

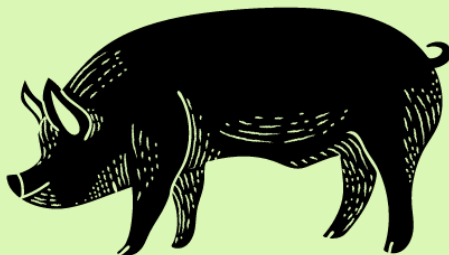
The Dutch nitrogen controversy

Environmental concerns from
The Hague to the countryside

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NO_x



NH_3



Master thesis 2020/2021

Nina Hooijer

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Master thesis

Engaging Public Issues

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Nina Nyoman Hooijer

570176

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Willem Schinkel

Second reader: Dr. Bonnie French

Erasmus University Rotterdam

**Erasmus
University
Rotterdam**



Preface

Before starting my thesis I was interested in global warming and its implications. When I began to focus on the nitrogen controversy I found it fascinating to analyze certain rules and regulations to tackle global warming, one of which is the introduced nitrogen regulations. It is interesting to see how policy has implications on people and how people deal with this differently. Several, at first surprising, issues also played a part in the nitrogen controversy. This taught me how certain world views are formed and that these world views could be described as a lens through which issues are seen.

I would like to thank my supervisor Willem Schinkel for his critical view on my work. I really appreciated how you formulate ideas and helped us in the pleasant Zoom meetings. I like to thank Bonnie French as well, your feedback provided a fresh view on my work which I valued highly. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, I had a different master experience as I had imagined. Yet, I enjoyed the meetings with my fellow students. It was nice to know we were going through the same experience. Last but certainly not least, I want to thank my boyfriend, friends, parents, and siblings for their support and distraction when needed.

Abstract

This thesis delves into the different imaginaries which are visible in the Dutch nitrogen controversy between the government and farmers. To combat global warming, the government came up with rules and regulations to reduce nitrogen emissions in all sectors. The rules and regulations caused some backlash from the agricultural sector, they voiced their frustrations in protests organized by the action group Farmers Defense Force. The farmers and government have different imaginaries in the nitrogen controversy, this can be related to theory on public involvement in politics, different realities, and truth by using the scholars Marres (2007), Shapin and Schaffer (1985), and James (1907). The different imaginaries were analyzed with a critical discourse analysis on social media outlets by the farmers and government. Policy documents were analyzed as well. It turned out that within the two imaginaries from the farmers and the government there are divergences and convergences when it comes to the role of politics and government, the role of agriculture, and the role of global warming. The results show that the nitrogen controversy resulted in public division. One might say there is a division between farmers and politics, farmers and other publics, and farmers and the media.

Keywords: agriculture, global warming, imaginaries, politics.

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1. Introduction

Global warming is an issue that influences everyone. Increasing temperatures, rising sea levels, melting mountain glaciers, floods, air pollution: it's all part of a reality we have to deal with (Titus, 1989; Turrentine & MacMillan, 2021). The global temperature has increased by 2.1 degrees since 1880 and nineteen of the warmest years have occurred since 2000 (NASA, 2020). Global warming is partially caused by deforestation (Senior, Hill & Edwards, 2019; Zecca & Chiari, 2010). Furthermore, global warming is also caused by the increase in greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere. 'Global warming occurs when carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other air pollutants collect in the atmosphere and absorb sunlight and solar radiation that have bounced off the earth's surface. Normally this radiation would escape into space, but these pollutants, which can last for years to centuries in the atmosphere, trap the heat and cause the planet to get hotter. These heat-trapping pollutants—specifically carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, water vapor, and synthetic fluorinated gases—are known as greenhouse gases, and their impact is called the greenhouse effect.' (Turrentine & MacMillan, 2021). The current era of global warming is directly related to human activity. Agriculture and farming contribute to global warming as well. Methane, a greenhouse gas, is produced by livestock animals and nitrous oxide, another greenhouse gas, can be found in some fertilizers that farmers use (WWF, 2021).

Nitrogen emissions contribute to the issue of global warming as well. In 2018, 46 percent of the nitrogen in the Netherlands was produced by the agriculture sector (Adviescollege Stikstofproblematiek, 2019). Nitrogen (N₂) itself is not bad for our health or the environment. However, it starts to have a bad effect when nitrogen atoms bind with hydrogen. Nitrogen and hydrogen together form ammonia (NH₃), which can be found in manure and artificial fertilizers. Too much nitrogen in the ground can harm the environment because certain plants can't grow there anymore, thereby decreasing the number of insects (RTL Nieuws, 2019a). The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture asked the 'Adviescollege Stikstofproblematiek' to advise them on how to deal with the nitrogen crisis. This advisory board reported that all sectors with nitrogen emissions should contribute to reducing nitrogen in a balanced proportion so nature can repair (Adviescollege Stikstofproblematiek, 2019). There should be a 50 percent reduction in nitrogen emissions between 2019 and 2030

(Adviescollege Stikstofproblematiek, 2020). This could result in a reduction of the total livestock density of farmers (Adviescollege Stikstofproblematiek, 2019).

The new regulations made some Dutch farmers not feel appreciated by the government, they voiced their frustrations in several protests. Highways were blocked with tractors, a country hall was bashed, and food distribution centers were blocked (Wijnbergen, 2020; NOS, 2019a; Winterman, 2019). The protest group Farmers Defense Force (FDF) was created to protect the interests of Dutch farmers. At one point the chair of FDF compared the treatment of farmers in the Netherlands to the situation of Jews in World War II (NOS, 2019b). These developments created a public controversy around the nitrogen crisis. The government had to deal with the frustrations of the farmers. The government wants to meet the climate objectives and improve the environment by restricting sectors with big nitrogen emissions whilst farmers feel cornered by the new agricultural regulations. Farmers feel like they are now being portrayed as environmental polluters. "Farmers fulfill a lot of different activities in society, but cannot solve all the problems of the country" (Taylor, 2019).

FDF views global warming differently than the Dutch government does, through these different ways of seeing global warming they articulate the issue differently and create different meanings of global warming. These different imaginaries can for example be seen in the following quotes.

'Nitrogen involves the question of what we all want in this country and how we make it happen. That does mean that we have to do things differently. This applies not only to agriculture, but also to sectors such as mobility and industry. Everyone has a contribution to make in order to solve the nitrogen problem. [...] The longer this takes, the greater the task will become. If we do nothing now, it will become increasingly difficult to adapt to this new reality.' (Smit & De Snoo, 2021). [agriculture minister Carola Schouten]

'We have 300 goats and 60 cows. Two years ago we were already forced by the authorities to slaughter cows because of phosphate pollution, and now politics wants to reduce the number of cows by half because of nitrogen. How would you feel if someone from above came and told you that you were losing half your house? It's unfair what's happening here.' (Khaddari, 2019). [Dutch farmer Suzanne Kat-Disseldorp]

My research question is as follows: *'What different imaginaries can be seen in the nitrogen controversy between the Dutch government and Farmers Defense Force?'*. I looked into what kind of imaginations of global warming are present in the nitrogen controversy and public division based on global warming views. My main focus is on how two groups articulate the issue of global warming differently. For FDF the issue becomes something different than it is for the Dutch government. However, in order to disagree there needs to be some agreement. Do FDF and the Dutch government also have things in common? Do they for example share that there are legitimate environmental concerns or that there should be some form of change within the agricultural sector?

Furthermore, it might also be that some things I find within the nitrogen controversy have to do with other aspects than global warming. There is a general relation with global warming in this controversy, which is my starting point and where my interest in this topic came from. However, global warming could not be the first thing that is on the mind of the farmers. For farmers, the nitrogen controversy could be about rules and regulations, about bureaucracy. Meanwhile, regulations are internally related to global warming for policymakers. For them in order to combat global warming, certain regulations have to be implemented. There could be different articulations of what the issue exactly is for FDF and the government.

2. Theoretical framework

The nitrogen controversy in the Netherlands can be related to several theories. I related this ongoing controversy to theory on public involvement in politics, different realities, and truth by using the scholars Marres (2007), Shapin and Schaffer (1985), and James (1907).

2.1 Public involvement

Should publics be involved in political matters? Marres (2007) states that public issues are a crucial dimension of democratic politics. She uses the work of American pragmatists Dewey and Lippmann to illustrate this point. The scholar Dewey claimed that technological societies require more public involvement in politics. Public involvement practices are predominantly concerned with the articulation of contested issues. 'He also claimed that intelligent decision-making will occur only when expert knowledge-making is matched by citizen participation in public debates' (Marres, 2007, p. 766). Whereas Lippmann aspired expert advice in government decision-making and less public involvement because political affairs are too complicated for the ordinary citizen according to him.

Dewey aspired a participatory democracy. In the case of an emerging controversy, there is an opportunity for public involvement in politics. When institutions directly implicated in a problem can't solve that problem the need for public involvement in politics emerges. 'Under certain conditions a politics of issues *must* take the form of a democratic politics' (Marres, 2007, pp. 768-769). Public involvement in politics can help to settle certain issues. 'These publics are dedicated to ensuring that such issues are dealt with' (Marres, 2007, p. 770). Dewey stated that a public is brought into being by a certain issue. A public doesn't live from start, where there is an issue people get affected and then a public emerges. There are different publics for the same issue who take different positions within an issue. These different publics can be called 'divergent associations' (Marres, 2007, p. 773). Divergent associations can be seen as partly exclusive and irreconcilable associations of actors. These associations can be seen in discursive terms, they are shown in textual and visual accounts of a controversy. They can also have a 'socio-ontological' status. 'Issues should then be approached as being constituted by institutional, physical, monetary and legal ties, among others.' (Marres, 2007, p. 773). To conclude, the aim of Marres is to show that public involvement in politics is occasioned by issues and dedicated to their articulation. Public

involvement practices should be dedicated to issue formation, which is made possible in democratic politics.

2.2 Different realities

When is knowledge accepted and when is knowledge rejected? (Shapin & Schaffer, 1985). This question can be related to the seventeenth-century researchers Hobbes and Boyle. These researchers had a dispute about an air-pump. The Hobbes-Boyle controversy was about different ways of seeing reality, different ontologies. This was tied to social order. Boyle's experimentalism and Hobbes's demonstrative way were seen differently. Hobbes's views were not credited or believed. Boyle's experimentalism was seen as more correct. Shapin and Schaffer want to 'break down the aura of self-evidence surrounding the experimental way of producing knowledge' (Shapin & Schaffer, 1985, p. 13). They wonder how and why certain practices and beliefs were accounted as true. 'More important to our project is an examination of method understood as real practical activity. [...] We shall suggest that solutions to the problem of knowledge are embedded within practical solutions to the problem of social order, and that different practical solutions to the problem of social order encapsulate contrasting practical solutions to the problem of knowledge. That is what the Hobbes-Boyle controversies were about' (Shapin & Schaffer, 1985, pp. 14-15).

Shapin and Schaffer argue that you don't see your own culture's routine practices as problematic and in need of explanation (Shapin & Schaffer, 1985). You don't ask taken-for-granted questions about common things because then you will be seen as a troublemaker or an idiot. Being a member of a culture you try to understand can therefore have its disadvantages. 'Playing the stranger is therefore a difficult business; yet this is precisely what we need to do with respect to the culture of experiment. We need to *play* the stranger, not to *be* the stranger. A genuine stranger is simply ignorant. We wish to adopt a calculated and an informed suspension of our taken-for-granted perceptions of experimental practice and its products. By playing the stranger we hope to move away from self-evidence' (Shapin & Schaffer, 1985, p. 6). When you play the stranger in your own culture you know there are alternatives to taken-for-granted beliefs and practices. We should move away from taken-for-granted perceptions of experimental practice and its products.

2.3 Truth

In a controversy, people can adhere to different truths. Therefore, the truth itself can be at stake in a controversy. But what is truth? Is what you believe in the truth even if others don't see this as true? For James (1907) truth is about pragmatism, it's about what works. 'The pragmatic method is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable. [...] The pragmatic method in such cases is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to anyone if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle. Whenever a dispute is serious, we ought to be able to show some practical difference that must follow from one side or the other's being right.' (James, 1907, p. 28). There is only a dispute between (groups of) people if you think that there is this absolute way of thinking. You have to look at whether your dispute is an actual dispute or in practice, you mean different things than the other person because of the other words or methods you use. There is not really a dispute, there are different people who care about different things and are looking for different truths than you. Truth is what helps you in your practical engagement. We want knowledge to use it, it needs to prove itself by being practical (James, 1907).

2.4 From theory to the nitrogen controversy

These theories helped me to analyze the nitrogen controversy. The text from Marres (2007) was used to look into the articulation of issues and public involvement in politics. FDF and the government are different publics for the same issue of global warming. FDF was created because of the nitrogen issue, it emerged because of a certain issue. The nitrogen controversy is a controversy in which the issue and its publics emerge. In the case of an emerging controversy, publics can involve in politics. This can also be seen in the nitrogen controversy. Public involvement practices are generally concerned with the articulation of contested issues (Marres, 2007). The publics involved in the nitrogen controversy are concerned with the articulation of a contested issue: how to deal with nitrogen emissions. The publics involved in this controversy are an example of public involvement in politics. Moreover, Dewey stated that intelligent decision-making happens only when expert knowledge-making is matched by citizen participation in public debates. He wanted more public involvement in politics whilst Lippmann wanted expert advice in government decision-making and less public involvement

in political affairs (Marres, 2007). Still, what is considered best? Is public involvement desirable or is politics too complicated for that? In the nitrogen controversy, the government struggles on how to deal with the nitrogen controversy. Would this mean public involvement in politics is needed? Furthermore, within the nitrogen controversy 'divergent associations' can be distinguished. There are different publics for the issue of nitrogen who take different positions within that issue.

The work of Shapin and Schaffer (1985) was used to analyze different realities and the acceptance of knowledge. They wonder when knowledge is accepted and when knowledge is rejected. This can also be asked in the nitrogen controversy, do farmers for example accept knowledge from the advisory board and the government? The Hobbes-Boyle controversy was about different ways of seeing reality, this could be the same in the nitrogen controversy. Shapin and Schaffer wonder how and why certain practices and beliefs were accounted as true. This can also be analyzed in the nitrogen controversy, do the different groups involved in this controversy adhere to certain practices and beliefs? Or do some publics question taken-for-granted beliefs and practices? It might be that some people feel like there are alternatives to taken-for-granted beliefs and practices. Shapin and Schaffer stated that when you play the stranger in your own culture you know there are alternatives to taken-for-granted beliefs and practices.

The theory of James (1907) was used to delve into different truths. Whenever a dispute is serious, there should be some practical difference between following one notion of truth instead of the other (James, 1907). Is there a practical difference in the nitrogen controversy between the truth of different involved publics? Would there be different consequences if the truth of politicians or the truth of farmers would be followed? Moreover, in a controversy the truth itself can be at stake. In the nitrogen controversy, politicians and other publics like farmers may adhere to different truths. If different truths regarding nitrogen are believed in, could it yet be that the government and FDF mean the same but articulate it in different ways? Do the government and FDF share that there should be some kind of agriculture or that there are legitimate environmental concerns? These similarities could be there because they share discursive positions within a discourse and that discourse decides what can and can't be said and understood. The government comes with regulations and the opposition comes from FDF, but they might have similarities. I took a step back and analyzed conflicting truth claims without judging their epistemic merit.

3. Methods

In order to get a coherent answer to my research question, I did a Critical Discourse Analysis and analyzed my data using Atlas.Ti.

3.1 Data

I analyzed extant documents such as newspapers, policy documents, existing (video) interviews et cetera. These documents are not mere facts, they reflect shared definitions, the power to enforce these definitions, and a frame to convince readers of their verity (Charmaz, 2014, p. 49). A policy document can for example have the agency to change the world. Documents are not objective facts and are written in a certain context. 'The genre and specific form of a document as well as any written text in it draw on particular views and discourses.' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 46). I learned more about the different discourses in the nitrogen controversy by comparing the style, contents, direction, and presentation of material of a document to a larger discourse of which the document is a part of (Charmaz, 2014, p. 46). I tried to see how a document reflects its author's assumptions, how certain meanings reflect particular social and historical contexts, which realities the documents claim to represent, how language is used, and how various audiences interpret the document and act on it (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 53-54).

Apart from existing documents, I looked at Twitter posts from the Dutch government, farmers, and other publics. The Tweets were in Dutch, therefore the Tweets shown in the analysis were translated to English. A Twitter search can only retrieve tweets not older than 7 days, therefore I analyzed tweets that were posted between April 5th and April 12th. I searched for the following hashtags: #stikstofcrisis, #boerenprotest, #FarmersDefenceForce, #boeren, and #stikstof. I also included tweets from prime minister Mark Rutte, the ministry of Agriculture, agriculture minister Carola Schouten, and action group FDF. The created codes and code groups can be found in the appendix. I didn't include directly identifying personal details when using Twitter data in my analysis. I removed user names and the time and location of when the Tweet was posted.

Furthermore, I employed a Critical Discourse Analysis. I looked at relations of power and inequality in language. 'The purpose of [a Critical Discourse Analysis] is to analyze "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control

as manifested in language” (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 448). I was attentive to power imbalances when I analyzed my data. I for example saw that some people feel like there is a division between government officials and publics. Some people posted that government officials don’t have to comply with the Covid-19 measurements or make sure nitrogen emissions reduce whilst the general public does have to take this into account. This could be seen as a power imbalance between government officials and different publics.

I analyzed all the documents using Atlas.Ti through several steps of coding. I first coded *in vivo*, by creating codes that consist of the same words that a document uses. The next step was to create initial codes by looking at the document on a “higher level” to summarize the document. After this step, I created focused codes and looked at which codes I could group together to create a coding frame with different themes from all the documents (Charmaz, 2014, p. 18). The recurring themes formed a basis for my analytical chapters. Throughout the coding process, I made sure to write memos that capture the thought process I had while coding.

3.2 Limitations

I tried to give an adequate picture of the nitrogen controversy between two different groups. There is a history behind a policy document of nitrogen, this is an example of the social life of a method. Different methods are entangled in public issues, coming out of historical and political circumstances. Clusters of methods create ontological politics, for example public opinion, ideologies, or climate (Law, Savage & Ruppert, 2011). Methods are part of the social world and also construct the social world. Methods are social and performative. Knowledge is situated, it is bound to a certain time, place, and history. Therefore, I opened a controversy to see what comes out of that whilst keeping in mind the history of a method. There is a certain history behind the rules and regulations taken by the Dutch government in order to reduce nitrogen emissions, I kept this history in mind when I analyzed my data.

4. Analysis

“Politicians lie, left-wing voters are ignorant or lying climate liars, greenwashing by the government, farmers can financially not meet the climate standards, farmers are not appreciated, farmers torture animals, et cetera”. Different truth claims were analyzed within the nitrogen controversy. Two different imaginaries can be distinguished which will be called the ‘agricultural centered imaginary’ and the ‘global warming centered imaginary’. These two imaginaries both cover the following three elements: the role of politics and the government, the role of global warming, and the role of agriculture in the world. The two imaginaries are conflicting imaginaries, but at some point there is something shared. There are convergences and divergences within each imaginary. We can have access to the nitrogen controversy by looking at the imaginaries at play. The three elements of global warming, politics, and agriculture are the articulations around which the nitrogen controversy revolves. Within the nitrogen controversy different issues are also somehow related to nitrogen, which is possible because there is an imaginary behind it. That makes links between seemingly different issues logical.

4.1 The role of politics and the government

“In Lippmann’s and Dewey’s accounts, publics form when issues require their involvement, and these publics are dedicated to ensuring that such issues are dealt with.” (Marres, 2007, p. 770). Although politics nowadays are more global and institutional arrangements are conceived of as pluralities, we can still learn something from these two seventeenth-century scholars. Being that we can see how public involvement in politics is occasioned by issues and dedicated to addressing them. Issue formation requires the involvement of political outsiders, a public, because public involvement is concerned with issues that existing institutions cannot settle (Marres, 2007).

Should different publics be more involved in politics like the scholar Dewey claimed? In the nitrogen controversy, different publics have a certain opinion on the policy behind nitrogen emissions, some people make their opinion heard. This analytical chapter will delve into opinions on Dutch politics, Covid-19, and a division between farmers and politicians. Some feel like within the ongoing nitrogen controversy something needs to happen soon, this

will be discussed as well. Within the nitrogen controversy, a lot of different and at first surprising issues are mentioned along with the nitrogen controversy, these different issues may also play a role in this controversy. The analysis will show that there is a more or less coherent imaginary underlying these different issues.

Opinions on Dutch politics

Within the nitrogen controversy, different publics involved in political affairs (Marres, 2007). In general terms, it was analyzed that people have a certain opinion on political affairs. Some feel like the Dutch government is lying, this has to do with the nitrogen controversy and the childcare benefits scandal. The childcare benefits scandal has to do with the fact that tens of thousands of Dutch parents who received childcare benefits were institutionally discriminated against by the Dutch tax authority. Parents who applied for childcare benefits had been wrongly identified as fraudsters. 'With the aim of detecting fraud, the Dutch tax authority actively searched for people who met certain characteristics, such as having dual nationality. They had to deal with extra checks on childcare benefits.' (College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2021). Many parents ran into financial and mental problems. Because of the childcare benefits scandal, some parliaments resigned and the government stepped down. Prime minister Mark Rutte did not consider resigning. Parents had to be compensated, but this did not go without its struggles. It also turned out that the government had been withholding information (NOS, 2021). The governmental discrimination in the childcare benefits scandal has been massively critiqued.

"Lying culture in the government? Maybe. What is certain is that there was/is a lying culture in the (stepped down) parliament. #nitrogen #leyair #surcharges"

Furthermore, political parties, the king, and large companies have been subjected to considerable criticism. Political and economic trends of the past years are critiqued as well.

"BV The Netherlands and the VOC mentality.. the rudeness of 'our king'... well.. what else is new.... #climatecrisis #nitrogencrisis #forourchildren"

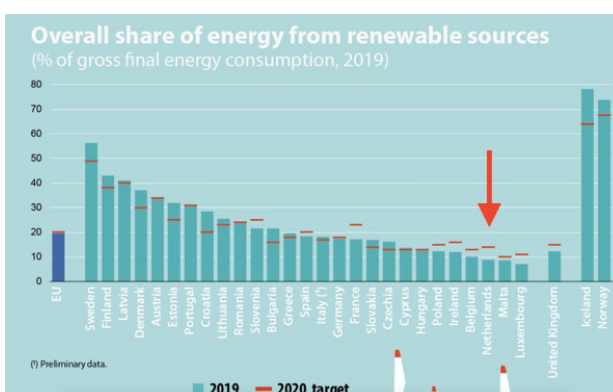
“Seventeen large companies, including Ahold, Air France-KLM, Facebook, and KPN, have disproportionate access to Dutch ministers: they account for nearly 30 percent of the total number of ministerial appointments.”

Reaction: “That's why it's so easy to shove emissions off to small businesses #nitrogen and is #pfas so quickly solved with raising the standard #hypocrisy and perhaps corruption”

“This is the legacy of Teflon Mark* #nitrogen, no houses, money from citizens to shell, lowest spendable income in Europe, greatest inequality, stripped out healthcare, police, rule of law, political fragmentation”

*Teflon Mark relates to Mark Rutte, the Dutch prime minister. Teflon relates to the non-stick coating in pans. Mark Rutte got this name because of his ability to survive scandals.

TOM



*translation top left image: Mark Rutte says: “Above all, let us not bury our heads in the sand!”. On the signs: “Careful! Nitrogen!”, “Careful! Chemical junk!”, “PFAS!”, “Trash!”.

*translation top right image: “buying a house 1990 vs. 2020”

*translation bottom right image: “Real disposable income households per capita”

These quotes show that not everyone adheres to authority. The nitrogen controversy shows that authority can be questioned and that people can distance themselves from the government based on certain imaginaries they have.

Covid-19

As mentioned before, within the nitrogen controversy a lot of different issues are also voiced and somehow related to nitrogen. The imaginary behind it makes links between seemingly different issues very logical. One seemingly different issue within the nitrogen controversy is Covid-19. Covid-19 can be related to the nitrogen controversy. People question why Denmark receives billions from the EU for culling minks for fear of Covid-19 mutations, but Dutch farmers don't get compensated. Furthermore, vaccinating has also been mentioned.

"The decision to temporarily stop vaccinating was based on emotion, not science, he says. First analyze the data and only then draw conclusions. Mistake #Rutte Same mistake as with #PFAS and #Nitrogen Failing cabinet #Rutte"

Some feel like rules and regulations don't apply to government officials, whilst others mention that not all farmers obey the Covid-19 regulations either.

"💣 NOTIFICATION 💣

#CO2 and #nitrogen reduction should be taken care of by everyone except government officials. #corona measures apply to everyone except government officials. Flying should be limited except for government officials.

💣 END OF POST 💣"

"Ehmm 1.5m? Or are farmers immune these days? Why do you have the Groningen flag on your tractor at a protest in Drenthe? #farmersprotest"



Division between farmers and politics

Within the nitrogen controversy, some people distance themselves from the Dutch government. Some don't agree with statements of political parties or are critical of certain reports. These quotes are an example that not everyone always adheres to authority.

"Clarity. What happens, if GroenLinks gets its way. More "natural area", and less "nitrogen", but less biodiversity and unaffordable food. #agriculturepolicy #green-left #D66 #naturearea #nitrogen"

"Yesterday a new #nitrogen report came out from the @rivm. It's about this report: "Numerical substantiation RIVM Long-term Exploration of Nitrogen Problem". I submitted some questions to the author."

Geachte heer Bleeker,

Nav voornoemde rapport vroeg ik mij twee dingen af:

- 1) zou ik in lijn met de aangenomen motie vanuit de Tweede Kamer over de volledige openheid van de gebruikte modellen en data alle gebruikte sets en data kunnen ontvangen? Waarom zijn deze niet standaard bij de downloadpagina gezet eigenlijk? Waarom voert u kamermoties niet uit?
- 2) in het begin wordt heel netjes geformuleerd in een disclaimer dat er allerlei onzekerheid is in de modellering, maar wat is de exacte bandbreedte waar we het hier over hebben? Kunt u dit exact specificeren kwantitatief en van wat dit afhangt meer kwalitatief?
- 3) vindt u het zelf ook niet convenient dat er in een overleg tussen het ministerie en het rivm is bepaald ("in de loop van het proces") zonder directe argumentatie in het rapport onder 1.2 vraag 4 en vraag 8 maar niet te beantwoorden?

Graag verneem ik en voor de transparantie meld ik hierbij even dat deze discussie ook online gaat worden gezet.

Met groet,
Rutger

*translation image:

"Dear Mr. Bleeker,

In response to the aforementioned report, I was wondering about two things:

- 1) Would it be possible for me to receive all the sets and data used, in line with the motion passed by the House of Representatives on full disclosure of the models and data used? Why are these not included on the download page by default? Why don't you carry out chamber motions?
- 2) At the beginning it is very nicely formulated in a disclaimer that there are all kinds of uncertainty in the modeling, but what is the exact bandwidth we are talking about here? Can you specify this exactly quantitatively and what this depends on more qualitatively?
- 3) Do you not find it convenient that in a consultation between the ministry and the rivm it was determined ("in the course of the process") without direct argumentation in the report under 1.2 question 4 and question 8 but not to answer?

I would like to hear from you and for the sake of transparency, I hereby report that this discussion will also be put online.

Regards,
Rutger"

The quotes above show a division between politics and other publics. This can be related to Marres (2007). The different publics involved in the nitrogen controversy can be seen as 'divergent associations'. There are different publics for the same issue who take different positions within an issue. These different publics can be called 'divergent associations' (Marres, 2007, p. 773).

The VVD and prime minister Mark Rutte are also a point of critique. Mark Rutte and farmers could be seen as 'divergent associations' as well. Mark Rutte emphasizes that we have to deal with the nitrogen crisis 'together'. He wants to protect nature, but at the same time make sure new projects are possible (Minister-president Mark Rutte, 2019). In a press conference, he said the following when talking about nitrogen emissions: 'I can sometimes

have very short concerns, but I then get that huge paycheck to try to work with my colleagues to turn those concerns into action'. (Minister-president Mark Rutte, 2019).

It has commonly been viewed that the Dutch government is not handling the nitrogen controversy in an adequate way, some people blame especially prime minister Mark Rutte and his party the VVD for a lack of efficiency. Rutte is being mocked, sometimes described as a dictator, and some want him to resign.

“#FarmersDefenceForce #wearethepeople”



*translation left image: “A very long time ago, 15 million happy Dutch people existed. And then I came!”



*translation right image: “That's what happens when you forget everything”

“The #rutte #Dictatorship lets hard-working Dutch people rot & deploys #police violence at peaceful protests & even dogs & Our own police & MEds, disgusted by this #Careworkers #Groningers #Farmers # childcarebenefitsscandal #Pvv #FvD exclude & disadvantage = Contempt of the people & betrayal & Rutte knows that! IMO 🚲”

“What are the 3 similarities between the #climateagreement the #nitrogen nagging and the #coronameasures ?

- Demolish the economy

- Plunge the Netherlands into a crisis

- Caused by the VVD

We can fight them 1 by 1 or do it like Austria #KickRutteOut”

One might say that the government and farmers believe in different practices and beliefs. This can be related to Shapin and Schaffer (1985). They wonder how and why certain practices and beliefs were accounted as true. In the nitrogen controversy different groups involved in this controversy adhere to certain practices and beliefs. The government wants to protect nature together whilst farmers feel like Rutte lets hard-working Dutch people rot. Farmers question the beliefs and practices of the government. Farmers generally adhere to an ‘agricultural centered imaginary’ and the government generally adheres to a ‘global warming centered imaginary’. The beliefs and practices within these two imaginaries can clash as can be seen in the quotes mentioned above.

Action and unite

Publics are involved in politics through different issues, as could be seen in the topics mentioned before. This can be linked to the work of Marres (2007). ‘Issue definition has been widely recognized as an important dimension of democratic processes in political science and democratic theory [...] Theories of agenda setting regard issue definition as the decisive factor in democratic institutional politics, as it determines which actors can get involved in political process, and on what terms [...] According to theorists of deliberative democracy, one of the main values of public participation in institutional politics is that it renders issues publicly visible, thereby forcing them onto the political agenda.’ (Marres, 2007, p. 761). In the nitrogen controversy, different publics display the issue of nitrogen emissions publicly, this forces the government to respond to calls of different publics. One call is about the fact that some feel like the nitrogen controversy is taking too long and something needs to happen soon. People wonder how many more reports and lists are needed in order to take action. Others started a petition and ask people to support their appeal. Some feel like people should unite and stand together against the government.

“#Broadly disproportionate #violence against citizens should never be used. Never go against the #will and #freedom of angry #Geuzen, #Frisians, #farmers & #outside

#citizens If #people #unite, every #government knows they are #stronger together, no matter what #police force or #army”

This quote shows that it is believed that the government should respect the will and freedom of people. Some feel like people could unite to stand together against the government, this shows a clear division between farmers and politics. It may be that the division between some farmers and the government is too great, this could explain why the government struggles on how to deal with the nitrogen controversy.

4.2 The role of global warming

‘In the Netherlands too, we are noticing the consequences of climate change. Globally, the last 130 years have seen an average temperature increase of 1°C, in the Netherlands this is even 1.7°C. [...] In addition to an increase in the average temperature, we are also seeing a rise in the sea level, droughts, floods and watershed. If temperatures rise 3 degrees, by 2080 it will be too warm for 40 percent of our plant species to survive.’ (WWF). Based on the data, it was found that the future of nature is kept in mind. Yet, the policy surrounding climate and nature is questioned and it is possible that there is a public division through sustainability issues. This analytical chapter will delve into the climate and nitrogen policy and the fact that the nitrogen controversy is being compared with other sectors that also emit nitrogen.

Climate policy

In order to combat global warming, an adequate climate policy needs to be established. It is thought that the climate policy is lacking efficiency and are telling “green lies”.

"#Environment and land use planning require a #vision. But for years that was a dirty word. As a result, we are now being overtaken by reality. #nitrogen #climatechange”

“The EU cowards prefer to let it be produced in Ukraine where they can make a nice penny from it themselves. What happens to our food supply when Ukraine, for example, goes to war with Russia will be of no concern to them. #farmers”

Some people feel like Europe should ban food products from countries that do not meet the set requirements of animal well-being, food safety, biodiversity, and environmental and fertilizer standards. This would benefit farmers. To make sure nature is cared for, the precipitation of nitrogen must be reduced significantly. Some state that all sectors must contribute to this. Moreover, some are speaking of 'ignorant or lying leftist climate liars', they mainly refer to D66 leader Sigrid Kaag. Plus, it is believed that the government is greenwashing, as can be seen in the following quote. This quote reveals how some publics question actions and intentions of the government.

"Politicians and lobbies would rather spend millions for a more sustainable image than for sustainability itself. greenwashing. bizarre. #farmers #lto #dairy #sustainable #eu #subsidy #kaag #rutte #vvd #d66 #omtzig #pattern #omtziggate #denhaag #climate #nitrogen #cattle"

Steeds meer consumenten beseffen dat zuivelproducten bijzonder onduurzaam zijn. Om dit groeiende bewustzijn onder consumenten tegen te gaan, startte de Nederlandse Zuivelorganisatie (NZO) samen met andere Europese zuivelorganisaties de misleidende reclamecampagne *Sustainable Dairy in Europe*. Uit onderzoek van Dier&Recht blijkt dat de Europese Unie deze campagne heeft gesubsidieerd met maar liefst 2,9 miljoen euro. Het is ronduit absurd dat de EU miljoenen euro's belastinggeld verspilt aan duurzaamheidspropaganda van de zuivelindustrie!

*translation image: "More and more consumers are realizing that dairy products are particularly unsustainable. To counter this growing awareness among consumers, the Nederlandse Zuivelorganisatie (NZO), together with other European dairy organizations, started the misleading advertising campaign 'Sustainable Dairy in Europe'. Research by Dier&Recht shows that the European Union has subsidized this campaign with no less than 2.9 million euros. It is downright absurd that the EU is wasting millions of euros of taxpayers' money on sustainability propaganda from the dairy industry!"

The climate policy can be related to the two imaginaries. Within the nitrogen controversy, there are points at which the 'agricultural centered imaginary' and the 'global warming centered imaginary' converge. Many people are for instance convinced, even many people in the agriculture world, that global warming is a problem and that something should be done.

However, that point of convergence is at the same time a point of divergence because for the farmers global warming is not something that has to do with them per se. Global warming has to do with a lot of other people, for example with politicians and how they portray global warming. It might be that farmers feel like politicians are making the problem of global warming seem bigger than it is.

Nitrogen policy

For the recovery of nature, even more nitrogen reduction is needed, according to advisory board 'Adviescollege Stikstofproblematiek'. The government has an internal struggle on how to deal with nitrogen. The contradictions between political parties in the government make finding a suitable solution complicated. Various political parties believe that at best there will be less deterioration of nature, not a real improvement. Initially, the government wanted the reduction of nitrogen emissions to be a goal on its own. Yet, on the advice of the advisory board, the cabinet decided that the reduction of nitrogen should be a legal obligation. Agriculture Minister Schouten wants the emissions to genuinely reduce. This could be done by feeding the livestock different food, but she is willing to consider alternatives and discuss this with the agricultural sector (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2020).

The policy surrounding nitrogen has been heavily critiqued. Based on the data, it was found that people find it strange that within Europe different rules apply to farmers. Some find it hard to be "proud of the Netherlands if you're forced to be part of Europe". In Germany the nitrogen regulations could be described as less rigorous, this has resulted in Dutch farmers moving to Germany (NOS, 2020). Some feel like "these animal torturers go abroad to abuse animals even more". Moreover, the halving of the total livestock has also been a point of critique. Some people feel like the Netherlands has the world's best farmers, but these farmers are being punished with the nitrogen regulations.

"Maybe now you understand why you lost @groenlinks and @D66 @vvd don't start it. Put down a @nuclearpowerplant to meet your European goals and get on with the business of the day! And yes! Buy out the #farmers for more #forest and #nature instead of half of the #Netherlands to #meadows"

Nitrogen controversy in agriculture versus other sectors

Apart from nitrogen emissions from the agricultural sector, nitrogen also emits from other sectors like aviation, traffic, shipping, and railway transport (Adviescollege Stikstofproblematiek, 2020). The government stated that all sectors which emit nitrogen must reduce their nitrogen emissions. It was decided to lower the maximum speed limit to 100 km per hour on all highways. The construction and infrastructure sectors must also reduce their emissions. This is a sensitive topic because there is an urgent need for new houses and infrastructure must be invested in to ensure accessibility. The government is aware that many entrepreneurs and farmers fear for their businesses, source of income, and their way of life because of the nitrogen regulations (Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit, 2019). Although all sectors suffered setbacks, some people pointed out that the focus shouldn't be on the agricultural sector, other sectors also play a part in the nitrogen controversy. The nitrogen emissions of the aviation sector are 3.9 kton per year in 2018. This is in contrast to 13 kton per year in 2018 from the agricultural sector (Adviescollege Stikstofproblematiek, 2020). Schiphol and Lelystad Airport also emit nitrogen, which is for example mentioned in the following Twitter quotes.

“Very busy at #Schiphol The #klm network, mainly serving transfer passengers, is maintained with our tax dollars. #COVID19 #ClimateCrisis #CO2 #nitrogen #finedust #ultrafinedust #noisedisturbance”

“Nature restoration is hopeless if the magic calculation method is used whereby:

✗ #F1 Zandvoort decreases #nitrogen deposition on #N2000 areas

✗ Road traffic cap remains at 5km

✗ Logging of #aviation above 1000m

✗ #LelystadAirport not getting existing rights #Schiphol”

Calculations and data from institutes are questioned. Apart from the aviation sector, the Zandvoort racing circuit is also mentioned in the nitrogen controversy. Here data is also critiqued.

"#CircuitZandvoort estimates #nitrogen emissions 15% too low and is unfair to #farmers. It's a #VVD-scam and harms #nature and #climate. #formule1 #F1 #zandvoort #races #respectfornature #Natura2000 #kennemerduinen #nitrogen"

To sum up, it is believed that nitrogen emissions should reduce in all sectors and not just in the agricultural sector. Some feel like farmers are being blamed for the nitrogen problem. This has resulted in the formation of a public that is opposing the idea of blaming farmers and the agriculture sector for nitrogen emissions.

"Nature Today: Decrease in nitrogen deposition leads to biodiversity recovery. So reduce emissions substantially at ALL sources. These sources are often also CO2 emitters, the knife cuts both ways! #nitrogen #biodiversity #nature #co2 #climate"

"Agriculture has already met this goal. So now 70% less cars? 70% less aviation, industry? #nitrogen #comeweblamethefarmers"

4.3 The role of agriculture

Taking global warming into consideration, how should the agricultural sector be dealt with when it comes to nitrogen? Publics have different opinions on this matter, different truths are believed in as the scholar James may say (James, 1907). This analytical chapter will deal with the fact that there is this division between farmers and other publics and between farmers and the media. Moreover, the agricultural sector has been criticized and some people argue there should be a different kind of agricultural sector. This will be analyzed as well.

Division between farmers and other publics

Publics are concerned with problems that cannot be appropriately handled within existing frameworks of knowledge production and policymaking. When you consider public involvement as being mediated by issues, a broad range of practices must be taken into consideration. Certain events can be seen as opportunities for broader processes of the articulation of public issues (Marres, 2007). Actors are jointly and antagonistically implicated

in issues. 'Partly exclusive associations are entangled in an issue. Such an understanding of controversy brings into relief a distinctive merit of public articulations of issues: a publicizing issue articulation highlights the partial irreconcilability of the associations that coalesce with that issue. The public-ization of an issue in a controversy distils a specific point of contention from the tangles of divergent associations that make up an issue. Articulating a public affair renders explicit, and thereby opens up for critical scrutiny, the mutual exclusivities between associations that different constituencies bring to a controversy, and which are caught up in the matter at stake, and de-publicizing articulations can render such exclusivities obscure.' (Marres, 2007, p. 773).

The fact that actors are jointly and antagonistically implicated in issues can also be seen in the nitrogen controversy (Marres, 2007). Farmers and other publics can be seen as partly exclusive associations entangled in the issue of nitrogen. Some feel like the government talked enough with farmers.

"2/2 Get a tendency to think: New #government should solve this issue. There has been enough talk with #farmers(organizations). Radical policy choices must now be made and let a #democratic majority decide. Then the people will get what the people want!"

Others feel like it is difficult to discuss certain matters with farmers. The attitude of some farmers is being criticized. Some farmers on the other hand feel like urban people don't understand them.

"It is indeed difficult discussing with many #farmers on Twitter. They often seem to live in a parallel world with their own truth. They almost always experience criticism as an attack and then you quickly get about 40 "counterattacks" in which they copy (retweet) each other."

Reaction: "Who is in a parallel world in this case? All the farmers together or you with your judgment from a metropolitan frame?"

Reaction: "See, and this kind of reaction is exactly what makes pleasant discussions impossible with this group of #farmers on Twitter."

Immediately dismissing the other as framing, incompetent, etc. Either you are in favor of us or you are against us!"

The complex struggles regarding global warming and agriculture are affecting people's views on others. Some experience 'urban farmer hatred', a negative attitude towards farmers and the countryside from people living in urban regions. On the other hand, consumers and urban people are also a point of criticism. Some think it's annoying that people just shower all day for fun and that toilets are being flushed with potable water. It has commonly been assumed that we should consume less and buy more sustainable products.

"If anyone has a mountain of butter on their head, it is the Dutch consumer who hangs the farmer from the highest tree, but buys cheap products himself from countries that have never heard of the word sustainability. #farmersprotest"

Response to someone: "Live in moderation [name], that's all that matters. We are consuming ourselves to death, it is a bit easy to shift all the blame to the #farmers. The farmers I know are people who live frugally and thriftily unlike many city people."

Furthermore, it is believed that farmers are blaming nature and all its animals for the nitrogen crisis. People feel like when farmers would take responsibility for the nitrogen crisis, it would finally make the agriculture sector a credible interlocutor. On the other hand, some feel like framing farmers has become a national folk sport. Moreover, it is questioned whether farmers actually love animals.

"But #farmers love animals so much, don't they? Or are they still those animal exploiters who exploit animals for money?"

"Facts 2021: Every day in NL 2 million healthy animals are slaughtered, that is 730 million healthy animals per year. Every year 31 million animals die prematurely in NL stables. Conclusion: #farmers do NOT love animals"



Reaction: "Wrong conclusion. Your definition of #animallove is a different one than that of #farmers #farmerrepublic"

The fact that farmers and other publics may care for animals differently is an example of different truths regarding animal well-being. Farmers feel like they also care about animals, but in a different way than some other publics. This is a sign of disagreement on a fundamental level, different publics disagree on what caring for animals is. For farmers caring for animals means something else than it may for other people. However, it is also a sign of fundamental agreement, namely about the importance of animal well-being. Both farmers and other publics know animal well-being is something to strive for. The pragmatist approach of the scholar James (1907) can be used to point out the paradox of fundamental agreement and disagreement. For James truth is about what works. You should see whether your dispute is an actual dispute or in practice, you mean different things than the other person or group because of the different words you use. The nitrogen controversy is an actual dispute because the different publics involved have no agreement on the meaning of terms and the truth of certain propositions. Whenever a dispute is serious, there should be some practical difference between following one notion of truth instead of the other (James, 1907). There is a practical difference in the nitrogen controversy between the truth of different involved publics. Caring for animals the way farmers do has different consequences than the way other publics care for animals. The consequences of their beliefs are different, yet they do share in the belief of one truth: the fact that animal well-being is important.

Division between farmers and the media

Apart from a division between farmers and other publics, there can also be a division between farmers and the media distinguished. This can be seen in the following quotes. The media is

linked to GroenLinks, a Dutch green and left-wing political party, and to people living in urban regions.

“Exactly as the #GroenLinks spokesman #VARA is so fond of showing: the #country, only nature-hating stupid #farmers live there. Except for those #camping farmers. And that #nature man has the right opinion. Once again the (peripheral) #urban farmer hatred is being shoved down our throats.”

“The nitrogen problem for farmers can be solved, but then cows almost always have to stay inside. With filters (air scrubbers) the emissions are drastically reduced. A good idea? Tonight in Atlas 20.25 @NPO2 with [name], #atlastv #nitrogen #farmers”

Reaction: “Also #atlas @omroepntr looks for the solution to the #nitrogenproblem in air scrubbers instead of structural measures to improve animal welfare and our environment in a sustainable way.”

Different kind of agriculture

Should there be a different kind of agriculture? There are farmers who want to get involved with nature, but they get nothing in return. Most of them don't have the financial space. Furthermore, it is believed that we should break with bioindustry.

“By any means, #water #climate #animal welfare #COVID19 / #zoonoses #biodiversity or #nitrogen We need to get rid of the #bioindustry 📌”

Moreover, water conflicts are also mentioned.

"The discussions are becoming more heated between the water board, farmers and nature organizations": #waterconflicts are not reserved for Africa, it is a global problem, it is the new reality in the Netherlands. #waterman #water #conflict #farmers”

For some people, the current agricultural sector is not sustainable and should therefore be changed, as can be seen in the following quote.

“#milk #dairy #calf decay #campina #hormones #pandemics #nitrogen crisis”



*translation left image: “Dairy industry among biggest environmental polluters in the Netherlands”

*translation right image: “Reply to parliamentary questions on calf transport by plane #milkthewhitedemolisher”

It is believed that the solution to the nitrogen problem is structural measures to promote animal welfare and our environment in a sustainable way. Besides, some feel like the food chain must make greater use of technology and innovations to reduce methane and nitrogen emissions and energy consumption.

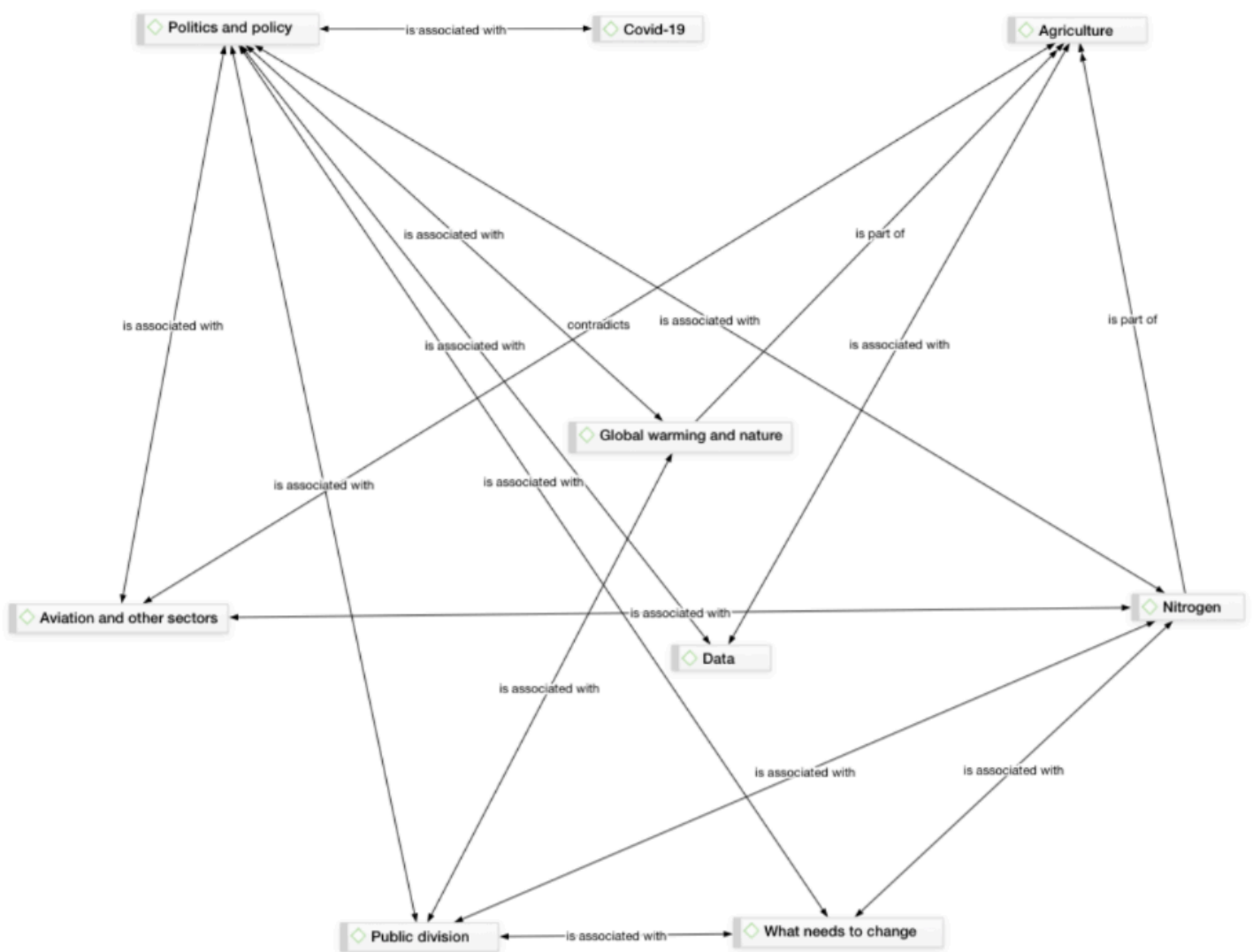
“The costs of intensive agriculture's contribution to the #biodiversity crisis, the #nitrogen crisis and the #climate crisis are adding up. Agriculture in the Netherlands is at a loss. High time for the transition to organic plant cultivation. #systemchange”

As mentioned before, farmers feel like the agricultural sector is taking all the blame for the nitrogen emissions. But is a different kind of agriculture needed and possible? Some feel like a new type of agriculture is indeed needed, as can be seen in the examples mentioned before. The fact that people think outside the box, outside of taken-for-granted beliefs and practices about the agricultural sector, can be related to Shapin and Schaffer (1985). Shapin and Schaffer wonder why certain practices and beliefs are accounted as true. Furthermore, they argue that you don't see your own culture's routine practices as problematic and in need of explanation (Shapin & Schaffer, 1985, p. 5). When you play the stranger in your own culture you could ask taken-for-granted questions about common things and move away from the

self-evidence. Within the nitrogen controversy people are exactly doing this, they are shaking up taken-for-granted beliefs and practices about how to deal with global warming when it comes to agriculture. Some people know there are alternatives to the current kind of agriculture and question taken-for-granted beliefs and practices.

Links in the nitrogen controversy

The nitrogen controversy is first of all related to the government, farmers, nitrogen, and global warming. Yet, a lot of different elements also play a role in this controversy. After coding my data, I grouped the codes together. With these code groups, I created a network that shows the different elements at play in the nitrogen controversy. I decided to place the more causal code groups above and the code groups which evolved from these code groups at the bottom. The logic of the analytical chapters follows from the data analysis.



5. Conclusion

The particular reason for the nitrogen controversy to start was the fact that the government introduced rules and regulations to reduce nitrogen emissions. Around half of the nitrogen in the Netherlands is produced by agriculture (Adviescollege Stikstofproblematiek, 2019). This way, the agricultural sector contributes to global warming which is why the government wanted to reduce nitrogen emissions. The accompanying rules and regulations made farmers not feel acknowledged and supported, their frustrations were voiced in several protests organized by FDF. These occurrences caused a public controversy around the nitrogen crisis. The question arose of what different imaginaries can be seen in this controversy. Two coherent world views could be distinguished which you could call imaginaries. These two different imaginaries were labeled the 'agricultural centered imaginary' and the 'global warming centered imaginary'. These imaginaries have to do with the role of politics and the government, the role of global warming, and with the role of agriculture in the world. These three elements are the articulations around which the nitrogen controversy revolves. There are convergences and divergences within each imaginary. On the one side, farmers, the government, and other publics want to combat global warming and make sure nature is cared for. The introduced nitrogen rules and regulations were a first step towards this. However, these rules made farmers move abroad because of less rigorous nitrogen regulations (NOS, 2020). It is believed that farmers are the ones to be blamed for the nitrogen problem. Some farmers wonder why the focus is not on other sectors as well, they state that industries, aviation, and traffic should also reduce their nitrogen emissions. Thus, on the other side of the controversy you have people distancing themselves from the Dutch government. Some feel like some rules and regulations don't apply to government officials. Moreover, the childcare benefits scandal, "lying politicians", possible corruption, and critique on Mark Rutte and the government have resulted in a division between farmers and politics. The complex struggles regarding global warming are also affecting people's views on others. Consumers and city people are a point of criticism. It has commonly been assumed that we should consume less and buy more sustainable products. You could speak of a division between farmers and other publics, people feel like they can't argue with farmers and farmers feel blamed for everything.

The main purpose of this thesis was to get a sense of the different views within the nitrogen controversy. I wanted to describe the two imaginaries at play to get a better sense

of what this controversy was about. The normative view of the controversy was known to me, but a new view on the subject from people questioning the government and the nitrogen policy felt incomparable and divergent. The nitrogen controversy is an example of publics involving in politics and of people adhering to different realities. It is about the fact that not everyone always adheres to authority. Not all farmers just follow orders from above, some fight back or leave the Netherlands. It is also about public division and what sparks public division. The nitrogen controversy actively demonstrates that authority can be questioned and that people can distance themselves from each other based on certain imaginaries they have.

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Appendix 1: Codes and code groups

These were the hashtag codes of the Twitter data:

- #5G
- #Adoptieschandaal
- #Agrarische
- #Akkerbouw
- #Aso
- #Bbb
- #Biodiversiteit
- #Biodiversiteitscrisis
- #Bioindustrie
- #Biologisch
- #Boer
- #Boeren
- #Boerenlobby
- #Boerenprotest
- #Boerenrepubliek
- #Buitenburgers
- #Burgers
- #Campina
- #Carolaschouten
- #Climatecrisis
- #Co2
- #Conflict
- #Consument
- #Consuminderen
- #Corona
- #Coronamaatregelen
- #Coronavirus
- #Covid19

- #Covidiot
- #Democratische
- #Den Haag
- #Dictatuur
- #Dierenleed
- #Dierenliefde
- #Dierenwelzijn
- #Diervriendelijk
- #Dierwelzijn
- #Duurzaam
- #Educatief
- #Eerlijk inkomen
- #Eetmindervis
- #Eetmindervlees
- #Emigratie
- #Energietransitie
- #Eu
- #Farmersdefenceforce
- #Fdf
- #Fijnstof
- #Fruitteelt
- #Geluidsoverlast
- #Gemeenteraad
- #Geweld
- #Gezondelucht
- #Groen
- #Groenlinks
- #Halvering
- #Handen uit de mouwen
- #Innovatie
- #Innovatief
- #Insecten

- #Inspraak
- #Jesseklaver
- #Jeugdzorg
- #Jeugdzorgschandaal
- #Kaag
- #Kabinet
- #Kabinetsformatie
- #Kalverhouderij
- #Kalverleed
- #Kapitalisme
- #Kinderopvangtoeslagschandaal
- #Klimaat
- #Klimaatakkoord
- #Klimaatcrisis
- #Klimaatdoelen
- #Klimaatleiderkaag
- #Klimaatopwarming
- #Klimaatverandering
- #Klm
- #Klmmoetvliegen
- #Komwegevendebueroendeschild
- #Landbouw
- #Landbouwbeleid
- #Leger
- #Lelystadairport
- #Leugens
- #Luchtvaart
- #Luchtvaarthaters
- #Luchtvaartnota
- #Macht
- #Machtcorrumpeert
- #Melk

- #Melkveehouderij
- #Mening
- #Mest
- #Mestnormen
- #Metenmet2Maten
- #Milieu
- #N2000
- #Natura2000
- #Natuur
- #Natuurgebied
- #Natuurmonumenten
- #Natuurorganisaties
- #Nederland
- #Nederlandisteklein
- #Noodzaak
- #Omtzigt
- #Omtzigtgate
- #Onderdrukken
- #Onderwijs
- #Onzeboerderij
- #Overheid
- #Participatie
- #Pas
- #Perspectief
- #Plastic
- #Platteland
- #Pluimvee
- #Politiegeweld
- #Politiemacht
- #Respectvoordenatuur
- #Rutte
- #Ruttedoctrine

- #Schiphol
- #Stedelijke
- #Stemzeweg
- #Stikstof
- #Stikstofcrisis
- #Stikstofis
- #Stikstofuitstoot
- #Stikstofwet
- #Stopbashingklm
- #Subsidie
- #Toekomst
- #Toeslagen
- #Toeslagenaffaire
- #Trapruttehettorentjeuit
- #Trotsopdeboer
- #Vaccinatie
- #Vaccinatiestrategie
- #Vee
- #Veestapel
- #Veevoederindustrie
- #Verenigen
- #Verhuftering
- #Vervuiling
- #Voedselketen
- #Voedselprodukten
- #Voedselveiligheid
- #Vooronzekinderen
- #Vrijheid
- #Vvd
- #Waterconflicten
- #Watersysteem
- #Wijzijnhetvolk

- #Woningen
- #Woningnood
- #Wooncrisis
- #Zandvoort
- #Zorg

I added the following codes myself:

- actie
- carola schouten
- cijfers/grafieken
- consumeren
- covid-19
- crisis
- democratie
- dieren
- economie
- gevoel van boeren
- innovatie
- kritiek
- luchtvaart
- media
- mening over boeren
- politiek/beleid
- stedelingen
- stikstof
- toekomst
- twijfel
- veestapel
- vraagstuk
- VVD

I created the following code groups in which I subdivided the codes:

- Landbouw
- Data
- Covid-19
- Luchtvaart
- Natuur/klimaat
- Politiek/beleid
- Stikstof
- Verdeeldheid
- Wat moet er veranderen

Appendix 2: Ethics and privacy checklist



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Jennifer A. Holland, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: The Dutch nitrogen controversy - Environmental concerns from The Hague to the countryside

Name, email of student: Nina Hooijer, 570176nh@student.eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Willem Schinkel, schinkel@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: 11/01/2021 – 20/06/2021

Is the research study conducted within DPAS

YES - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. YES - NO

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? YES - NO

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. YES - NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). YES - NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES - NO
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? YES - NO
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? YES - NO
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? YES - NO
Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? YES - NO
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? YES - NO
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? YES - NO
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? YES - NO
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? YES - NO
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? YES - NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

I stored my data on my laptop in Atlas.Ti. I stored my data when I started to analyse my data from the 29th of March onwards.

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

I was responsible for the day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from my research.

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

I backed-up my research data every week.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

I didn't use directly identifying personal details. I used Twitter data in my analysis, I made sure not to mention personal details when I used a Tweet in my analysis. I removed user names and the time and location of when the Tweet was posted.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Nina Hooijer

Name (EUR) supervisor: Willem
Schinkel

Date: 20/06/2021

Date: 19/03/2021