anchorage of the approach within the Coalition Agreement illustrates the final responsibility of the minister as executing governor. Accordingly, the governance network surrounding the Agreement on Climate is perceived as *‘organized by government’* itself. This is also perceived within the network itself. As one of the negotiating actors, representing young professionals, elaborates:

**“So I do see the tables as something organized by the government, in which people were more or less obliged to join. If you weren’t there, your voice wasn’t heard. Especially in the beginning, the sphere was that way. Of course, combatting climate change is a shared objective, but the urgency is not felt similarly by each participant.” (ISNL08)**

This is underlined by an actor, part of a preparing working group concerned with electricity:

**“Well there is an important difference in comparison to the current Agreement on Energy. That has been initiated by a couple of organizations, whereas currently, there is a strong role for the ministries. That is, they were given some policy frameworks, in particular the Coalition Agreement, and they operate within that frame. Hence, there is a steering role for government concerning the Agreement on Climate, as I experience it.” (ISNL09)**

Accordingly, the close and explicit presence of executive government was felt within the network as well:

**“Well, there is a certain threat. If we won’t come up with something, the minister is going to decide it all by himself. And we don’t want any regulations over which we have even less influence. So you do feel that pressure, certainly.” (ISNL08)**

This clear framework put forward by the Coalition Agreement also creates several substantive issues. The space to negotiate particular topics is limited, which is a concern for some parties:

**“What goes wrong, and we wrote that earlier, is that there are some political taboos. Like charging cars per kilometer (*‘Kilometerheffing/Rekeningrijden’, resp.*), not reducing the livestock, and so on, which makes it problematic to achieve this goal of 49% Co2-reduction.” (ISNL04)**

Nonetheless, the anchorage of the Agreement on Climate within the broader framework of the Coalition Agreement, and therefore in governmental policy, is argued to strengthen the position of the parliament. This enhanced position of the National Parliament regarding the *‘Klimaataakkoord’* governance process in comparison to the *‘Energieakkoord’* is expressed in several ways by a lions’ share of the interviewees. As one notes:

**“I think it’s difficult, however, because in principle, power remains in Parliament. If tomorrow the Parliament says well, forget about the Agreement on Climate, we’re going to take a different approach...then that is what happens. So in that sense, in principle, you always remain in charge.” (ISNL04)**



Throughout the course of the governance process to arrive at the agreement, *'no important decisions regarding energy and climate are made within Parliament'*. Although several public hearings have been organized to inform Parliament on the progress of the several 'tables', there has virtually been no debate. At first sight, many of the interviewees regard their position particularly as 'awaiting the result of the negotiation process' or 'letting go'. 'We have to be patient' is a returning view on the position of Parliament as such. As one remarks:

**"...the framework has been democratically legitimized within parliament. But next up is the art of letting go. That demands trust. And, of course, the outcome needs to be judged in the end." (ISNL03)**

Hence, the interactive governance process lead to a political impasse regarding the parliamentary decision-making whereas topics on energy and climate were concerned:

**"So the past parliamentary year there haven't been made any important decisions regarding energy and climate...apart from the Groningen gas-extraction. [...] So as politics, you need to wait for a moment. Which I can understand, if it won't take too long." (ISNL05)**

Nonetheless, there are possibilities to exercise influence throughout the process. As a policy-adviser remarks, the role of Parliament is facilitating, and underlines that 'dictating what should be done in towns like Rijswijk or Voorschoten' is not the role of Parliament. That is up to the actors that develop this policy.

### Democratic legitimacy of the National Agreement for Climate

This relatively strong anchorage of interactive governance within governmental policy, constituted by a democratically legitimized Coalition Agreement, also enhances the perceived democratic legitimacy of the process as such. As one notes:

**"Of course, this coalition agreement obtained democratic legitimacy, as it was extensively debated, there were public statements, and then it was elevated to governmental policy. (ISNL03)"**

Opinions conflict regarding the democratic values and the way they are incorporated in the Agreement on Climate. When elaborating the tension between elected institutions, the primacy of politics, and network governance, an MP expresses:

**"And who is representing the average citizen? It won't be those 20 or so actors. Maybe they represent quite a share, which supports their interest, but we need to weigh their proposals, too. After all, we are elected." (ISN01)**

Accordingly, many debate revolves around the different criteria for democratic legitimacy as used in this study. Concerning the inclusiveness of the network, one remarks:

**"One of the questions I raised during the briefing we had, lately, regarded the inclusiveness. I don't know exactly who are invited at the tables, but who are *not*? Will they be critical towards the result, or will they feel bypassed?" (ISNL01)**

And then proceeds:

**"Input of citizens, is not incorporated actually. Then you end up with 17 million opinions. So in that sense, it's not inclusive. As far as I know, all parties will have an own interest, and they'll try to get that across as strong as possible. We need to be aware of that. So yes, it's really exclusive. It's a process merely from societal actors and companies." (ISNL01)**

The selection of actors that were to be invited for joining the interactive governance process has been made quite randomly, according to the remarks made by a policy adviser:

**"Since the group of people that is negotiating is limited. Someone, probably the chair of each table, appointed the actors that were to be invited and negotiate. So in that sense, it completely not inclusive." (ISNL04)**

Hence, inclusiveness is valued low. Others, however, value the inclusiveness as rather high:

**“Whereas inclusiveness is concerned, the throughput inclusiveness is high, because there are many stakeholders and representatives of citizens that can actively deliver inputs, and are able to directly turn the switches.” (ISNL03)**

Whether or not the degree of inclusiveness is valued high or low, most interviewees agree that the structure incorporates different opposing values, opinions and interests, which make it generally well-balanced. As one puts forward:

**“The composition of those tables was, I’m not sure what to think about it. Of course, additions can be made at any time, but anyway, overall, its organized quite thought-through.” (ISNL04)**

Negotiating actors underline the relative inclusiveness of the process. The representative of Greenpeace Netherlands for instance illustrates that, although there is a certain misbalance in terms of the capacity and power of the involved actors, most voices are heard. He argues:

**“Some companies tend to assign a lot of power to the environmental movement, but if you compare our capacity to theirs...that’s really out of balance. Nevertheless, we were represented at every table, which is a sign of inclusiveness, so to say.” (ISNL07)**

Several actors, on the other hand, report they needed to actively ‘lobby on all levels’ to get involved. As the representative of Greenpeace illustrates, he needed to convince the minister of their importance:

**“Then the minister told us to convince him of our role. Luckily, on the basis of the former Agreement for Energy we had very well examples of our role, our contribution to realize things. We weren’t even invited, actually – we imposed ourselves more or less.” (ISNL07)**

The same goes for the platform for young professionals in the field of energy and climate, ‘KEK’, that forced their involvement too:

**“Well, we showed that, if you organize yourselves as an interest group, you can be involved at the table very swiftly. It’s not very easy, but also not extremely difficult. So you can join the tables, see the documents, etc.” (ISNL08)**

Regarding inclusiveness as the diversity of voices and interests that are heard, the representative of the Electric Drivers Association illustrates a balance between ‘progressive and conservative’ powers at the tables. He further elaborates this by looking at the design of the governance process, in which the ‘main-tables’ are surrounded by ‘sub-tables’, composed of different subsets of actors:

**“...well, you do have this mobility-table, but it is surrounded by many sub-tables, like electric driving. [...] So in that sense, that has been a, although it increases the complexity, has been a way to enhance the inclusiveness of the process.” (ISNL06)**

Concerning the substantive opinions that are involved in the process, one points to the exclusion of a particular group of interests, namely, associations of people that oppose wind-farming:

**“There was this claim of opposers of windenergy, that they weren’t invited. Although I consider their legitimacy as zero, fact is they weren’t represented. Civil servants replied that they wanted to achieve goals, and accordingly, would not invite opposing powers.” (ISNL07)**

The same goes for representatives of the fishery sector, which, although their position receives a lot political attention, was not involved either:

**“Fishermen are not involved in the Agreement, but they do have a strong political position. A parliamentary majority represents the fishery sector.” (ISNL09)**

The accountability of the actors that constitute those tables nevertheless is subject of debate. Most interviewees regard the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate, rather than the negotiating actors themselves, as politically accountable. Accountability is valued low, as ‘there has been zero accounting towards the National Parliament by the negotiating actors’. As a Member of Parliament expresses:

**“Concerning the third point, accountability, that happens in different phases as well. The framework within the coalition agreement has been subject of debate within the Parliament itself. And there was no majority against it. Then the substantive preparation of an integrated proposal on the climate-tables, the final judgement on that lies at the Parliament. The minister should account for that.” (ISNL03)**

When asked after the accountability of the individual actors that are involved throughout the interactive governance process, he continues:

**“Not the negotiating actors. But it is exactly the minister under whose supervision the negotiations take place. We cannot account the individual actors.” (ISNL03)**

Another spokesperson regards the way actors think about their public responsibility quite lighthearted, as he expresses that:

**“Yes, they don’t have to account for anything, except towards their own members, or towards their shareholders if they are private firms. But we as a parliament have to account towards the public.” (ISNL01)**

This is underlined by a policy adviser, who thinks that accounting merely towards shareholders or members is too limited, as the interests accounted for are only a part of all affected interests:

**“Yes, accounting to shareholders is a particular type of accountability. But then you’re only being held accountable over the interests of those shareholders...whereas companies affect different interests too. They should account over those involved interests, too.” (ISNL04)**

Yet, another MP nuances the image, and finds an explanation in the lack of concrete results so far:

**“Well, accounting actors, not yet, as none of their proposals have been implemented yet. The picket poles are not there yet. So it’s impossible – we need to do this by learning.” (ISNL02)**

Nonetheless, the accountability and possibilities to account individual actors is valued relatively low to zero. And that is undesirable according to some. As one expresses:

**“I wouldn’t know how to organize that, but it should not be merely the political realm that has to account for this. Because in particular large companies, they are such powerful actors. I really think they should account more towards the public.” (ISNL04)**

The organized feedback junctures towards the parliament as an existing representative institution are, although organized, generally valued low as well. In terms of content, they *‘weren’t fruitful at all’*. The quality of deliberation and the transparency towards the public are, overall, valued average, or as expressed manifold, *‘as high as possible’*.

Negotiating is regarded ‘impossible’ in the open, but as far as possible without doing harm to the process, information has been laid for insight. As one expresses, making all circulating documents and conversations public would disturb the process:

**“There will be individual, half-finished proposals that will be taken out of their context, which is not helpful for the process. So leaving the process the process is, to a certain extent, inevitable.” (ISNL08)**

Concerning the outputs of the governance network, the role of the parliament is strengthened, too. Indeed, this is perceived and felt by negotiating actors. As one expresses:

**“If all calculations are finished, and the Cabinet gives its appreciation, the parliament will partly be inclined to further influence the process, for instance by resolutions.” (ISNL07)**

Nonetheless, there is a clear threshold to what the parliament may and could do in terms of changing the outputs produced by the network itself:

**“I think the minister will be reserved in giving his appreciation, to protect all those precarious agreements, and not to act like a bull in a china shop and frustrate it all. Hence, he will try to get that attitude across in Parliament, too.” (ISNL07)**

### Political meta-governance

To what extent do political actors concerned with the subjects discussed within the realm of the Agreement on Climate recognize their role as meta-governor, and do they apply meta-governance strategies accordingly? It is clear that the attitudes of political actors towards these questions vary. A first division that clearly manifests is the difference between being part of the governmental coalition or opposition. As an MP puts it:

**“I do think that MP’s that were involved in the formation of our new government...they made the decision to agree on the realization of the climate agreement. So the involvement of MP’s on the side of coalition parties has been way more than that of the opposition. Those negotiations, on the coalition agreement, were also taking place behind closed doors.” (ISNL03)**

That is, the decision whether or not there was to be organized a National Agreement on Climate by using an interactive governance process has been made during the negotiations on the Coalition Agreement ‘Trust in the future’. Indeed, one of the MP’s part of the coalition parties emphasizes the importance of the Coalition Agreement when it comes to assessing the network governance outcomes:

**“It’s amazing to come up with all sorts of things, but in the end we as a coalition will assess whether it fits the Coalition Agreement. Does it go beyond that agreement, and if so, are we willing to accept the financial consequences?” (ISNL01)**

One of the negotiating actors underlines this, as she puts forward that:

**“I don’t have the idea that politicians try to address all sorts of things. Merely parties that are not part of the coalition try to actively steer on the Agreement on Climate. I talked to a lot of parties in the coalition lately, but they’re rarely doing that. But yes, that Labour and the Greens are trying that, I can understand that.” (ISNL09)**

Hence, the influence of parties to steer the financial and substantive frame within which the interactive governance process takes place, has been different depending on whether they are part of the coalition or opposition. When asked after attempts to influence the framework provided by the Coalition Agreement, a member of the opposition replied:

**“We could’ve exercised more influence, maybe. But it wouldn’t have made a difference. Road pricing (‘Kilometerheffing’, resp) won’t succeed with the Liberals. And shrinking the livestock won’t be discussed as long as the Christian Democrats are in government. So we might have tried, but it wouldn’t have made a difference.” (ISNL04)**

Another MP of the opposition, however, suggests that the difference between opposition and coalition should not be overstated, as his party regards the approach towards an Agreement on Climate as part of their political objectives as well:

**“Well first about my mandate...look, as a political party you are given the task to realize as many of your program as possible. In this case, with such an agreement, it was clear to us that this would be the next step. Hence, we agreed with the approach.” (ISNL03)**

Nonetheless, the actual application of recognizable meta-governance strategies differs among MP’s and their particular positions. To start with, some MP’s don’t clearly recognize their role as meta-governor as such. One, for instance, regards it more as an administrative role:

**“Actually I’m completely at a distance of the process, so I do not recognize this meta-governor role. I think it’s really an administrative rather than a political role. Although I can imagine that this governance, that you can really use it for steering. By guiding the process.” (ISNL02)**

Generally speaking, attempts to influence the design of the governance network can be summarized in the following reply of an MP:

**“Which parties are invited at the tables? No, no. I do think there should be, more generally speaking, a balance. But the exact selection of particular actors, no, that is really executive management, that is a task for the minister and the departments.” (ISNL03)**

This is underlined by a remark of another MP:

**“No, I didn’t do that [influencing the composition of the network, resp]. They all came up with that themselves, I suppose. I didn’t steer on it, and I’m unaware of attempts to do so by others.” (ISNL01)**

Negotiating actors did not experience network design as such. When asked after the determination of the ‘rules of the game’, for instance, one of the actors argues:

**“Well, changing the rules...I wouldn’t know. Parliament wants to stay informed, that’s true. But I don’t have a concrete example that politicians tried to change rules or something alike.” (ISNL09)**

When asked about network framing, that is, attempts to influence the financial, legal or discursive framework of the governance process, the attitude of most political actors clearly changes. As one expresses:

**“And further, if you look at the topics were on the agenda, we emphasized that aviation and shipping should be addressed during the negotiations. And, let’s see, we always argue that there should be stricter norms for the industry.” (ISNL04)**

An MP explicitly links the meta-governance strategy of network framing to the addressing and agenda-setting task that politicians traditionally perform, as he puts forward that:

**“...so yes, I try to address topics that I think are underexposed. Sometimes I use different instruments, such as asking Parliamentary questions. When you see solar fields, for instance, or the connection with electricity nets, which are quite expensive. So I’ll be picking up signals from society, and then ask questions to the minister, with the hope and expectation that he wants to move in a certain direction.” (ISNL03)**

The presence of a frame is, indeed, strongly perceived among negotiating actors. Generally, the representative of Greenpeace states that:

**‘...and the Parliament has appointed itself a bigger role. To begin with, they discussed the framework of the governance process in a very early stadium. They discussed the framework and how the process will look like.’ (ISNL07)**

This framework, however, is particularly stressed by the executive branch of government and, consequently, civil servants. As one of the negotiating actors puts forward:

**“Well we do feel an imposed framework. A frame that is imposed on the executive power and civil servants. But politicians themselves, they’re not very involved.” (ISNL09)**

Concerning the discursive framework, topics that are to be addressed and those who aren’t are indeed argued to be put forward very clear. They argue that *‘the topics that are not on the agenda are put forward very explicitly’*, hence illustrating a clear demarcation of the scope of the deliberation. Furthermore, a financial frame is felt. As one of the actors puts forward:

**“But in the Coalition Agreement they even fixed how much money will be allocated for railways, how much for roads. We cannot change that. That is very limited. And it causes tension – we, at the tables, think we should be able to re-arrange that money, and the coalition parties don’t.” (ISNL06)**

Monitoring, considered another element of network framing, does not occur regularly by means of formal tools. Negotiating actors and political actors do use informal pathways to keep one another up-to-date, however. As a policy adviser expresses:

**“Well, we received information in the meantime. Concerning the broader picture, the guidelines. And yes, that may be from the hands of a lobbyist.” (ISNL04)**

Nonetheless, this doesn't concern contacts specifically aimed at addressing the governance process on the Agreement on Climate, and are not specifically aimed at monitoring. As a policy adviser remarks, monitoring definitely is a concern, but attempts to monitor are rather aimed at *organizing* the monitoring itself:

**"We are concerned with monitoring, particularly assuring that the monitoring is organized in a proper way. But we ourselves, we are not monitoring." (ISNL04)**

Concerning monitoring and transparency as two reinforcing elements, an MP puts forward that the broader system of checks and balances performed by independent agencies is a concern of the political role as a meta-governor. Accordingly, *'you do not monitor yourself, but assure that the governance arena is being monitored by strong institutions'*:

**"Their [The Environmental Assessment Agency, PBL, resp.] calculations will enhance public transparency. A democratic state is way more than a democratically elected parliament which appoints a government. In fact, it also involves the system of checks and balances by strong institutions." (ISNL02)**

Embedding the governance approach in its broader institutional context is a way for political actors to safeguard both their own role as well as the public transparency towards the people they represent. An MP puts forward that:

**"In more military terms, it provides lead and gunpowder to bombard the result if it involves shortcomings. For instance, the agreement may include CCS. Then you may react – so you're claiming that Co2 can be stored, but this report shows that it is not feasible... So how realistic is your proposal? Hence, it provides ammunition to exercise influence in the public space, to make things visible." (ISNL02)**

Network management is not reported extensively, and is limited to sharing and distributing information. As an MP puts forward:

**"I just mentioned asking Parliamentary questions, but you may also think of sharing certain information. I had this energy cooperative, for instance, that was concerned about the projected electricity pricing, which would have devastating**

**effects for the business case of their solar field. When I receive that type of information, I use it to address the problem elsewhere. (ISNL03)"**

Strengthening the position of particular actors inside the network. Generally, interviewees do see a certain misbalance in terms of preferences between political parties and actors, dependent on their substantive opinions. Empowering actors in terms of allocating resources would not be seen as appropriate:

**"No, I did not see MP's in such a managerial role. Allocating means for our organization is something we would disregard – we don't take money from government nor private firms." (ISNL07)**

Network participation is reported more extensively. Indeed, both political and negotiating actors do refer to informal contacts, also concerning the Agreement on Climate. Nonetheless, these contacts take place 'within already existing ties' and are not in particular separately organized for this governance process. Rather:

**"Well, let's be clear that all negotiating actors do have contacts in parliament regularly. So it's hard to demarcate that from contacts specifically aimed at addressing the Agreement on Climate." (ISNL06)**

As an MP continues:

**"That type of interactions do occur. Often initiated by the actors themselves – the societal middle in the Netherlands is extremely well-developed, every sector has its own representatives. It forms a procession of lobbyists." (ISNL03).**

Hence, political and negotiating actors both engage in a reciprocal relationship and use their already established ties to exchange information concerning the Agreement on Climate. But, which is emphasized by an MP, the network participation is explicitly aimed at steering the governance process:

**"There are several topics that I address in interaction with representatives of organizations. With the hope and expectations that some of that will seep through towards those negotiations. It's hard to determine what exact influence this has, but these are attempts explicitly aimed at exercising influence." (ISNL03)**

However, this does not hold for all political parties. It is emphasized that some societal actors are more likely to have better ties with particular political parties. As one of the negotiating actors expresses:

**“I do have regular contacts with MP’s, particularly concerning the Agreement on Climate, maybe 2 or 3 parties for sure. And you do exchange information there. Other actors will do the same, without a doubt. But maybe they’ll prefer contacts with parties with a different political color.” (ISNL08)**

Another MP, himself not being very active in exchanging information by using the network participation strategy, argues that:

**“That some NGO’s, for instance, will have very well-established contacts with some parties. That the Greens know the input of Greenpeace during the negotiations...that may well be. That happens. But we’re not discussing that as MP’s.” (ISNL01)**

He continues that:

**“But I’m actually glad that BOVAG and RAI [*two car-owner associations, resp.*] don’t inform me regularly. What I do not know, I cannot use.” (ISNL01)**

Furthermore, it is argued that the direct participation in such types of interactions is very time-consuming. As an MP puts forward:

**“Well we could be participating in the network, interacting with the actors. And we do so on other topics, like elderly care. But it has to be at the cornerstone of your parties’ policy, and you need to have enough capacity to do so. It’s very time-consuming.” (ISNL02)**

## V ANALYSIS

### REFLECTIONS ON THE DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY OF INTERACTIVE CLIMATE GOVERNANCE IN THE NETHERLANDS AND THE APPLICATION OF POLITICAL META-GOVERNANCE STRATEGIES

*This chapter precedes with analysing the empirical data obtained throughout the phase of fieldwork, thereby linking the empirical findings to theoretical ideas elaborated in the theoretical framework. First, the governance network concerning the Dutch Agreement on Climate is categorized by using the heuristic elaborated in the theoretical framework, thereby using the states' capacity to meta-govern and the structure of the network as parameters.*

*The second part of the analysis precedes by using the gathered data to whether or not political meta-governance was applied in the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate, and what implications this has for the democratic performance of the governance network concerned with the agreement as such. Accordingly, research questions 4 and 5 are addressed.*



## Categorizing the Agreement on Climate as governance network

The potential to exercise meta-governance effectively is influenced by several characteristics of the governance network as put forward by Daugbjerg and Fawcett (2017, see Figure 3). Accordingly, a first step in analysing the democratic performance of the governance network would be to determine how the governance network surrounding the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate can be characterized.

### The states' capacity to meta-govern

The first determinant is provided by the states' capacity to meta-govern. Drawing on the continuum of society-centred and state-centred meta-governance, Daugbjerg and Fawcett (2017) regard state-centred meta-governance as 'a situation in which the state plays a relatively dominant role in network steering'. Regarding the Agreement on Climate, the states' capacity to meta-govern can be valued high. This falls apart in the following arguments.

First, the interactive governance process concerning the Agreement on Climate is politically anchored in the Coalition Agreement of the Dutch national government. This agreement provides a formal basis for the execution of governmental policy, and therefore the way governmental performance is assessed and steered by the parliament. Accordingly, the Dutch state has a relative strong position when it comes to 'persuade, regulate, or change the network' (Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017).

Second, interviewees perceive the position of the Dutch government as particularly strong when it comes to setting the framework for the governance process to be organized. This is expressed in metaphors such as '*picket poles*' set by the government, referring to '*the goals, the rules of the game*' that are determined politically in advance.

Indeed, this manifested in several parliamentary debates concerning the Agreement on Climate and tangible attempts to meta-govern by political actors. This is underlined by MP's that regard the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate, and not the individual actors, as responsible for the final outputs produced by the network.

Third, the strong position of the state to meta-govern manifests in a 'shadow of hierarchy' casted over the actors, which is a returning feature of the interviews. The minister of Economic Affairs and Climate plays a pivotal role in selecting the actors that are to be invited (e.g., the remarks made by the representative of Greenpeace Netherlands). The near presence of government is felt as a '*stick behind the door*', causing actors to feel a shared sense of urgency to arrive at feasible solutions together. Furthermore, the state takes a participating role, as it is represented by civil servants at the different tables. Hence, the capacity of the state to meta-govern can be regarded as high.

### Network structure

The second determinant as provided by Daugbjerg and Fawcett (2017) concerns the structure of the network. As shown in the preceding chapter, opinions conflict when it comes to the relative closure of the governance network concerned with the Agreement of Climate. Some consider it rather inclusive, involving a high degree of relevant societal and private actors. Others point towards the limited access for citizens to get involved or the exclusion of particular, unpopular opinions. Although opinions differ along the continuum of inclusion or exclusion, the network structure can be regarded as relatively exclusive. This falls apart in the following arguments.

First, involved actors have privileged access to the governance process. As Daugbjerg and Fawcett (2017) put forward, 'privileged access to a network is considered to be a major factor in biasing policy decisions towards the interests of insiders'.

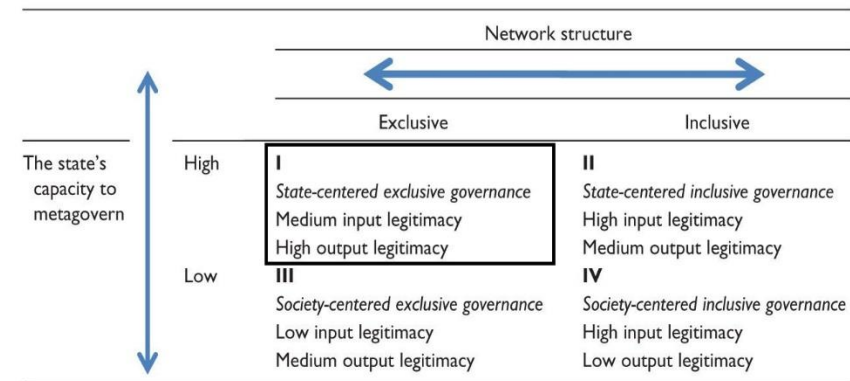
Although the range of privileged actors is quite wide, thereby suggesting relative inclusiveness, the presence of access-criteria shows that access is clearly limited. Some actors express the need to proactively self-organize and to actively ask to be involved, rather than being invited.

Second, it is put forward that not all voices are expressed. This particularly concerns individual citizens. Although citizens were informed during meetings throughout the country, criticism was not widely accepted. As an MP interprets the atmosphere, *'if you denied climate change, or are opposing wind turbines, you were told to leave'*.

Third, the actors that are involved are shown to agree to a certain extent to the *raison d'être* of the governance network, as the members share a 'common view about the network and its broader social, political and economic objectives', expressed in the generally accepted aim of attaining 49% Co2-reductions by 2030 (Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017) and the *'general sense of urgency to mitigate climate change'*. Hence, it can be argued that the structure of the network concerned with the Agreement on Climate is relatively exclusive, rather than inclusive.

In accordance with a high states' capacity to meta-govern and a relative exclusive structure of the governance network, the governance network concerned with the Dutch Agreement on Climate overlaps with *Cell 1* of the heuristic as developed by Daugbjerg and Fawcett (2017, see Figure 3). Indeed, it was shown that 'state authorities play a central role in the network either through direct intervention or through imposing a shadow of hierarchy over its activities'. The 'relatively stable institutional structure' and 'general agreement over the norms and rules of the game' suggest a limited number of actors, which indeed can be regarded the situation as examined in this case. Therefore, the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate can be categorized as *state-centred exclusive governance*.

Figure 13 shows the application of the heuristic of Daugbjerg and Fawcett (2017) to the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate.



**Figure 13: Categorizing the Dutch Agreement on Climate as state-centred exclusive governance**

### Implications for democratic legitimacy

The categorization of the governance network concerning the Agreement on Climate as state-centred exclusive governance holds implications for its democratic performance.

First, medium input legitimacy is expected due to the relative strong position of state authorities to 'safeguard the broader public interest', but the usage of criteria for actors to obtain access to the network will cause particular actors to 'benefit from privileged access' (Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017).

Second, this type of governance network is likely to produce relative high levels of output legitimacy, because 'decision making is likely to proceed more 'efficient' and faster among a more exclusive group'. Furthermore, the relative exclusive character safeguards more effective policy implementation and delivery (Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017).

## The democratic legitimacy of interactive climate governance in the Netherlands

As follows from the heuristic provided by Daugbjerg and Fawcett (2017) medium input legitimacy and high output legitimacy can be expected. The measurement of the democratic legitimacy of governance networks throughout this study follows the division made by Klijn & Edelenbos (2013) and, accordingly, used the following indicators to examine the democratic legitimacy of the governance network concerned with the Agreement on Climate:

- Accountability
- Voice
- Due deliberation

These indicators manifest in different phases of the governance process. As elaborated in Chapter III, these can be considered input legitimacy, throughput legitimacy and output legitimacy (See Figure 1). Although the limited scope of this study and the timeframe of the subject of analysis cause the application of these phases to be limited, many of the findings can be associated with one or more specific phases as mentioned above, and are therefore presented accordingly. This section, hence, will proceed with some general observations on the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate governance in the Netherlands, and thereafter explicitly address the three indicators mentioned above.

### General reflections on the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate-governance in the Netherlands

Overall, the gathered data suggest a relative strong anchorage of the interactive governance process regarding existing representative institutions. The controlling and framing powers of the Dutch Parliament are safeguarded both in terms of input (explicitly discussing the framework for the governance network with parliament in advance), throughput (organized interfaces throughout

the governance process) and output (the final balancing of the produced agreement and decision making by parliament).

Furthermore, the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate, representing the executive branch of government, is perceived as the '*accountee*' on which account is to be rendered. This indeed is in accordance with the formal division of powers, as the parliament represents the controlling and framing power, and the minister represents the executive power. In a sense, the primacy of politics, thus, is not explicitly challenged.

Nonetheless, the interactive approach concerning the Agreement on Climate holds implications for the role of existing political institutions. Political actors express to feel a '*threshold*' to exercise their formal power, as the governance process is expected to result in a '*carefully constructed, well balanced*' agreement based on a balance between '*sweet and sour*' regarding the interests of all actors. Changing things that are politically unfeasible and/or undesirable will '*make this construction collapse*' and may eventually cause actors to walk away from the tables. Political actors, hence, express their anxiety to act like a '*bull in a china shop*' when they actively interfere with the carefully constructed agreements that are presented to them.

Negotiating actors, on the other hand, do feel accountable to '*come up with an agreement that is politically feasible*', as they take into account the strong position of the parliament. Although a certain degree of accountability towards existing political institutions is felt, the particular concern of negotiating actors are their own constituencies.

Some of the negotiating actors explicitly address the felt '*shadow or hierarchy*' casted by the clear presence of the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate.

Indeed, the explicit role and *'representation of government'* in the interactive governance process by civil servants cast a shadow of hierarchy, as actors are well aware of the ability of the minister to use *'law and regulations we have less influence over'* if negotiating actors *'won't arrive at the 49% percent goal'*. This formal power of the minister is referred to as a *'stick behind the door'* which actors are constantly aware of.

The transparency of the process is valued very low to zero. As an MP expresses, he *'knows as much as presented in the media'*, and therefore has no more information than any other citizen. Although some political actors perceive this as negative, there is understanding as well – an MP argues that *'we should not disturb the chicken while she's breeding'*. The final judgement which is allocated in parliament encourages political actors to *'patiently await'* the result, because they know *'there will be extensive political debate'* on the delivered outputs in later stages of the process.

#### Democratic legitimacy as accountability

Following up on Figure 6, *accountability* has been defined as *'the allocated accountability throughout all stages of the governance process'*.

*Input legitimacy* in terms of accountability can be valued high. The clear anchorage of the Agreement on Climate within the (politically legitimized) Coalition Agreement safeguards the primacy of politics, as this agreement has been *'extensively debated'* in the Dutch Parliament. Accordingly, the *formal authority of representative institutions* remains relatively untouched.

*Throughput legitimacy* in terms of accountability can be considered low. Generally, negotiating actors do feel accountable towards existing representational institutions. They argue that they *'want to make sure to come up with proposals that are politically feasible'*, which expresses a clear focus on outputs rather than throughput.

More accountability, however, is felt to the constituencies the actors represent, because in the end, *'the output is valued politically'*. Hence, the governance process itself is *'not really about democracy, but more about representing interests'*. This is echoed by political actors, that argue that they *'need to be aware'* of the composition of the network in terms of represented interests. Although there are some *organized feedback junctures* towards the Dutch Parliament, these are valued low, as they are perceived *'not fruitful at all'*. No explicit attempts to monitor the performance of the network have been made either.

*Output legitimacy* in terms of accountability can be valued high. Although the data provide no insights in the *actors' satisfaction with the outcomes*, as there are no outcomes to be reported yet, the explicit role of existing representative institutions and the *'final judgement'* that is given by the Dutch Parliament safeguards the *'weighing and allocation of means'* by representative institutions. Both political actors and negotiating actors perceive this role as sufficing to safeguard the *'interest of citizenry'* in the final Agreement on Climate. Considering the input and output legitimacy, hence, the way accountability is organized throughout the governance process illustrates high levels of democratic legitimacy. Throughput is a concern, although this is *'partly to blame the parliament itself'* as well, since different occasions to scrutinize the throughput were not used optimally.

#### Democratic legitimacy as voice

Voice, in relation to democratic legitimacy, concerns the *'involvement of actors in all phases of the process'* and has therefore been defined as the relative inclusiveness of the governance network (see Figure 6).

The *input legitimacy* in terms of voice, hence concerning the *'regulations on access to the process'* and the *'subjects at stake'* can be valued low.

There are explicit regulations on the access to the process, and there are explicit cases of actors that wanted to be involved, but weren't invited eventually. The number of subjects at stake is clearly limited by *'picket poles'* set in the Coalition Agreement, which particularly concern the ongoing debate on the livestock in the Netherlands and the discussion on road pricing.

Among interviewees, the inclusiveness of the governance network in terms of *throughput legitimacy* concerning the Agreement on Climate is subject to debate. Some actors do regard the process as inclusive, *'because there are many stakeholders and representatives of citizens that can actively deliver inputs, and are able to directly turn the switches'*. According to many interviewees, the extent to which different substantive interests are represented is quite balanced, and *'therefore inclusive'*. Both political and negotiating actors argue that there will *'always be criticism regarding the composition of the network'* since there is no *'scientifically perfect'* representation of all affected actors. Weighing *'practical arguments'* against an even broader inclusion of the network, most interviewees illustrate that the composition is *'well thought through'* and represents a fair distribution of *'conservative and progressive powers'*, and is hence valued high. To recall the expression of a policy adviser, he *'wouldn't know how to do it better'*. Time and inclusiveness are closely related, as an actor expresses, *'if we would've had the whole year, the process could've been more inclusive'*.

Others value the governance network as rather exclusive, and emphasize the nature of indirect democracy in which it is not the citizenry which is involved, but a range of affected actors. The actors that were negotiating furthermore illustrate that they *'needed to pro-actively organize themselves'* in order to *'get a chair at the tables'*. This illustrates that not all affected actors were automatically involved.

And, to recall the case of anti-windfarm associations, a case introduced by one of the negotiating actors, there are examples of actors that wanted to be involved, but were not allowed to join the network. An MP illustrates that, concerning individual citizens, indeed, *'there have been possibilities for people to express their opinions'*, but he doesn't have the impression *'that these will be incorporated in the final agreement'*. Hence, although very clear and explicit attempts to widen up the inclusiveness of the governance network have been undertaken by both the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate as well as the Dutch Parliament, there are explicit limitations to the extent we might regard the governance process as attaining high legitimacy in terms of voice.

#### Democratic legitimacy as due deliberation

Due deliberation refers to both the quality and the transparency of the deliberation within the governance network, and is measured by *'actors' satisfaction with the quality of deliberation and transparency'* (Figure 6).

Generally, both political and negotiating actors consider the transparency of the governance network as low to zero, but yet *'as high as possible'*. Political actors do understand that *'negotiating in the open'* limits the internal quality of deliberation, and therefore do not necessarily demand more transparency. Negotiating actors, on the other hand, emphasize that indeed, *'full transparency is impossible'* but that, nonetheless, there were no *'secrets'*. The same goes for the relative ease concerning the way internal information was circulating among actors. Political actors illustrate that *'due to informal circuits, we were quite up-to-date'*. But, when referring to their privileged position as political actor, *'the average citizen wasn't'*. As a negotiating actor puts it, *'information was widely shared among actors that trusted one another'*, both inside and outside the network.

In that sense, an actor puts forward that '*political actors were able to monitor what was happening in the network*' via informal pathways. As he expresses, '*everyone was Whatsapping*'. Indeed, this suggests a tense relationship between secrecy and transparency.

### Concluding reflections on the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate-governance

The democratic legitimacy of interactive climate-governance in the Netherlands in terms of *accountability* can be valued high. This study reported high levels of accountability on the side of political representative institutions. Indeed, the anchorage of interactive governance in a democratically legitimized governmental policy was shown to strengthen the role of existing representative institutions.

Furthermore, existing structures regarding the division of accountability are not challenged, as executive powers, in the studied case represented by the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate, are formally accountable for the governance process. The decision of the minister to use interactive governance as an instrument to enhance societal commitment and support, and use expertise of private, public and societal actors have been reported as arguments that are recognized and supported by the Dutch Parliament. Negotiating actors do feel accountable towards public authorities, particularly to arrive at politically feasible solutions. Accordingly, *political accountability* is anchored relatively strong. Due to *ex ante framework setting* by means of the Coalition Agreement, making steering beforehand and monitoring afterwards possible, a vertical accountability relationship between representative institutions and the governance network is established (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Inconsistencies arise when looking at *social* or *public accountability*, as those remain underexposed (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016).

Indeed, this echoes the findings of earlier studies, reporting that it is not particularly the accountability relation between representative institutions and governance networks, but rather, the relationship between governance networks and the broader citizenry which may be at stake (Aarsæther et al., 2009).

Despite specific attempts to 'strengthen the relationship between governance network and citizens' as suggested by Aarsæther et al (2009), the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate governance in the Netherlands in terms of *voice* can be valued medium. Although, indeed, the reported findings suggest an interactive governance arena in which a wide variety of substantive interests and arguments have been involved, actors needed to adhere to formulated access criteria and proactively impose their involvement in the governance network. This demands thought-through organization, and indeed excludes societal groups with fewer capacity to do so. Accordingly, the direct involvement of citizens has been clearly limited. Generally, MP's aim at safeguarding an overall general balance between '*progressive and conservative powers*' in the network rather than being concerned with the involvement of specific actors. Time-pressure under which interactive governance may take place shows to be in a tense relationship with inclusiveness, which empirically underlines the tension between effectiveness and inclusiveness as reported by Provan and Kenis (2009).

The democratic legitimacy of interactive climate governance in the Netherlands in terms of *due deliberation* can be valued as medium. Although the public transparency of the deliberation within the network is valued as '*low to zero*', this is not perceived problematic. It is argued that, although the transparency of the governance arena is low, it is also '*as high as possible*'.

Both political and negotiating actors acknowledge that a certain degree of secrecy is needed, as suggested by Torfing et al (Torfing, Peters, Pierre, & Sorensen, 2013).

The degree to which transparency was organized particularly underlines the ‘state-centred’ character of governance in this case, as ‘the degree of transparency of state-centred governance is very much controlled by the government itself’ (Torfing et al., 2013). Indeed, in-between briefings organized by government and an in-between press release, planned in advance, underline the governmental influence over the degree of transparency. These reflections are captured in Figure 14.

	<i>Input legitimacy</i>	<i>Throughput legitimacy</i>	<i>Output legitimacy</i>
<i>Accountability</i>	High	Medium	High
<i>Voice</i>	Low	Medium	<i>Unknown</i>
<i>Due deliberation</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	Medium	<i>Unknown</i>

**Figure 14: Levels of accountability, voice and due deliberation in different phases of the governance process**

### Political meta-governance and the Agreement on Climate

The heuristic as provided by Daugbjerg and Fawcett suggests a strong position for state-centred meta-governance concerning the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate. In order to identify the actual application of political meta-governance strategies, results from both parliamentary data (see Figures 9-12) and interviews with potential meta-governors are used. To recall, the meta-governance strategies that might be exercised were, as follows from the theoretical framework (see Figure 5), identified as (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009):

- Network framing (hands-off)
- Network design (hands-off)
- Network management (hands-on)
- Network participation (hands-on)

### General reflections on political meta-governance and interactive climate-governance

Reflecting on political meta-governance, first and foremost, it is relevant to demarcate the executive branch of government from the controlling branch of government, which holds executive government to account (Torfing, Pierre, Peters, & Sorensen, 2013). Indeed, the Dutch Parliament concerns the *controlling branch* of government, and as such, exercises democratic control. A returning feature in the research findings reported above, is that MP’s that constitute this controlling branch perceive many of the identified meta-governance strategies as particular roles for the *executive branch* of government. Accordingly, the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate performs a considerable job as meta-governor. Since *political* meta-governance as defined in this study explicitly addresses the role of Members of Parliament, however, this section will turn towards the role of MP’s meta-governing the interactive climate-governance process concerning the Dutch Agreement on Climate.

There is wide consensus concerning the necessity for interactive governance with regard to climate policy in the Netherlands. Both political actors and negotiating actors agree that this interactive governance approach has significant advantages in comparison to top-down governmental policies. Among others, these concern societal expertise ('know how'), commitment, the organization of societal support and, generally, smooth policy implementation in later phases. Hence, this particularly concerns the 'governability' and 'instrumental' argument of interactive governance, an attempt to 'strengthen policy capacity' (Bell & Hindmoor, 2009).

Consequently, the examination of meta-governance is shown relevant in this case, as attempts to steer the constellation within which the governance network operates may have come about. Before turning to the application of meta-governance strategies as mentioned above, however, it is valuable to address several general remarks in advance. Following the questions that are to be asked when assessing the democratic anchorage of interactive governance in elected politicians, raised by Torfing et al (2013), these concern the general awareness of the governance network and the assumed role of meta-governor by politicians (Torfing et al., 2013a).

#### *The awareness of the interactive governance arena*

Generally, Dutch MP's are very well aware of the presence of the governance network that is concerned with elaborating the Dutch Agreement on Climate. Indeed, they do acknowledge this governance arena as an arena of interactive governance or, indeed, a 'governance network'. Yet, awareness on more specific elements of the governance network, for instance, the exact composition in terms of actors and the way process-management is organized, is limited. Hence, access to information about the governance network, another question raised by Torfing et al (2013a), is not widely recognized.

#### *The acceptance of the role of 'meta-governor'*

The assumed role of 'meta-governor' strongly varies among political actors. Some perceive it as an '*administrative, rather than a political role*'. Accordingly, the application of specific meta-governance strategies, in particular those concerning network management, are perceived as part of process management or executing policies rather than the controlling and framing role of the Dutch Parliament, and are accordingly associated with the role of the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate, rather than their own position as MP or policy adviser. Many political actors position themselves as '*awaiting*' or '*facilitating*' when asked about their current role.

#### *The formulation of pre-defined meta-governance objectives*

Political actors do not recognize the application of meta-governance in accordance with pre-defined objectives. As a policy adviser mentions, '*there is no pre-defined masterplan on how to influence the Agreement on Climate*'. Others acknowledge their willingness to meta-govern, but point at their limited capability to apply meta-governance strategies, due to e.g. capacity ('*we are a small party with few personnel*'), other priorities ('*climate is not our main-issue*'), or regard it simply not opportune in this phase of the governance process.

An MP argues that '*you shouldn't disturb a chicken while she's breeding*', and in doing so illustrates the widespread sense of the clearly limited and demarcated role of political actors. Some political actors, in particular those part of the opposition, tend to downplay their role, as '*it wouldn't have made a difference*' whether they would've interfered more actively or not. As one puts forward, '*a lions' share of policies is negotiated during the formation of the Cabinet*', and therefore not suitable for political debate.



*The close cooperation with public administrators*

The last question addressed by Torfing et al (2013) falls outside the scope of this study, and therefore, insufficient data have been gathered to effectively address this question.

*The combination of different meta-governance strategies*

Nonetheless, some political actors explicitly refer to meta-governance strategies, and even different forms thereof. Although they may not regard them as meta-governance strategies with a pre-defined strategy in mind, the manifestation of several meta-governance strategies stands out. The next section will elaborate the application of meta-governance strategies with regard to the Agreement on Climate.

**The Dutch Parliament and network design**

Network design concerns activities aimed at ‘influencing the used rules and procedures’ and ‘influencing the composition of the network’ (see Figure 5). Indeed, some studied documents explicitly show attempts to engage in network design. A resolution submitted by the Greens and other members of the opposition (document 30 196, Nr. 577), for instance, asks the Cabinet to explicitly involve actors representing the financial sector (design) and address how their investment-portfolios can enhance sustainability solutions (framing). Other resolutions are aimed at influencing the composition of the network by safeguarding the presence of environmental organizations (document 30 196, Nr. 580) or extending the range of procedures used by involving internet consultation to enhance citizen involvement (document 30 196, Nr. 585). Resolutions concerning the publicity of the network also occurred; a resolution submitted by the Party for Freedom, for instance, requests to proceed the negotiations in public (document 34 672, Nr. 35).

Parliamentary questions are also used to engage in network design. This is shown by the questions submitted by the codes 2018Z04049 and 2018Z08677 to alter the used definition for defining bio-mass as sustainable fuel.

Notwithstanding the examples of network design provided above, political actors themselves report to not be actively engaged in network design. Most regard steering the ‘rules of the game’ and the ‘composition of the network’ as particular tasks for the executive branch of government, and therefore the responsibility of the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate. To recall the expression of an MP, deciding the composition of the network is ‘*a task for the minister and the departments*’.

**The Dutch Parliament and network framing**

Network framing concerns activities aimed at ‘*setting a financial, legal or discursive framework*’ and, indeed, the ‘*monitoring of the performance of the governance network in terms of its surrounding framework*’ (see Figure 5). This section addresses the role of the Dutch Parliament in meta-governing the framework surrounding the Agreement on Climate.

The Dutch Parliament (‘Tweede Kamer’) and the elected Members of Parliament (MP’s) engaged in extensive *network framing* activities concerning the Dutch Agreement on Climate. In particular, the high amount of attempts to address the scope and agenda of the governance network, and thereby influencing the *discursive framework*, stands out. This strongly manifests in the usage of parliamentary resolutions to influence the discursive frame.

Examples of topics that were to be addressed concern, among others, the reduction of Co2-emissions by the aviation- and shipping sectors (see document 36 196, Nr. 450), the inclusion of enhanced sustainability of heat-supplies (see document 34 723, Nr. 20), obstructing regulations that prevent companies to enhance their sustainability (see document 30 196, Nr. 595) and the reduction of the livestock (see document 30 196, 582). Furthermore, parliamentary questions were used to '*draw governmental attention*' to topics that were a particular concern of MP's, and the responsible minister was often asked whether he was willing to address those topics throughout the governance process. Examples include black-outs and electricity-shortage on popular locations for data-centres (document 2018Z08358), changing the used definition of bio-mass (document 2018Z08677), safeguarding human rights in wind energy supply chains (document 2018Z00805) and criteria for loans concerning fossil-fuel investments (document 2018Z00120).

Some political actors were well aware of their role in influencing the discursive frame. An MP expressed to seize '*all emerging opportunities*' to address the topics he thought to be a concern in the governance process. Some MP's explicitly link their agenda-setting role to this strategy, and hence do not perceive it as something which is innovative in comparison to their traditional role.

Negotiating actors generally do perceive a clear framework surrounding their self-governing activities and deliberation. Indeed, this particularly concerns the discursive frame as well.

This particularly relates to the estimation of topics that may be politically feasible. As the negotiating actors are well aware of the strong position of the Dutch Parliament in valuing the final agreement, '*coming up with proposals that are politically sensitive makes no sense*'. Accordingly, negotiating actors do consider some topics as '*no-go's*', thereby indicating the presence of a strong discursive framework.

Particular topics that are ought '*politically sensitive*', and therefore perceived as a fixed discursive frame, concern the decrease of livestock and road pricing.

Despite the strong emphasis on discursive framing, no significant findings reporting financial or legal framing are to be mentioned. The financial framework referred to most frequently is captured in '*cost-effectiveness*', as measures should not be too expensive, since that decreases political feasibility of those measures. One negotiating actor does report the presence of a strong financial framework, which is fixed in the Coalition Agreement. This concerns the Infrastructural Budget ('*Infrastructuurfonds*'), which concerns all budgets per infrastructural modality (railways, roads etc.). As he argues, '*we [the negotiating actors, resp.] do think we are allowed to shift that money, whereas the coalition parties think we aren't*'. An MP refers to an explicit limitation which is incorporated in the Coalition Agreement whereas the costs are concerned, indeed illustrating a financial framework. Nonetheless, no tangible meta-governance activities aimed at influencing this framework have been reported.

Concerning the monitoring of the performance of the network in terms of its surrounding framework, no significant research findings were reported. As reported, informal contacts do play a role in keeping '*up-to-date*' as far as the progress of the negotiations is concerned. The usage of informal contacts and real-life interaction with actors within the network, however, can be considered network participation rather than network framing, which will be examined next.

### The Dutch Parliament and network management

Network management concerns '*direct interference by providing resources*' as well as the '*distribution of knowledge and information*'. Meta-governance related to this specific strategy occurred scarcely in the process regarding the Agreement on Climate.

The questions submitted by codes 2018Z05436 explicitly address design of the network. However, design, here, is used to indicate the scientific anchorage of the governance process, referring to independent bureaus that are to assess the proposals produced by the network. This type of network intervention is more likely to be categorized as *network management*, as it concerns the management and production of knowledge in the governance network (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Despite the clear focus MP's regarding network framing, similar to network design, most elements indicating network management were perceived as tasks for executive government.

### The Dutch Parliament and network participation

Network participation concerns direct interaction of the meta-governor with the actors that are part of the governance network (see Figure 5). The research findings reported in this study suggest a strong anchorage of network participation of political actors via existing ties between particular organizations and people. Indeed, this follows the logic of general public affairs and lobbying. MP's and actors often *'know one another'* and have *'contacts with representatives of their organizations regularly'*. Using these already established contacts, political actors *'receive updates on the process'* and general information, whereas negotiating actors use their ties to *'explore what substantive solutions may encounter political support'* and *'what topics are politically sensitive'*. Hence, the relationship between political actors and negotiating actors can be considered reciprocal. There is no considerable balance, however, in terms of contacts between negotiating actors and MP's: the extent to which MP's apply the network participation varies among them, and the density of relationships varies (specific parties prefer specific actors and vice versa).

Furthermore, it was reported that some MP's part of the coalition explicitly excluded the Agreement on Climate as a conversation topic in advance (*'we're not here to talk about the Agreement on Climate, are we?'*).

Some are deliberately using the strategy in order to exercise influence, whereas others are relatively unaware of what is happening and how their colleagues interact with negotiating actors. Furthermore, the reported results illustrate that maintaining this relationship is very time-consuming, and hence will depend on the capacity of parties to establish and maintain such relationships concerning the interactive governance arena, as well as the political priorities of the specific political party.

### Concluding reflections on political meta-governance in interactive climate-governance processes in the Netherlands

This section set out to address the application of meta-governance strategies by political actors, defined as political representatives, throughout the interactive governance process concerning the Dutch Agreement on Climate. Indeed, the application of meta-governance strategies was shown to have come about in the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate. The occurrence of network framing and network participation is considerably more often than are network design and network management.

Network framing particularly concerned discursive framing, which some political actors directly relate to their agenda-setting role. Indeed, this has to do with the soft application of *Authority* by political actors (Vabo & Røiseland, 2012). Aims to influence the *'overall objective'* and *'joint mission'* of the governance network were explicitly reported (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009).

Topics that were to be addressed concern, among others, the size of livestock in the Netherlands, the division of societal costs brought forward by the energy transition and reluctant, obstructing regulations that hinders companies to enhance their sustainability performance.

The setting of a framework within which actors operate can be considered a traditional task of Dutch representative bodies, building on vertical hierarchy rather than horizontal steering, and is accordingly referred to as ‘government of governance’ (Koppenjan et al., 2011). Negotiating actors report to be aware of this framework, and indeed have obtained a ‘clear idea of what the political system conceives as politically feasible and appropriate’ (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009).

Network participation particularly concerned informal contacts with representatives of actors that were involved in the network, which should not be seen separately from already established relationships that concern lobbying in a more traditional sense. Hence, these relationship were not specifically established to discuss and steer the particular interactive governance arena. Rather, already established relationships were used to, next to ‘regular’ fine-tuning and lobbying, address the Agreement on Climate as well. From the side of political actors, this application of network participation was particularly aimed at ‘keeping up-to-date’ of developments within the network, whereas negotiating actors used their contacts to ‘explore what topics were politically feasible’, due to their awareness of the strong position of the Dutch Parliament in the final decision making.

Both network design and network management occurred scarcely concerning the interactive governance process. Political actors particularly regard both strategies as part of the role performed by the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate, representing the executive branch of government.

Nonetheless, the findings of this study report sporadic attempts to influence the composition of the network or the rules of the game. Some political actors acknowledged that limited organizational capacity and other political priorities played a role in their limited application of meta-governance strategies.

A summary of the application of different meta-governance strategies, the density of their occurrence and forthcoming examples is provided by Figure 15.

Meta-governance strategy	Operationalized	Occurrence in the Agreement on Climate	Example
<b>Network design (hands-off)</b>	Influencing the rules and followed procedures Influencing the composition of the network	Scarce	Submitting resolution 30 196, Nr. 580, to involve sufficient environmental organizations
<b>Network framing (hands-off)</b>	Setting a legal, financial or discursive framework Monitoring the governance network in that framework	Very often	Submitting resolution 36 196, Nr. 450, to address Co2-reduction in the aviation- and shipping sectors
<b>Network management (hands-on)</b>	Direct interference by providing resources Distributing knowledge and information	Scarce	Submitting questions 2018Z05436 about the scientific anchorage of the Agreement on Climate
<b>Network participation (hands-on)</b>	Active engagement in interaction among actors within the governance network	Often	Informal contacts between political actors and negotiating actors

Figure 15: Summarizing the application of meta-governance strategies concerning the Dutch Agreement on Climate

## Enhancing democratic legitimacy of interactive governance: what role for political meta-governance?

This study examined the democratic legitimacy of interactive governance processes, applied on the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate, and studied the role of political meta-governance therein. Accordingly, the study assumed a causal relationship between the application of political meta-governance and democratic legitimacy of governance networks.

In doing so, the study operationalized democratic legitimacy by using a threefold conceptualization as provided by Klijn & Edelenbos (E. H. Klijn & Edelenbos, 2013), further elaborated by Klijn & Koppenjan (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). This conceptualization consists of the elements that were comprehensively elaborated above; accountability, voice and due deliberation.

The second, independent variable of this study consisted of the application of political meta-governance. Here, the application of meta-governance strategies as provided by Sørensen & Torfing (2006, 2009) was used. This conceptualization has been elaborated above, too, and consists of network design, network framing, network management and network participation (Sørensen & Torfing, 2016; Sørensen, 2006; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009).

This study showed that the democratic performance of the Dutch Agreement on Climate can be characterized as attaining high levels of accountability, whereas other sources of democratic legitimacy can be considered medium to low. Furthermore, this study showed that the application of individual political meta-governance strategies did come about in the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate, but that an integrative, full-fledged approach, covering all different strategies of meta-governance, remains a promise unfulfilled.

This is particularly caused by the general conception that many meta-governance strategies are tasks for executive government, rather than Members of Parliament; hence, this study stresses the clear demarcation between administrative meta-governance and political meta-governance (Doberstein, 2013; Torfing et al., 2013).

What role, then, lies ahead for political meta-governance in enhancing democratic legitimacy? To recall, theoretically, high hopes were casted on the role of meta-governance in enhancing democratic legitimacy (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). *Network design*, for instance, is argued to potentially safeguard the inclusion of all affected stakeholders and assure publicity concerning the network (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Endeavours concerned with *network framing* may, i.a., assure legal, financial and discursive conditions within the operations of the network take place, and enables monitoring and scrutinizing performance therein (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). *Network management* is argued to potentially empower weak and marginalized stakeholders and assure transparent and fair circulation of information. And, concluding, *network participation* may arguably enhance a broad policy agenda, as the meta-governor engages in day-to-day interaction with the network as a whole (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009).

Empirically, this study showed mixed experiences concerning the role for meta-governance in enhancing democratic legitimacy. The preceding sections will interrelate the research findings presented above with one another in order to provide a point of departure for general conclusions.

### Network design and assuring the inclusion of all affected stakeholders and publicity

Although attempts to apply the meta-governance strategy *network design* were shown, the governance network itself can be regarded as being relatively exclusive.

Indeed, tangible attempts concerning the inclusion of all affected actors (see, e.g., the resolution to include the financial sector and environmental organizations) occurred. Notwithstanding the importance of these attempts, administrative rules concerning the general accessibility of the governance network were applied strictly, demanding negotiating actors to proactively self-organize and impose their presence in the network, and resulting in the exclusion of specific societal groups (e.g., fishermen and citizens opposing wind farms were mentioned). A dilemma put forward, here, is that most political and negotiating actors consider the network as being relatively inclusive and generally well-balanced. To recall the expression of a policy adviser, he '*wouldn't know how to do it better*', as there is no '*scientifically perfect balance*' of whom to include. When holding on to the theoretical conceptualization of *voice*, however, rules regarding access indicate privileged access, and therefore relative exclusiveness (Daugbjerg & Fawcett, 2017; E. H. Klijn & Edelenbos, 2013).

Attempts to apply *network design* to assure publicity of the network were shown as well, for instance by assuring interfaces with Parliament in advance, and calling upon the executive branch of government to proceed the negotiation in public. However, both political actors and negotiating actors value the transparency of the governance network as 'low to zero', but simultaneously 'as high as possible', as they both acknowledge that '*negotiating in the public is impossible*'.

Accordingly, the application of network-design was shown to occur, but did not cause significant differences concerning the inclusiveness nor the publicity of the governance network.

### Network framing and assuring and monitoring a framework for network governance

Application of the *network framing* strategy was reported manifold, as elected officials used their position to provide a framework for network governance to be organized. In particular, discursive framing occurred. Although Sørensen & Torfing (2016) regard network framing as a 'weak meta-governance tool, especially when it stands alone', it effectively caused negotiating actors to feel the pressure to operate within this framework, both in financial, legal and discursive terms. As put forward by Koppenjan et al (2011), however, this is closely related with the 'framework-setting' role that is a traditional element provided by the Dutch political system. Nonetheless, the framework, in this case incorporated in the politically endorsed Coalition Agreement, causes actors to be well-aware of the strong position of the Dutch Parliament and positively contribute to a formal basis to render account on. Indeed, accordingly, this can mainly be regarded as positively influencing the democratic value of accountability, particularly strengthening the existing accountability relationship between the controlling and executive branches of government (Torfing et al., 2013).

### Network management and empowering weaker stakeholders

The application of *network management* as hands-on meta-governance strategy was not reported extensively. Indeed, political actors particularly regard the activities related to network management as tasks for executive government and public administrators (Torfing et al., 2013). What is more, is that actors that can be considered relatively weak (e.g. Greenpeace) position in comparison to private actors put forward that they '*would not accept support from government*', even if they were offered. Accordingly, no correlation between network management by elected officials and values of democratic legitimacy could be discovered.

### Network participation and enhancing a broad policy agenda

Although Sørensen (2006) defines *network participation* as *direct* participation, this study reported more *indirect* ways of network participation.

MP's report to, indeed, engage in direct interaction with negotiating actors. However, they do so in the 'regular' realms of the Dutch political arena, implicitly indicating they are reluctant to participate in the studied interactive governance arena itself. Although influencing the policy agenda through network participation was mentioned, network participation was shown to be particularly aimed at exchanging information. Indeed, a reciprocal relationship between political and negotiating actors was reported. Political actors used their interaction with actors to obtain information regarding the ongoing negotiations and to address topics they were concerned with, whereas negotiating actors used their interaction to explore the political feasibility and appropriateness of specific measurements and proposals (compare with *network framing* in Sørensen, 2009). Arguably, these pathways of direct communication between political and negotiating actors will 'provide valuable inputs to the formulation of new and adequate solutions' and 'a strong commitment of the political community' to realize the negotiated policies and secure goal achievement (Sørensen & Torfing, 2016).

### Concluding reflections on the role of meta-governance in enhancing democratic legitimacy

When comparing the theoretical promise of meta-governance of enhancing democratic legitimacy to the empirical results provided in this study, a mixed image arises.

On the one hand, this study reported the occurrence of disparate meta-governance strategies applied by political actors. Particularly, those concerned *network framing* and *network participation*, and to a lesser extent, *network design*.

On the other hand, there is no reason to assume a full-fledged application of meta-governance in accordance with what Torfing et al (2013) would regard as a 'mixed' approach towards meta-governance, applying both *hands-on* and *hands-off* strategies in order to complement one another. When adhering their line of reasoning, it follows that meta-governance is not exercised in an 'effective and efficient' manner.

Three main lines of explanation can be distilled from the interviews with political actors. First and foremost, this study showed that politicians, indeed, are tempted to regard several elements of meta-governance as administrative tasks (Torfing et al., 2013). Although administrative meta-governance does have a democratic anchorage within institutionalized norms and rules incorporated in the traditional, political realms of representative democracies (e.g. the provision of separated powers between a controlling and executing branch of government), Torfing et al (2013) warn that leaving meta-governance to public administrators 'seriously reduces the level of democratic control with decentred governance processes'. The final responsibility of the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate might, however, be regarded as political in the end: the controlling power, hence, holds the executive power to account.

The second and third argument fall apart into more or less practical explanations. These concern the capacity of political actors to engage in full-fledged meta-governance, as, for instance, network participation is considered relatively time-consuming. Especially smaller political parties report to have limited capacity to actively meta-govern. The third argument relates to this, as it is necessary to set political priorities. Some parties may be concerned with particular substantive issues, and meta-governance networks accordingly.

This is for instance shown by the relatively high number of resolutions submitted by the Party for the Animals, a single-issue party concerned with animal rights and climate change, whereas 50Plus, a political party concerned with elderly people, reports to meta-govern other interactive governance arena, as they better fit their policy agenda. Accordingly, they merely engaged in active meta-governance in the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate.



## VI CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

### WHAT ROLE FOR POLITICAL META-GOVERNANCE IN ENHANCING THE DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY OF INTERACTIVE CLIMATE GOVERNANCE IN THE NETHERLANDS?

*This study set out to examine the influence of political meta-governance on the democratic legitimacy of interactive governance processes, and reflects this theoretical assumption on the empirical case provided by the Dutch Agreement on Climate, the 'Klimaatakkoord'. In doing so, this study set out to assess the democratic anchorage of interactive climate governance in elected politicians. When assessing the democratic anchorage of governance networks in the role of political actors, Torfing et al (2013b) address several questions that are to be asked whereas the role of elected politicians is concerned.*

*This section will reflect on those questions, and in doing so value the influence of political meta-governance on the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate governance in the Netherlands. This section will conclude with general remarks concerning the implications of the research findings, and the way these relate to other research findings. Accordingly, the question central to this study is addressed:*

*What is the influence of political meta-governance on the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate-governance in the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate ('Klimaatakkoord')?*

## Towards democratically legitimate interactive climate-governance?

The aim of this study was to empirically study the application of meta-governance strategies aimed at enhancing the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate governance in the Netherlands. Here, the changing role of elected officials in safeguarding democratic values of accountability, voice and due deliberation was examined. The materials reported above suggest many interesting findings.

A first conclusion that may be drawn is that, indeed, the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate underlines the development that ‘government officials are increasingly seeking to solve complex problems’ through ‘interactive forms of governance’, such as governance networks (Sørensen & Torfing, 2016). The state-centred character of the provided case shows that state actors retain to play a ‘pivotal role’, even when interactive governance is at play (Bell & Hindmoor, 2009). Accordingly, participating actors did report to be aware of the close presence and potential interference of governmental actors, illustrating a ‘shadow of hierarchy’ (Nederhand, Bekkers, & Voorberg, 2016; Whitehead, 2003).

A second conclusion to be drawn is that the case studied in this research further justifies the theoretical and empirical doubts concerning the extent to which politicians are prepared and capable of taking the role of meta-governor and apply full-fledged meta-governance strategies accordingly (Koppenjan et al., 2011). This conclusion falls apart in the following arguments.

First and foremost, Torfing et al (2013) put forward that ‘the effective and efficient exercise of meta-governance calls for a mix of the different forms’ thereof. This study reported the application of disparate meta-governance strategies, but does not illustrate such a mixed approach towards complementing *hands-off* strategies with *hands-on* strategies and vice versa.

Second, the limited application of political meta-governance partly roots in leaving the lions’ share of meta-governance strategies to the executive branch of government and public administrators, due to the general conception that these, in particular network design and network management, are administrative roles. Although the role-image of political meta-governors was not widely recognized in the studied case, some politicians did take a proactive stance in applying two meta-governance strategies in particular: network framing and network participation. Nonetheless, a deliberate, integrative and full-fledged approach towards meta-governing the Dutch Agreement on Climate, covering all different elements of meta-governance as such, did not come about.

A third conclusion concerning the application of meta-governance is that, echoing earlier findings (Baker & Stoker, 2012; Vabo & Røiseland, 2012), meta-governance strategies are not that different from traditional sources of political steering. Indeed, ‘traditional’ means, such as those incorporated in the parliamentary system (e.g. resolutions, parliamentary questions) are widely used to apply separate meta-governance strategies. Network participation was shown to be heavily interrelated with ‘regular’ and already established contacts between involved actors and Members of Parliament.

A fourth conclusion is that the strong anchorage of interactive governance processes in a broader, politically endorsed governance framework safeguards both democratic accountability and simultaneously strengthens the ability of politicians to apply network framing strategies (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). This conclusion falls apart in two arguments:

The state-centred character of interactive governance portrayed in this case, being the result of anchoring network governance in governmental policy, safeguards traditional mechanisms of *vertical political accountability* (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016).

Consequently, there is a common sense regarding who is accountable to whom. That is, the minister of Economic Affairs and Climate, representing the executive branch of government, is accountable towards the Dutch Parliament, representing the controlling branch of government. The politically endorsed Coalition Agreement is the formulated basis over which account is rendered. Both in terms of input (determining the framework) and output (final decision making), hence, the representative position of the Dutch Parliament is safeguarded. In doing so, perhaps the most controversial dimension of governance through governance networks, decision making by societal actors, is mediated (Doberstein, 2013).

The ability of politicians to apply network framing has been partly fostered by anchorage of network governance in broader governmental policy as well. Here, again, this framework-setting role is not considerably different from the traditional position of representative bodies in the Netherlands (Koppenjan et al., 2011). Consequently, this is likely to be regarded as the 'government of governance' rather than 'governance of governance'. The case shows that network framing was shown to be particularly discursive. Indeed, politicians associated discursive network framing with their more traditional agenda-setting role. The broader governance framework provided by the Coalition Agreement has been extensively debated in the Dutch parliamentary arena, and hence provided space for network framing within the traditional realm of politics. As reported, both formal means in the political arena, such as parliamentary resolutions and questions, as well as informal means, such as informal contacts with actors, were used to this end. The latter, indeed, can be characterized as network participation rather than network framing.

A fifth conclusion that is to be drawn from the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate is that, although *political accountability* is anchored very well, critical remarks can be made concerning the *societal* and *public accountability* of the governance network (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Although this fits the representative model of democracy very well, in which elected officials are held accountable using political mechanisms of accountability, accountability as elaborated in associative and deliberative models of democracy tends to be underexposed. Indeed, this stresses the importance of the governance network to encounter the broader citizenry (Aarsæther et al., 2009).

A sixth conclusion that may be drawn from this case-study is that values other than democratic accountability, that is, *voice* and *due deliberation* perform relatively poor in state-centred interactive governance. This particularly relates to two renowned dilemmas regarding network governance, by which the relative poor performance can be understood.

The first dilemma, relating to *voice*, explicitly addresses the tension between effectiveness and inclusiveness (Provan & Kenis, 2008). As Provan & Kenis put forward, '*the more that organizational participants are involved in the network decision process, the more time consuming and resource intensive that process will tend to be*'. As the governance process examined in the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate is confronted with a particular timeframe, choices regarding its composition are made. This, indeed, resulted in the explicit exclusion of particular actors. Generally, this encountered understanding among both political actors and negotiating actors, as long as a certain substantive balance of interests was safeguarded.

The second dilemma, relating to *due deliberation*, has been identified by Torfing et al (2013) and concerns the tension between secluded and transparent governance. As the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate shows, transparency continues to pose dilemmas regarding the degree of transparency that is to be included.

Generally, this too encountered understanding among the actors involved.

### **Enhancing democratic legitimacy through political meta-governance: a mere theoretical discussion?**

Elected politicians can lend democratic legitimacy to processes of interactive governance by exercising meta-governance strategies (Torfing et al., 2013). Although some findings report cases in which meta-governance has been applied by political actors effectively, many empirical studies illustrate clear limitations concerning the extent to which meta-governance is applied deliberately and by the usage of a full-fledged meta-governance approach, covering all different strategies (Bell & Park, 2006; Edelenbos et al., 2017; Fotel & Hanssen, 2009; Koppenjan et al., 2011; Scourfield, 2015).

#### **Barriers for applying political meta-governance**

Barriers concerning the application of political meta-governance by elected officials have been reported manifold, and concern among others:

- Narrow interpretation of meta-governance (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009);
- Limited resources (Koppenjan et al., 2011);
- Political role conflicts (Edelenbos et al., 2017);
- Democratic tradition and institutions (Fotel & Hanssen, 2009).

As can be drawn from the case of the Dutch Agreement on Climate, this study adds to those obstacles:

- Limited time and organizational capacity to meta-govern (compare Vabo & Røiseland, 2012);
- Political priorities concerning the substantive issues that are to be meta-governed.

### **Political and administrative meta-governance**

The findings of this study underline that, although some meta-governance strategies do come about, the exercise of meta-governance is generally regarded as a mere task for executive government rather than elected officials. In doing so, the Netherlands appear somewhat comparable with Canada, as both countries show that state-directed administrative meta-governance is dominant (Doberstein, 2013). Indeed, this may hold severe implications for democratic legitimacy and the position of elected officials (Torfing et al., 2013). Accordingly, the pathway towards lasting role innovation concerning the role of elected representatives, has again been shown to be a long and bumpy one. Although the emphasis on elected officials as political meta-governors is arguably a justified one, this study reported a high relevance for administrative meta-governance. Although one may argue that, indeed, the executive branch of government is controlled by elected officials, the tendency to leave meta-governance a mere administrative task comes at a severe risk of damaging democratic values (Torfing et al., 2013). Nonetheless, based on this study, the divide between political and administrative meta-governance might be considered a redundant one. Accordingly, future research might consider to define political meta-governance broader – that is, including administrative meta-governance.

Altogether, the research findings presented above suggest an adjusted causal scheme to be drawn from the case-study on the democratic legitimacy of interactive climate-governance in the Netherlands. This concluding scheme is captured in Figure 16.

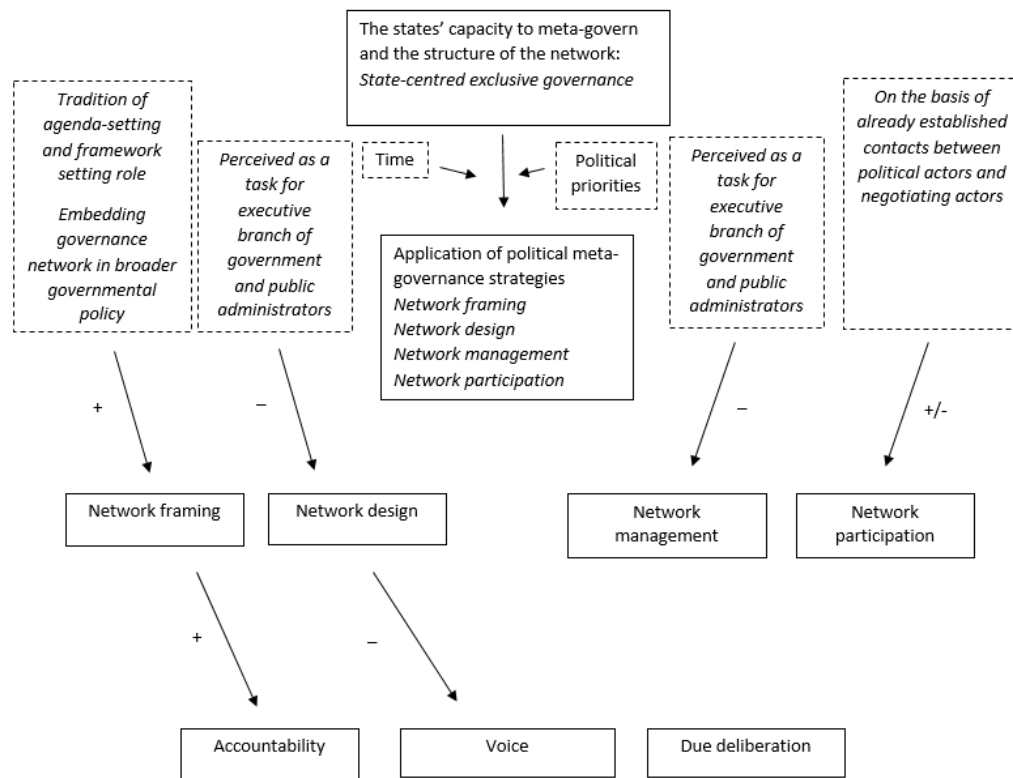


Figure 16: Causal scheme, adjusted on the empirical findings presented in this study

## Limitations of this study and directions for future explorations

Given the single case-study provided in this study, projection of the presented findings on interactive climate-governance processes in countries other than the Netherlands should be done with care. Furthermore, the particular tradition of interactive climate-governance in the Netherlands, as well as the relatively strong nature and position of societal actors, should be taken into account when doing so.

In examining the case, two dominant policy arenas were used: the political arena (that is, the Dutch National Parliament) and the governance arena (the negotiating actors concerning the National Agreement on Climate). However, this study highlighted many exchanges and interaction between those arenas. Furthermore, it showed that, due to the state-centred character of network governance, the political arena and the governance arena are inevitably closely intertwined.

The timeframe of this study limits the extent to which *output legitimacy* is taken into account. That is, as illustrated in the timeframe provided in Chapter III, the governance process subject to this research was running simultaneously to the data-gathering. Indeed, no final policy outcomes are to be reported, and consequently, the legitimacy of those outcomes could only be estimated to a limited extent, partly based on expectations of interviewees and the announced process.

This study illustrates the retaining importance of state actors in processes of interactive governance. The findings of this study, on the other hand, suggest a clearly limited role for political meta-governance in enhancing the democratic performance of interactive governance processes. Consequently, further research into the role of political meta-governance in relation to democratic legitimacy is needed.

Directions aimed at building forward on the findings reported in this study may aim to examine, among others:

- The democratic legitimacy of administrative meta-governance rather than political meta-governance, and consequences of interactive governance regarding the traditional divide between controlling and executive branches of government;
- The assessment of democratic legitimacy in other interactive governance processes, and influence of meta-governance thereon;
- The deliberate application of meta-governance strategies by state-centred administrative actors and civil servants, particularly aimed at democratic legitimacy;
- Success-factors relating to role-innovation of political meta-governors.

Our best hope, then, is that the findings presented here and in future research will continue to address the balance between traditional modes of government and interactive modes of governance, and the implications this holds for existing representative institutions. Eventually, this will cause different modes of governance and forthcoming democratic values to complement each other's shortcomings and, accordingly, provide a common ground to address the current and future issues our 21<sup>st</sup> century societies are, and will be faced with.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Example and structure of a parliamentary resolution

## Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal

2

Vergaderjaar 2017–2018

31 936 Luchtvaartbeleid

Nr. 450

## MOTIE VAN DE LEDEN KRÖGER EN VAN DER LEE

Voorgesteld 14 februari 2018

De Kamer,

gehoord de beraadslaging,

overwegende dat de uitstoot van de luchtvaart in belangrijke mate bijdraagt aan de klimaatverandering;

overwegende dat naast de stappen die gezet worden binnen EU ETS en ICAO er ook nationaal stappen gezet kunnen worden, zoals een grotere inzet op snelle internationale treinverbindingen die, al dan niet direct, een neerwaartse invloed op de uitstoot van de luchtvaart kunnen hebben;

verzoekt de regering, om te bevorderen dat er aan de Mobiliteitstafel in het kader van de onderhandelingen over een nieuw energie- en klimaatakkoord tevens gesproken wordt over maatregelen die, al dan niet direct, bijdragen aan de uitstootreductie van de luchtvaart,

en gaat over tot de orde van de dag.

Kröger  
Van der Lee

## Appendix 2: Example and structure of parliamentary questions

## Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal

2

Vergaderjaar 2017–2018

Vragen gesteld door de leden der Kamer

## 2018Z00805

Vragen van de leden **Van der Lee** en **Diks** (beiden GroenLinks) aan de Ministers van Economische Zaken en Klimaat en voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking over het rapport «Human rights in windturbine supply chains» van ActionAid en SOMO (ingezonden 22 januari 2018).

## Vraag 1

Bent u bekend met het rapport «Human rights in windturbine supply chains» van ActionAid en SOMO?<sup>1</sup> Kunt u een reactie geven op het rapport?

## Vraag 2

Deelt u de conclusie van de auteurs dat in de Wet windenergie op zee noch in het huidige beleid voor het verlenen van vergunningen en subsidies voor windparken op zee criteria voor internationaal maatschappelijk verantwoord ondernemen in toeleveringsketens bevatten?

## Vraag 3

Deelt u de mening van de auteurs dat de Nederlandse overheid zich met het onderschrijven van de richtlijnen van de Organisatie voor Economische Samenwerking en Ontwikkeling (OESO) voor multinationale ondernemingen eraan heeft gecommitteerd om alle multinationale ondernemingen die opereren in en vanuit Nederland de richtlijnen in acht te laten nemen? Zo nee, waarom niet?

## Vraag 4

Bent u bekend met de in de UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights beschreven verantwoordelijkheid van overheden om respect voor mensenrechten te waarborgen wanneer overheden een contractuele relatie aangaan met bedrijven door middel van vergunningsprocessen?

**Appendix 3: Interview scheme (IS01 – Political actors)****IS01a Introduction– Complexity and governance**

1. Would you consider the negotiations regarding the Agreement for Energy and Climate ('Klimaataakkoord') as an example of 'network governance', that is, the field is characterized by mutual dependencies and interaction among (affected) actors?
2. How does this, generally, affect decision making with regard to energy and climate in the Dutch Parliament?

**IS01b Introduction – Political meta-governance**

3. How do you, from a political point of view, experience this networked field?
4. How would you describe your particular role regarding the network governance process concerning the 'Klimaataakkoord'?

**IS01c The democratic legitimacy of network governance**

5. Do you consider the democratic legitimacy of the 'Klimaataakkoord' as low or high, according to the following standards:
  - a. The accountability of the actors involved (accountability) (low, mediate, high);
  - b. The inclusiveness and openness of the governance process (voice) (low, mediate, high);
  - c. The quality and transparency of the deliberation process (due deliberation) (low, mediate, high).

**IS01d Political meta-governance strategies to enhance democratic legitimacy**

6. Do you consider yourself as distantly influencing the design of the network, in terms of:
  - a. The rules and procedures followed throughout the network governance process and forthcoming transparency?
  - b. The composition of the network and forthcoming inclusiveness?
7. Do you consider yourself as setting the framework in which network governance can have place, e.g.:
  - a. By setting a legal framework/basis? (regulations)
  - b. By setting a financial framework/basis? (resources)
  - c. By setting a discursive framework/basis? (narratives)
8. Are you concerned with monitoring/scrutinizing the performance of the network? If so, how?
9. Do you regularly participate in networks surrounding the 'Klimaataakkoord', e.g.
  - a. Formal or informal meetings with negotiating actors;
  - b. Events organized by negotiating actors.
10. Do you consider yourself as managing the network, in terms of:
  - a. Direct interference by allocating resources and/or empowering particular actors?
  - b. Direct interference by allocating and circulating knowledge?

## Appendix 4: Interview scheme (IS02 – Negotiating actors)

### IS02a Introduction– Complexity and governance

1. Who are you representing, and why is that organization involved in the governance process regarding the Agreement on Energy and Climate ('Klimaataakkoord')?
2. Would you consider the field of governance regarding the National Agreement on Climate and Energy ('Klimaataakkoord') as 'networked', that is, the field is characterized by mutual dependencies and interaction among (affected) actors?

### IS02b The democratic legitimacy of network governance

3. Do you feel accountable towards existing democratic institutions, in particular the national Parliament?
4. Would you describe the 'Klimaataakkoord'-process as inclusive rather than exclusive?
5. Are you satisfied with the quality and degree of public transparency of internal deliberation among actors?

### IS02c Politicians as meta-governors

6. How do you experience the role of politicians regarding the 'Klimaataakkoord' governance process?
7. Do you witness certain strategies being deployed by political actors, and if so, would you consider them as effective?

### IS02d Political meta-governance to enhance democratic legitimacy in network governance

8. Do you consider politicians as actively influencing the design of the network, in terms of:
  - a. The rules and procedures followed throughout the network governance process and forthcoming transparency?
  - b. The composition of the network and forthcoming inclusiveness?
9. Do you consider politicians as setting the framework in which network governance can have place?
  - a. By setting a legal framework/basis? (regulations)
  - b. By setting a financial framework/basis? (resources)
  - c. By setting a discursive framework/basis? (narratives)
10. Do politicians regularly participate in networks surrounding the 'Klimaataakkoord', e.g.:
  - a. Formal or informal meetings with negotiating actors?
  - b. Events organized by negotiating actors?
11. Do politicians regularly attempt to manage the governance process regarding the 'Klimaataakkoord', in terms of:
  - a. Direct interference by allocating resources and/or empowering particular actors?
  - b. Direct interference by allocating and circulating knowledge?
12. Would you, all in all, consider these strategies as effectively enhancing the democratic legitimacy of the network governance process concerning the 'Klimaataakkoord'?