The relationship between the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019 and the social media attention that the protest received

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Abstract

In contemporary society, there is an increasing influence of social media on society. Social media function as a mobilizer for social movement organization. This research aims to identify the relationship between the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019 and the social media attention that the protest received. This research elaborates on the existing literature by applying concepts, including framing, the protest paradigm and the agenda-setting theory to social media. Based on in-depth interviews with participants of the protest, a Twitter content analysis regarding the tweets of the protest, and desk research regarding the policy changes as a result of the protest, this study shows there is a mutualistic relationship between the Dutch farmers protest and the social media attention that the protest received. Twitter played a role in the mobilization process of the Dutch farmers protest by informing people about the protest and encouraging people to join the protest. As a result of the physical protest, the protest received high social media attention. Furthermore, the social media attention for the protest resulted in multiple political agenda-setting impacts, including regional and national policy changes.

Key words: social movement organization, social media platforms, mobilization of protests, framing, agenda-setting, protest paradigm

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SMO	Social Movement Organization
UA	Urban Agriculture

1. Introduction

Farmers protests in the Netherlands have a long history (Nos, 2019). These protests were often motivated by the adaptations that were made by the Dutch government on the legislation that influences farmers, including increasing taxes, regulating costs prices, redistribution of land but also social inequality (ibid). For the first farmer protest in 2019, the motivations are quite consistent with the previous cases. However, the difference lies in the sense that social media specifically contributed to the protest on the 1st of October, in the mobilization process, but maybe also in the attention that it received afterwards (Kaneza, 2019).

Nowadays, using social media is the most popular online activity (Fan & Gordon, 2014). Social media is not just a means of entertainment. It can be politically influential, heavily employed by politicians, institutions and activists (Weeks et al., 2017). Social media platforms are a means that could facilitate internal debate among activists (Gillan et al., 2008). Platforms create a self-mediation and distribution of ideas for activists (Jost et al., 2018). Activists could, through social media, bypass the state and the market, which results in the fact that there are new opportunities to distribute and or construct collective identities (Jost et al., 2018; Vasi & Chan, 2016). One platform that is used often by social movements is Twitter (Kaneza, 2019). One of the reasons for Twitter's popularity among activists is the use of hashtags (ibid). Twitter has created the hashtag to arouse discussions and conversations about particular topics. It is an informal method that highlights certain concepts, which is why social movements use hashtags to promote their message (Page, 2012). In Europe, new forms of demonstration and protests took place with crucial online support (Brantner & Rodriguez-Amat, 2016). Activism is possible via online platforms; these general areas of social interaction in the form of public and political communication (ibid). One example of protests where the rise of social media played a role was the Euro crisis and anti-austerity protests that were happening all over Europe from 2007 until 2012 (Groshek & Al-Rawi, 2015). This is also what happened for the Dutch farmers protest.

Besides the process of media mobilizing protests, social media could also play another role in protests. Protests sometimes receive high media attention that results in a media hype (Elchardus, 2002). This was applicable for the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019 (NOS, 2019). However, only limited research is done about the results of issues that receive high media attention (Strömbäck & Esser, 2009).

As such, it prompts the question of identifying the specific role that social media played before, during and after the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019. This results in the following main question:

What is the relation between the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019 and the social media attention that the protest received?

To provide an answer to this main question, the following secondary questions are being answered in the process:

1. How was the Dutch farmers protest mobilized and what was the role of Twitter in the process of mobilization?
2. Why did the Dutch farmers protest get a high amount of social media attention and how was the protest framed in the media?
3. Did the media attention on the Dutch farmers protest have any agenda-setting impacts, if so, on what?

To create answers to these questions, this thesis used a theoretical framework that is built on literature about the mobilization of protests, social media and protests, and the influence of social media in protests. several concepts are taken into account in the scope of the theoretical framework, including framing, the protest paradigm and the agenda-setting theory. Data is collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with participants of the Dutch farmers protest, a content Twitter analysis regarding the Dutch farmers protest and a desk research investigating policy changes as a result of the Dutch farmers protest and its social media attention. The results of this research will contribute to the existing literature, as well as to society.

Scientific relevance

Media has an increasing amount of influence on society (Strömbäck & Esser, 2009; Hajer, 2009). The role of social media in mobilizing protests has been studied intensively (Vasi & Chan, 2016; Gillan et al., 2008; Van Haperen et al., 2020). However, media attention for a particular protest does not always happen. Many social movements that carry out protests, only have limited resources and therefore try to strive for attention in the media, however, there is only a small amount that receives minimal media coverage (Smith et al., 2001). This research focuses on the Dutch farmers protest, which is a protest that received high (social) media attention. Therefore, this research adds to the literature how protests can get high (social) media attention.

Furthermore, there is only limited research about the consequences of social media attention on a particular issue (Strömbäck & Esser, 2009). This research will examine a particular case and focus on the (agenda-setting) impacts that social media attention has. Compared to the agenda-setting of traditional media, there is only little empirical evidence for the agenda-setting

impacts of social media attention (Hunt & Gruszczynski, 2018). In this research, several processes are being taken into account, including framing, the protest paradigm and agenda-setting, when focusing on the consequences of social media attention. Many of these processes are understudied in the existing literature when they are referring to social media (Sahin et al., 2016). Additionally, this research is relevant because the Dutch farmers protests are an ongoing process, despite this, previous studies have not dealt with this protest group. This indicates the need to understand the aspects of the Dutch farmers protests.

Social relevance

The societal relevance of this research is related to creating a way to use media attention for planning practice purposes. When the effect of social media use on the mobilization of protests is brought to light, the importance of social media in planning practice could increase. Therefore, social media could be used in planning practice, for example, to create a support base for certain plans or to open up (political) discussions. Furthermore, the results of this case study can be valuable for the use of media and the media coverage by governments, institutions and newspapers in general but in particular the Dutch context. By looking at the media attention, protests can be located and relating to this, escalations and tensions can be avoided. These aspects are all related to the societal relevance of this research.

The thesis is structured as follows: To begin, a small case description of the Dutch farmers protest will be given to get acquainted with the subject. Followed by the theoretical lens where this research is based upon. Thereafter, the methodology will be discussed that is used to provide an answer to the main question. Afterwards, the results of the research will be elaborated and they will be debated in the discussion. Finally, the conclusions of this research are stated.

2. Case description: The Dutch farmers protest

This research elaborates on the Dutch farmers protest on the 1st of October in 2019, it was the first protest of many concerning Dutch farmers. Thousands of tractors went to The Hague as well as other places, including Groningen, Zwolle and Hilversum (NOS, 2019). All the tractors caused the biggest traffic jam in Dutch history, with a length of 1,126 kilometers (ibid). It was a form of collective action that was the consequence of several reasons, which were often related to the farmer's environmental behaviour and the lack of transferring to a more sustainable system (Van Rooijen, 2020). According to Van Rooijen (2020), Dutch farmers had several reasons to protest, including new emission policies, new quotas etc. made by the Dutch government. Furthermore, the farmers strived for more recognition and acceptance from the government, as well as from the Dutch population (NOS, 2019). In addition, according to the farmers, they were often seen as the culprits of climate related issues. Because all of the aforementioned reasons, the farmers wanted to be heard. In addition, they wanted to participate or notified in policymaking that has a direct influence on the farmers (Van Rooijen, 2020). The first protest on October 1st 2019 was triggered by the proposition made by Tjeerd de Groot to halve livestock as a result of the limitations of the nitrogen emissions (NOS, 2019). The protest was organized by two relatively big Social Movement Organizations (SMO's), including Agractie and the Farmers Defence Force (Van Rooijen, 2020).

As mentioned before, the Dutch farmers protest was an often-discussed event. During the week before the protest, farmers used social media to create a higher support base among farmers and other participants (Kaneza, 2019). In that week, 274 messages were posted. On the day of the first protest, 1 October, this amount increased with 424.39% to 4,280 messages (ibid). It was inevitable to see the messages of the farmers and news articles about the farmers protest (ibid). In October 2019, 4 farmers protest took place in all different parts of the Netherlands. This indicates that the farmers wanted to be heard and that there was an enormous form of collective action and togetherness and solidarity among the farmers. After a month of messages online and physical protests, there were eventually 19.000 messages on social media, they were both positive and negative (Kaneza, 2019). The farmers brought to speak political discussion, both physical and online. The main online platforms for the political discussion were Twitter and Facebook (ibid).

3. Literature

This chapter will elaborate on the concepts that are being used in this research, including mobilization of protests, media attention, framing, the protest paradigm and the agenda-setting theory. The chapter will finish with a summary in the form of a conceptual model.

3.1 Mobilization of protests

To identify the mobilization process of the Dutch farmers protest, it is necessary to look more in-depth into reasons for people to mobilize. Therefore, the individual motives for protest mobilization are discussed. In addition, different types of networks play a role in the mobilization process, also referred to as the mobilization structure. Moreover, the concepts of framing and the protest paradigm are relevant for the mobilization of protests.

Mobilizing participants for protests is often seen as a difficult task (Boekkooi, 2012). McAdam et al. (1996) define the mobilizing structure as ''collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action'' (p.3). There has been made a distinction between three types of networks that are part of the mobilization structure that play important roles in the mobilization process. Hence, these three networks help make other people aware of the upcoming event and encourage them to also participate in the particular protest (Boekkooi, 2012). Firstly, formal networks, particularly Social Movement Organizations (SMO's). Through these networks, social, cultural, moral and material resources are distributed and assembled (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). Resources include social, cultural, moral and material resources (ibid). There are specific networks that are designed for movement mobilization, these are referred to as social movement organizations (Fisher et al., 2005). SMO's play an enormous role in supporting and mobilizing participation in protests (ibid). They provide information to their followers, which results in participation in physical protests (Fisher et al., 2005). The role of SMO's is in particular essential for participants who are not from the local area, so to include 'outsiders' (ibid). This is strengthened by Somma (2010), who states that participants who are involved in an organizational movement are more likely to participate than people who are not engaged in some sort of institution.

Secondly, informal networks are another form of network that plays a role in the mobilization structure (Boekkooi, 2012). Informal networks include friends, neighbours, colleagues etc. (ibid). This kind of network is essential because individuals are activists in 'abeyance', the state in everyday life when an important issue occurs (Melucci, 1985). When movements arise, the awareness and activism of the individual increases and the awareness and activism decline again when the movement declines (ibid). Furthermore, people that are involved

in movements, ask their environment to join them and bring new people to the protest (Gould, 2003).

Finally, in contemporary society, online networks, among which social media, are important factors in the mobilization process (Boekkooi, 2012). From the 2000s, online networks have an increasing role in the mobilization structure (Boekkooi, 2012). The organizers of the particular protest use online networks to encourage people to participate in the protest (ibid). The Internet, the reach and speed of a message on the Internet, was new and had a supersizing effect (Bakker et al., 2008). According to research by Fisher (2018), together with personal networks, the internet is the main method for hearing about events and protests. Nowadays, social media is the main resource for obtaining information about current events, political issues etc. (Boulos & Wheeler, 2007). Furthermore, social media is also being used as a way in which people are informed about current protests that occur in the world (ibid). Therefore, social media has a major influence on the mobilization of physical protests (Rheingold, 2006). Social media is different from other media platforms, this is because of the fact that there is no interference of gatekeepers (ibid). Everyone is able to post issues online on social media platforms (Boulos & Wheeler, 2007). Therefore, social media platforms are of great importance in informing the audience (ibid). This is strengthened by Van Haperen et al. (2020), who state that social media changes the local circumstances for social movements, social media ensures to transfer emotions to the audience. Furthermore, because of social media, activists who were not always involved could be made more visible (ibid).

When diving more into the social media platform Twitter, tweets can have several aims when the main theme is an upcoming protest, according to Theocharis et al. (2015). They distinguish multiple aims that a tweet can contain. Firstly, political mobilization, which refers to the distribution of information about an upcoming event or when a tweet calls for action. Secondly, coordination, which are often tweets by organizations or participants that talk about the logistics of the event. Thirdly, information, which relates to the distribution of information and causes of the event mostly distributed by news reports. And finally, conversation, which are tweets that include political statements or other conversations about the event (ibid).

To make a distinction between traditional media and social media platforms, traditional media platforms are less reactive to events compared to social media (Boulianne et al., 2020). Traditional media is therefore not seen as an indicator for mobilizing protests. Traditional media does not often cover events before they occur, if they would, journalists could be seen as not keeping to the norms of neutrality (Valenzuela, 2013). Thus, traditional media is more pro-

establish biased, and in contrast, social media offers a platform that is more pro-movement (Lee et al., 2017).

This mobilization structure helps to understand the networks that are involved in encouraging participation in protests. This research will use the mobilization structure to explore if these structures, formal, informal and online networks are also present in the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest. Furthermore, this paragraph identified the role that social media platforms, among which Twitter, could have in the mobilization structure. This research elaborates on the role of Twitter in the mobilization process, by examining the Dutch farmers protests.

In addition to the influence of online networks, framing of the content that is stated online plays an increasing role in the spread of the information on social media platforms (Benett & Segerberg, 2012). Entman (2000) sees framing as the selection of particular aspects of a perceived reality and efforts to make the particular issue more salient. Thereupon, frames are to define the problems of certain issues and weigh out the costs and benefits of those issues (ibid). Frames already make a moral judgement before the issue will shift to the audience. In addition, frames suggest remedies and provide justification for the problems (Entman, 2000). Norris (1995) stated that frames help obtain attention for particular aspects of reality, while other issues would not receive this sort of attention. McCurdy (2012) says framing is 'assessing how political movements are represented in the media is undeniably valuable'. Tankard (2001), saw framing of content as a positive process because it made an end to the objectivity of the media attention. In this thesis, framing is defined as the media attention to certain issues that are placed within a field of meaning (Scheufele, 1999). This definition is most applicable because it directly refers to media attention.

This thesis focuses on framing on social media platforms. Social media attention is essential in helping social movements communicate with the broader public (Hunt & Gruszczynski, 2018). The size of the social media attention along with the content influence if the audience creates sympathy for the social movement (Cooper, 2002). If the social media attention is favourable to the particular issue, this contributes to mobilization. For these reasons, media framing is of great importance, social movements have to consider how they are represented in the media, social movements have to deal with 'framing tasks', this needs strategy according to Hon (2016). One strategy that is named by Hon (2016) is the phenomenon that social movements set up excessive actions to attract media attention, this is related to the protest paradigm, which will be discussed later. Thus, the social media attention through framing helps to build meaning for the audience (ibid). Furthermore, through digital technologies, information about for example organizational groups are by no means value neutral (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

A more empirical study by Woods (2010), found that personalized frames and framing, in general, played a role in the rural protests in Britain between 1997 and 2007. In the latter years from 2003 till 2007, there was an increasing role for digital technologies. These technologies helped to shape and frame the rural protest in a way that encouraged people within the rural community to contribute to the mobilization as well as active rural citizenship (ibid). In addition, a study by White et al. (2014), found that agriculturalists use social media to combat the negative attention that the farmers often get. However, the agriculturalists are positive about social media use, for their own as well as for the agricultural sector. They frame their issues in a way that the social media attention will help encourage people to participate in protest or seek empathy (White et al., 2014). According to Harlow et al. (2017), research has shown that framing is the most prominent factor for predicting engagement and interpretation by the audience. Based on the theory of the concept framing as well as the aforementioned empirical findings, this research will identify the lens of framing that is used by the farmers to construct their argument. Through these frames made by the farmers, mobilization could be encouraged (Hunt & Gruszczynski, 2018).

A framing strategy that is mentioned before is the protest paradigm. The protest paradigm is an essential concept when looking at the mobilization of protests (Chan & Lee, 1989). Protests are always seeking media attention, to make sure that they are being heard by the audience (ibid). There has always been a complex relationship between social movements and media attention (McLeod & Hertog, 1992). Participants of protests and social movements want to share their ideas and information through mainstream media (ibid). Protesters often use striking strategies to obtain media attention, such as graffiti, mass demonstrations but also violence against the police (Chan & Lee, 1989). This results in negative attention in the media. Boyle et al. (2005) name this situation as 'lose-lose', which means that for both the police and society this is a negative situation, but also for the protesters, who obtain negative media attention. This process of obtaining media attention by striking strategies is the protest paradigm (Chan & Lee, 1989). The more radical participants behave in the protest, the more negative media attention it will receive (ibid). McLeod & Hertog (1999) define the protest paradigm as the news coverage that focuses on the tactics, actions and drama of protests, rather than stressing the motives behind the protests. The latter definition of the protest paradigm will be used in this research because this research focuses on how the Dutch farmers protest is shaped by the media. In addition, the definition by Chan & Lee (1989) is incorporated in this research. Therefore, the protest paradigm in this study is identified as the phenomenon that social movements want attention and therefore act in a violent way, resulting in negative media attention.

According to Rauch et al. (2007), the protest paradigm results in disadvantages to the participants of protests (Rauch et al., 2007). This is in line with McLeod & Hertog (1998), who state that the protest paradigm can be seen as media attention that indicates disapproval towards the physical protests. Lee (2014), has set up three indicators of the protest paradigm. The first one is the accent on the violence of the protest (ibid). Secondly, the extent of the inclusion of the actual demands and voices of the participants. And finally, the inclusion of statements from other sources (ibid). McLeod (2007) even mentions more aspects and identifies five characteristics of the protest paradigm: news frames, reliance on official sources and official definitions, invocation of public opinion, delegitimization and demonization.

1. *Media frames* refer to the negativity in how protests are covered in the media.
2. *Reliance on official sources and official definitions* focuses on the fact that mainstream media is based on facts and therefore, people will believe what is shown in the media.
3. *Invocation of public opinion* relates to using reports and polls about the public opinion.
4. *Delegitimization* is based on the phenomenon that the media often does not explain the actual reason behind the protests and leaves out the context.
5. *Demonization* refers to the media attention that only includes content that has a negative effect on social movements.

These five characteristics will help to give a deeper understanding of the protest paradigm and how it can be present in the media. Therefore, these aspects mentioned by McLeod (2007), are taken into account, to help identify if the protest paradigm is also present when referring to the Dutch farmers protest.

Furthermore, an increasing amount of research is done on the applicability of the protest paradigm on social media platforms. The protest paradigm relating to traditional media is moderately different from the protest paradigm for social media platforms (Harlow et al., 2017). Research by Harlow et al. (2017) suggests that texts on social media platforms show the peacefulness of the protestors instead of the violence (ibid). However, the pictures that are shared on social media platforms, are predominantly violent and refer to drama (McLeod, 2007). Thich relates to the media frames that were mentioned in the characteristics of McLeod (2007). Because this relates highly to the framing of the issue, this research examines whether the Dutch farmers used the protest paradigm strategy as well as framing the issue to obtain media attention. Based on the literature, this would relate to a more violent approach of the mobilization of the protest, to increase the attention of the protest, along with certain frames made by the farmers.

Hence, the protest paradigm helps to understand the underlying thought of the Dutch farmers, because the protest paradigm is also applicable for the Dutch farmers, they wanted to be heard (NOS, 2019). Therefore, the concept of the protest paradigm is relevant. The protest paradigm allows this thesis to look at the farmers protest in a more in-depth manner, including the underlying reasons for media attention that relate to mobilization, which is different from other theories, such as just focusing on the mobilization structure. Furthermore, mobilization of protest also depends on the protest paradigm. When social movements want to obtain media attention, they are more likely to act in a more violent way, even despite the reaction that they might receive (McLeod, 2007).

Together with the involvement of different sorts of networks (formal, informal and online), the framing on social media platforms and the applicability of the protest paradigm, the individual motives for protest participation are also of great importance. Klandermans & Oegema (1984) have made a protest mobilization model (see figure 1), which visualizes the steps that are taken in the mobilization process. Scherman et al. (2015) applied the role of social media to this model in step 1 and step 2. Step 1 refers to the fact that people are expected to participate in protests, when they agree with the goals of the protest, in the model this is referred to as sympathizer (Klandermans & Oegema, 1984). The function of social media lies here in facilitating discussions and conversations, which results in recognition and a feeling of belonging to the social movement (Scherman et al., 2015). Social media platforms that function as such are mostly Twitter and Facebook (ibid). Twitter is seen as more open, which results in discussion among people that are sometimes not even connected (Valenzuela, 2013). By comparison, Facebook is more focused on relationships that already exist (ibid). Both platforms can function as mobilizers for physical protests, however, the platforms function in a different way (Valenzuela, 2013). Facebook works with close ties, which would result in higher recruitment, but the platform is more focused on private information, more between friends and family (Boekkooi, 2012). Twitter, on the contrary, is important in transmitting information and ideas on weak ties (ibid). Therefore, according to Scherman et al. (2015), the influence of the use of Twitter on the mobilization of protests will be higher than the use of Facebook. During step 2, Klandermans & Oegema (1987) research if the participants were the actual goal of the mobilization attempt, so the target, this means if they were asked to participate in the protest. Networks play an essential role in this step (ibid). According to Lee et al. (2017), social media takes upon the role of recruiting participants through networks. This is strengthened by Snow et al. (1980), who state that recruiting people is more effective through people that you know. When referring back to step 1, Facebook is the most efficient social media platform, because of its strong ties. In step 3, people weigh out the costs and the benefits

of participating in the physical protest (Klandermans & Oegema, 1984). According to Snow et al. (1980), people take several aspects into account, such as risks, time investment but also the possible sanctions that could be a result of the protest. Step 4 is the actual participation, people have gone through all the steps and still want to participate in the protest (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987).

This protest mobilization model provides the individual reasons for people to join the protest. In this research, this model helps to explore the individual reasons for people to have joined the Dutch farmers protest.
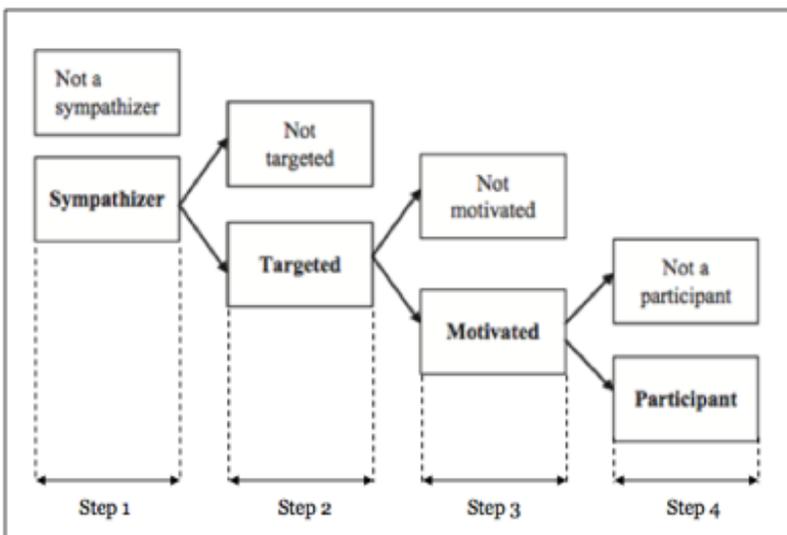
Figure 1 - Protest mobilization model (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987)

However, there are some conditions to the use of social media that have to be taken into account. Some structural factors have to be taken into account when looking at the role of the usage of social media (Soares & Joia, 2015). There has to be access to the internet, not everywhere individuals have access to social media. This provides opportunities to share opinions online (Garrett, 2006). The political context is also of interest, this influences the social movements that are in the particular country (ibid). Therefore, it is essential to look at the degree of democracy, freedom of speech etc. that differs per country (Best & Wade, 2009). Moreover, the socio-economic context is relevant, this is mostly related to the quality of life in a particular country and therefore it has to be taken into account (Soares & Joia, 2015). The instrumental factors, including, traditional media, agendas, international repercussions and repression of demonstrations are also of great importance (ibid). These factors have to be researched to identify the contribution of the use of social media in a particular social movement (Soares & Joia, 2015).

3.2 Social media and protests

Media attention is an important tool for helping social movements communicate with a wider public (Cooper, 2002). Several scholars define media attention as obtaining media coverage of varied intensity levels (Barasko & Schaffner, 2006; Amenta et al., 2009). While Clayman & Reisner (1998), see media attention more as the prominence of media coverage, the more prominent an issue will be provided in the media, the more likely the issue will reach the audience. The definition by Clayman & Reisner (1998), is used in this thesis because the latter part of the definition relates to agenda-setting which will also be discussed in this research.

With the amount of media coverage, several indicators are taken into account, among which the length of the article, the number of articles and the usage of illustrations, when referring to news articles (Amenta et al., 2009). Andrews & Caren (2010), state that media attention in modern society is scarce and desirable. Media attention can be obtained by different channels, such as, radio, television, newspapers, the internet among which social media platforms (Vliegenhart et al., 2015). Two aspects are of great importance that are integrated into media attention. The first one mentioned by Gamson & Wolfsfeld (1993), is standing. Standing refers to the fact that the subject of the article or group has a voice within the media. The second outcome is preferred framing, which can be defined as messages from groups are in the media without any distortion.

This research examines the social media attention of the Dutch farmers protest; therefore, it is essential to give a clear definition of the term social media attention. Because the concept slightly differs from traditional media attention, it was necessary to make a distinction between the two concepts. On the basis of the amount of media coverage both social media and traditional media attention overlap (Amenta et al., 2009). However, the difference lies in the speed of transferring an issue to the audience (Hadler & Yoran, 2012; DeLuca et al., 2012). Hence, social movements have to deal with challenges in obtaining (social) media attention (Cottle, 2008; Papacharissi & Blasiola, 2015), which means that the Dutch farmers also faced these challenges. In addition, according to Hermida et al. (2012), social media platforms have become an essential source for transferring news issues. Social media attention compared to traditional media, is much less hierarchical (Hadler & Yoran, 2012). This is because of the flow and speed of the social media world, issues and the exposure to information spread faster than traditional media (ibid). Furthermore, the process of obtaining social media attention does not include the interference of gatekeepers, therefore all kinds of issues are shared on social media (DeLuca et al., 2012). However, based on the definition of Amenta et al. (2009), the main idea of social media attention

is similar to the definition of traditional media attention. This relates to the varying levels of intensity of the media coverage of a certain issue (ibid).

Media attention to protests is a consequence of interactions between protester groups and journalists (Andrews & Caren, 2010). Selection bias is essential in the process of getting media attention. This refers to what factors influence whether an issue would be highlighted in the media (ibid). According to Gans (1979), the mainstream media does not favour protests and social movements, and only the most newsworthy protests will eventually obtain media attention. Several studies show that protests will occur in the media if they fit with the news organization, but also whether they have characteristics that are newsworthy (McCarthy et al., 1996; Wilkes et al., 2010). Andrews & Caren (2010) state that protests will receive media attention based on the issues, the location of the events and the size of the events. Shoemaker & Reese (1996), add to this that gatekeepers determine what is important enough to show in the media. According to Cottle (2008), media attention for protests has become less predictable and clear. This is due to the social movement society, which refers to the phenomenon that protests have become normalized and routinized (ibid). These social movements do not only seek traditional media attention but also social media attention (Hunt & Gruszczynski, 2019). SMO's use social media to draw attention to a certain issue (ibid). DeLuca et al. (2012), identified that social movements obtained more mass media coverage, because of the social media coverage. This means that there is a connection between social media attention and traditional media attention (ibid). DeLuca et al. (2012) state that when social media attention rises, traditional media attention on that particular issue also rises. The advantage of social media attention for protests lies in the ability that it can ''afford movements' voice and visibility that can promote the movement more generally and add to its chances of success" (Papacharissi & Blasiola, 2015, p.211). In addition, Christensen (2011) states that activism on social media is complementary, and not a replacement, to other forms of activism.

To put this theory about obtaining social media attention into perspective, a case study by Reed & Keech (2017) about Urban Agriculture (UA) will be discussed. Bristol, in the UK, was in 2015 the European Green Capital, consequently, this brought resilience in the sense of protest. The research concerns the media attention on these protests as well as the food activists. Based on a Twitter content analysis, it showed that UA got a lot of social media attention on Twitter. Furthermore, the analysis revealed where the tweets were about. The materials, so the tweets, were mostly shared with the purpose of creating a shared and normative picture about UA. Relating this study by Reed & Keech (2017), to this study, in the past years, agricultural protests already received media attention in the form of tweets. This thesis will elaborate more on the

social media attention of agricultural protest, applying it to the case study of the Dutch farmers protest.

Along with media attention for protest, framing, and in particular, protest framing is present. Together with framing the issues of the activists, framing also occurs in social media attention. Semetko & Valkenbrug (2000), studied different types of frames. For this research, the conflict frame is applicable. They define the conflict frame as ''emphasizing the conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions as a means of capturing audience interests'' (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95). According to Trilling et al. (2017), news that contains conflict frames are more likely to be shared on Twitter and Facebook, this relates to the 'shareworthiness' of the issue. However, conflict frames are sometimes related to less virality on social media platforms (Vreese, 2017). Because motives for posting issues on social media are related to impression management, this implies that positive issues are occurring more on social media platforms than negative issues (ibid).

Moreover, conflict framing is closely related to protest framing, because protests are part of conflicts. Protest framing is an essential aspect of this research because the research reflects on the Dutch farmers protest and social media attention. When looking in particular at protest framing, which is often related to McLeod & Hertog (1992), they made a distinction between four aspects where protest news articles are about. These four are being identified as confrontation, riot, circus and debate (ibid). Confrontation is related to the dispute between the police and the protesters. Riot stresses the dispute between society and the protesters. Circus underlines the show, the drama and the eccentricity of the protest itself. These first three put the participants of the protests in a certain light, the media showing the protesters as deviant, which led to a less solid look of the audience. And the fourth aspect is debate, this is related to the demands and the points of view of the protesters. Hence, the debate frame is seen as an opportunity to provide the audience with the underlying meaning of the protest (McLeod & Hertog, 1992). The theory on the protest frames will help understand protest frames that are present in the social media attention for the Dutch farmers protest. Therefore, it is interesting to see whether these four aspects can also be identified for the Dutch farmers protests on social media platforms.

3.3 Influence of social media on agenda-setting

In contemporary society, the importance of media is growing because of the fact of an increase in online newspapers, social media platforms and interactive internet sites (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2014). The agenda-setting theory is taken into account in this research because it could be possible

that agenda-setting happens as a result of the received high social media attention by the Dutch farmers.

It is essential to go more in-depth into the concept of agenda-setting. Scholars have long studied the agenda-setting theory (Cohen, 1963; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Rogers & Dearing, 1988). Cohen (1963), started with the idea of agenda-setting, he stated that the media does not decide what people think, but they decide what people think about. Eventually, McCombs & Shaw (1972), put this assumption into a theory that resulted in the agenda-setting theory. McCombs & Shaw (1972), define the agenda-setting theory as the phenomenon that news media can create public concern and awareness of particular issues on the national level. Rogers & Dearing (1988), have expanded the theory and made the model that includes three types of agenda-setting. The first one is public agenda-setting, where the public opinion is influenced by the content of the mass media. According to Birkland (2007), the media has the capability to change people's attitudes towards particular issues. Secondly, the media-agenda setting focuses on the fact that larger media platforms determine the agenda for other news media platforms (ibid). And finally, policy agenda-setting, where the public, as well as the media agendas, influence the decisions of policymakers (Rogers & Dearing, 1988). In addition, Kingdon (1995) states that political agenda-setting leads to policy implications. News coverage and media attention are important predictors of shifts in the opinion of the audience (McCombs & Shaw, 1993). When issues are covered frequently, the public will see these issues as more important (ibid). This means in reality that the media only shows what they think is important for the public (McCombs & Shaw, 1993). As a result, the public loses the ability to think for themselves (ibid). Hence, the media controls our access to information, news topics, and entertainment by agenda-setting, but also by gatekeeping (McCombs & Shaw, 1993). Therefore, this thesis uses a slightly different definition of agenda-setting than McCombs & Shaw (1972), by relating it more to contemporary society and the digital era. The following definition of agenda-setting will be used: the influence of social media platforms on the awareness and public concern of particular issues on a national level.

Feezell (2017) has done research about agenda-setting through social media and states that social media, just as entertainment media (Holbert & Hansen, 2006) and soft news (Baum & Jamison, 2006), can have incidental exposure to political issues. The majority of social media users go on platforms to socialize, network and to share their personal information (Bakshy et al., 2012). However, on these social media platforms, the users are often exposed to political information (Feezell, 2017). As a consequence of transmitting political issues to the users of social media platforms, social media have agenda-setting impacts that are a reflection of the content that is included in the mass media (ibid). Furthermore, not only incidental exposure to political

issues happen, politicians, use social media platforms themselves to transfer their political opinions to the audience (Bakshy et al., 2012). This phenomenon also facilitates the effects of agenda-setting (ibid). The agenda-setting impacts can be explained by psychology, referring to the need for orientation (McCombs et al., 2014; Matthes, 2006). The need for orientation is based on relevance and uncertainty, whereby relevance is defined as how important an issue is to society and uncertainty refers to the familiarity with an issue by the individual (ibid). When online news articles contain high relevance and high uncertainty, it is more likely that they have agenda-setting impacts (Feezell, 2017).

The theoretical framework of the three different agenda-setting aspects helps to explore the impacts that the social media attention on the Dutch farmers protest can possibly have. Based on the model by Rogers & Dearing (1988), this study will mainly focus on political agenda-setting and put it into a new perspective by focussing on social media instead of traditional media. For this research, political agenda-setting is most interesting because many people have an opinion about the media attention and the protest and because it is about a social movement that wants to reach a certain goal.

3.4 Conceptual framework

The conceptual model that is presented in Figure 2 gives a visualization of how the concepts that are used in this chapter are interlinked and related to each other. This model is based on the literature that is previously discussed. The following section will discuss the conceptual model and will elaborate on the relations between the different concepts.

First of all, based on the aforementioned literature the above shown conceptual model has been made (Figure 2). According to the literature, there is an interconnection between the mobilization of protests and the social media attention that it receives. Firstly, mobilization occurs because social media platforms function as a means of communication and inform people, which leads to the mobilization of participants of the physical protests (Van Haperen, 2018; Fisher, 2018; Sherman, 2015). Secondly, mobilization of protests encourages discussions on social media platforms and therefore lead to social media attention. The mobilization of the protest is dependent on the mobilization structure, framing of the protest as well as the use of the protest paradigm. Firstly, the mobilization structure identifies the networks that play a role in the mobilization of the protest. Secondly, framing shows a particular side of an issue which results in the audience shaping some kind of empathy or not (Hon, 2016; McLeod & Hertog, 1992). The particular framing of the protest could influence the mobilization of the protest. Thirdly, the protest paradigm suggests that participants use a violent way of demonstration to obtain media

attention. As a result, the more radical a protest is, the more negative the social movements will be in the media (Boyle et al., 2005; Chan & Lee, 1989). This research elaborates on the applicability of these two concepts to the Dutch farmers protest.
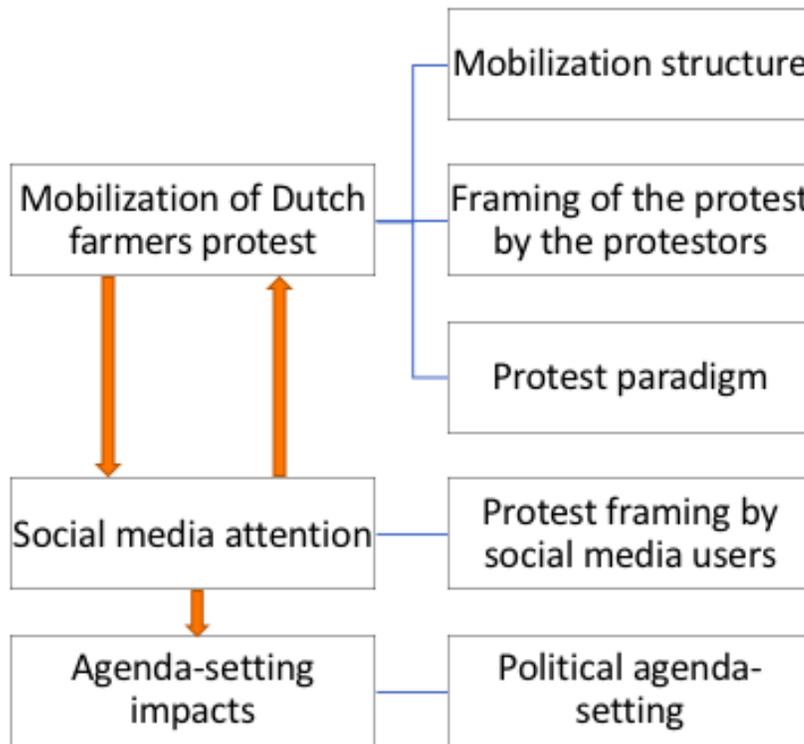
Figure 2 - Conceptual model

In addition, social media attention on the particular protest includes framing of the protest by the social media users (McLeod & Hertog, 1992). Furthermore, social media attention for the Dutch farmers protest could result in agenda-setting impacts. Agenda-setting refers to the phenomenon that the media shapes the public's opinion of what people think about, if certain issues often and to a large extent occur in the media, the audience will automatically think about these issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Rogers & Dearing, 1988). Possible agenda-setting impacts could include changing policies, or political conversations on the issue made by the government which is related to political agenda-setting (Rogers & Dearing, 1988).

The relationships that are found between all these concepts function as hypotheses for this research. This model will be tested on the basis of a case study. The outcome will provide to identify the relationship between the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019 and the social media attention that the protest received.

4. Methodology

In order to understand the relationship between the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest and the social media attention that it received, this research draws from qualitative data in the form of interviews and Twitter analysis. This approach is selected because it helps to give a more in-depth insight into the aforementioned relationship. In addition, secondary data is used in the form of desk research, to identify the impacts of the social media attention for the Dutch farmers protest.

4.1 Case study research approach

In this research, a case study methodology is used, this relates to an empirical research method that examines a particular case, a contemporary phenomenon, within its context (Yin, 2003). According to Flyvberg (2006), case studies result in context-dependent knowledge, this kind of knowledge together with experiences bring about expert the activity. A single case study is provided to construct external validity. Because a single case study is conducted, whereby theory is used, the findings of the study are generalizable (Yin, 2003). In addition, to construct validity, data is triangulated by using both qualitative data from in-depth interviews and qualitative data from a Twitter data collection. This helps create a case study database and establish a chain of evidence (Yin, 2003). Hence, triangulation is often used in the conduction of case studies, relating to multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2003). The analytical approach of this research draws from multiple sources of data. Firstly, in-depth interviews are conducted with participants of the Dutch farmers protest. Secondly, a Twitter data collection is gathered. Both sources of evidence are analyzed based on coding. Thirdly, secondary data is gathered through desk research, which is analyzed afterwards.

Yin (2003) mentions five elements that are essential for a well-structured case study, namely: the research questions of the case study (1), the propositions of the case study (2), the units of analysis of the case study (3), the logic linking the data to the propositions (4), and criteria for interpreting the findings (5). The first aspect is already mentioned in Chapter 2, regarding the case study of the Dutch farmers protest. This chapter will elaborate more on the case study, as well as on the other four aspects.

4.2 Case study: Dutch farmers protest

The Dutch farmers protest is a case of rural activism in the Netherlands both physically and virtually. Because this activism was both physically and virtually, this research helps to understand the relationship between the mobilization process of protests and the social media attention that it received.

The unit of analysis, or the case, is determined by defining spatial boundary, theoretical scope, and timeframe (Yin,2003). Firstly, the theoretical scope of this research is based on the theories that are applied in this research. The process of the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest is defined by the mobilization structure, the framing of the issue by the participants and the applicability of the protest paradigm. Furthermore, the protest leads to social media attention, whereby protest framing is present. Finally, this social media attention could possibly result in policy agenda-setting. Therefore, all these concepts were discussed in the conceptual framework of this research, which is related to the theoretical scope of this research.

Secondly, the spatial boundary of this case is complex, because the focus of the research lies on a protest and the media attention. The spatial boundary in this case study is defined by the protests. Even though the social media attention on the protests happened online, it can be argued as grounded on the protests with a real geographical scale. Therefore, the spatial boundary for this research is the Netherlands, because this research focuses on the Dutch farmers protest that has happened in the Netherlands. Multiple farmers protests have happened in the country. In addition, the geographical site, in this case, is not that relevant, because the protest contained a whole social movement. Almost all participants had the same reasons for participating in the protest and they all had the same aim, and therefore, it does not matter where in the Netherlands people went protesting.

Thirdly, another boundary is the timeframe of the case study. This research is based on the heights of the protests that happened in October 2019. In the month of October 2019, four different farmers protests happened, with October 1st as the first protest since 1990 (Van Rooijen, 2020). Because this research also focuses on the mobilization process of the protest, also the week before the first protest on October 1st has been taken into account. Therefore, the timeframe of this research ranges from September 23 2019 to 31 October 2019. In addition, this research is conducted from December 2020 to August 2021. The interviews and the Twitter collection happened from March 2021 from June 2021.

4.3 Data collection and analysis

This research uses a combination of data collected from semi-structured interviews and Twitter. Table 1 outlines the corresponding sources of data and analytical techniques of each secondary question, intending to understand the relationship between the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest and the social media attention that it received. The following sections detail the data collection and analysis.

Table 1 - Sources of evidence for secondary research questions

Secondary research question	Source of evidence	Analytical technique
How was the Dutch farmers protest mobilized and what was the role of Twitter in the process of mobilization?	Twitter analysis/in-depth interviews	Interviews: Coding via Atlas.ti Twitter: Coding via Atlas.ti
Why did the Dutch farmers protest get a high amount of social media attention and how was the protest framed in the media?	Twitter analysis/in-depth interviews	Interviews: Coding via Atlas.ti Twitter: Coding via Atlas.ti
Did the higher attention have any agenda-setting impacts, if so, on what?	Secondary data collection	Desk research

Moreover, within this research, there are three units of analysis: the participants of the Dutch farmers protests, the tweets regarding the Dutch farmer protest and the secondary data on policy changes resulting from the protest. All these units are visualized in Figure 3 and will be discussed in the following chapter. Firstly, the participants of the Dutch farmers protest are analyzed via coding of in-depth interviews. Secondly, the tweets with the #boerenprotest are analyzed by coding those tweets. And thirdly, the secondary data of the policy changes are investigated.
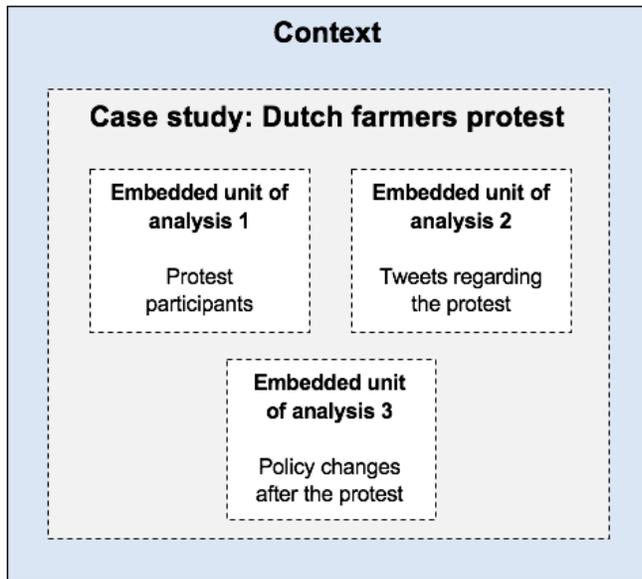
Figure 3 - Single-case embedded design. Based on Yin (2018)

4.3.1 Twitter analysis

The first unit of analysis that is identified is the tweets concerning the Dutch farmers protest (see Figure 3). This unit is analyzed through a content Twitter analysis. The content Twitter analysis will help explore topics, sentiments and framing of the particular issue (Zeng et al., 2010). In this research, tweets are used to understand how activists interpret the nitrogen regulations, how they call for action, but also how other people reacted to the protest.

In this thesis, two phases of Twitter data collection have been conducted. The first phase was based on the tweets of the week before the protest on the first of October 2019. This helps understand how the Dutch farmers protest was mobilized and what role of Twitter in the process of mobilization was using the '#boerenprotest' [#farmersprotest]. This set of tweets ranges from September 23rd to September 30th 2019. This time range helps identify the role that Twitter played in the mobilization of the protest and how the activists and SMO's frame the issue to encourage others to join the protest. In addition, identifying who tweeted about the protest will also contribute to identifying the mobilization process. This also relates to providing an answer to the question of mobilization of the protest. Therefore, the Twitter data that is collected, include the content of the tweets and the information about the tweeting accounts. This Twitter data is collected manually.

After collecting all the tweets from the aforementioned time range, which resulted in 275 tweets, the tweets were coded in Atlas.ti. Beforehand, a coding scheme was made that was based on research by Theocharis et al. (2015). Five categories have been made: (1) political mobilization (applicable when a tweet distributes information about an upcoming protest or when the tweet

calls explicitly for action), (2) coordination (applicable when the tweets are about the logistics of the upcoming protest), (3) information (applicable when a tweet contains news reports about the upcoming protest or about the causes for the upcoming protests), and (4) conversations (applicable when a tweet includes political statements or other conversations. Tweets containing conversations about the Dutch farmer protest include the aims and causes of the protest distributed by the farmers. Non-farmers shared tweets containing conversations including a statement of support with sometimes referring to the hashtags #trotsoponzeboeren (proud of our farmers) and #steundeboeren (support the farmers).

In addition, another code will be added to the tweet. This is based on the user of the account who placed the tweet. The codes that are made are both for organizational accounts as well as individual accounts: (1) news accounts, (2) social movement accounts (for example, 'Gele Hesjes', (3) farmers, (4) people (non-farmers), and (5) other. These codes are made because they can help distinguish the framing of the farmers. Moreover, the role of news accounts and social movement accounts can be identified.

The second set of tweets include tweets published between October 1st till October 31, this is the month after the first farmers protest, including also more following farmers protest. The number of Tweets in this time range is around 19,000 tweets, due to a lack of resources, a random sample of these tweets are collected. From each day in October, 33 tweets are gathered to make an evenly distributed data set, which resulted in an overall data set of 1,000 tweets. The tweets are collected manually, and therefore every first 33 tweets of the research result with #boerenprotest are gathered. This set of tweets will help identify the presence of conflict frames in the social media attention. Furthermore, this set of tweets identifies the point of view of people towards the Dutch farmers protest.

After the data collection, the tweets were coded on the hand of a coding scheme (see Table 2). The codes are based on a content Twitter analysis of research by Wan Woo et al. (2020). To make this set of codes completer and more applicable to this research, aspects of protest framing defined by McLeod & Hertog (1992), are incorporated in the coding scheme, including debate, confrontation, riot and circus. These codes will help provide the frames in which the protest is shown in the media. The codes debate, expressive and constitutional will be explained because they look similar. Firstly, tweets containing debate include discussions about arguments regarding the Dutch farmers protest. Tweets containing debate are for example: ''Ammonia, nitrogen and CO2. Juggling number and measuring methods at RIVM. #boerenprotest #farmersaction #farmersrevolt" by @muntverzamelaar. Secondly, tweets contain expressive calls about the protest. An example of a tweet that is coded as expressive is: ''*terrified farmers yeah,*

right.. Have you seen the huge farmer protests in the Netherlands? They virtually shut the country down over ludicrous demands from Greens #boerenprotest" by @sharpfang. Thirdly, constitutional tweets aim to encourage people to mobilize. An example is: *''#citizens join you!!! Against the #nitrogenlie #climatehysteria and all the nonsense!"* by @geeskegrietje.

Furthermore, a second coding scheme has been used to see who tweeted, these codes are the same as the first set of tweets. This set of codes elaborates on how the issue is framed on Twitter.

Table 2 - Summary of coding scheme

Coding scheme	Sub-category	Description
Rhetorical purposes	Debate	Tweets that include argument and causes
	Expressive	Tweets to just speak one's mind
	Constitutional	Tweets to call for action
	Confrontation	Tweets that include dispute between police and protestors
	Riot	Tweets that include dispute between society and protestors
	Circus	Tweets that include 'drama'
Attitude	Positive towards farmers protest	Defend farmers protest
	Negative towards farmers protest	Criticize farmers protest

However, there are some limitations to the Twitter analysis. Firstly, Twitter is to some extent biased. Thus, especially for the second data set, where a random sample of the Tweets is taken. As a result, the 33 tweets that were collected were the first 33 tweets of each day, which results in a biased data set collection. This can be seen as a limitation of the data collection. Furthermore, only tweets with #boerenprotest are collected, while even more tweets are about the protest. However, other studies have also adopted manual collection, for example, research by Boukes (2018) and by Wan Woo et al. (2020). Following these studies, this research argues that the random sampling can still provide sufficient remedy to understand the framing of the Dutch farmers protest.

4.3.2 In-depth interviews

The second unit of analysis is the participants of the Dutch farmers protest. Therefore, the second source of evidence is semi-structured in-depth interviews. 11 interviews are conducted with participants of the Dutch farmers protest. The participants that are chosen for this research are based on the composition of the participants of the Dutch farmer protest. Most people that joined the Dutch farmer were relatively young farmers (Van Rooijen, 2020) their age range from 18 till 35, also some farmers between the age of 35 till 65 joined the protest and even people that are not farmers at all joined the protest (ibid). Therefore, this research includes in-depth interviews with participants from the three aforementioned groups. Not only participants that went protesting in The Hague are included in this research, but also participants that protested in Groningen, because of the irrelevance of the geographical site. The table in Appendix B provides information about the different interviewees. The interviews help to understand the mobilization process of the participants, the framing of the social media attention and the reasons for the media attention, as well as to get insight into the political agenda-setting of the social media attention.

During the interview, some ethical considerations were taken into account. Beforehand, the interviewees were informed about their anonymity in the research, the confidentiality of the interview and they were asked for permission to record the interview.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted based on an interview guide (Appendix A). After conducting the interviews, the interview transcripts were translated to English and all personal identifiers were removed to provide anonymity of the participants, transcripts were next coded using Atlas.ti, using the codebook as shown in Appendix D. The main themes were individual motives for participation, the mobilization process, the participant's perception of the social media attention, and the impact of the protest and the social media attention. These themes follow from the theoretical framework. A summary of the conducted interviews can be found in Appendix C.

4.3.3 Desk research

On behalf of political agenda-setting, there is looked at the political reactions from the Dutch government after the Dutch farmers protest and the social media attention that it received afterwards. This study focuses on the short-term policy changes based on the fact that after the month of October 2019, more protests happened. This research solely addresses the protests in October 2019, because when looking at the policy implications there cannot be made a distinction between the protests within that month.

To identify the policy changes that were implemented, desk research is conducted. Formal and reliable sources are used to gather information. Google, Google Scholar and Nexis Uni are the databases that are approached in this research. An example of a site that is used is www.tweedekamer.nl, to identify the political debates about the Dutch farmers protest. For this information, the time span of the information that is gathered ranges from October 2019 until December 2019, because in January 2020 the next farmers protest happened.

5. Results

This chapter discusses the results that are found during the in-depth interview as well as the Twitter content analysis. The chapter is structured based on the different secondary research questions. Furthermore, the questions will be answered in this chapter.

5.1 Mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest and the role of Twitter

There is a wide variety of reasons why people joined the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019, these were mentioned both in the interviews and in the tweets. These relate to the individual reasons for the protest. Furthermore, on the basis of the mobilization structure, there is looked at how these individual motivations resulted in mobilization, hence, how the various networks (formal, informal and online) contribute to the mobilization process.

5.1.1 Mobilization process of the participants of the Dutch farmers protest

This section discusses the process of mobilization using indicators from the model by Boekkooi (2012). Beforehand, the individual motives are discussed based on the model by Klandermans & Oegema (1987). The main reason for joining the protest mentioned by the interviewees, was the existing regulations of the government, such as the decrease in land to make room for more Natura2000 areas and housing construction. Furthermore, many interviewees talked about the plans for halving the country's livestock to limit nitrogen emissions, where none of the farmers agreed upon. In addition, other motivations for engaging in the protest include the lack of respect to farmers by the government and the public, being heard as a sector, low prices of the products and the incorrect measurement of the nitrogen emissions. All these motivations relate to the individual motives for participation, and therefore, the interviewees can be identified as sympathizers, based on step 1 of the protest mobilization model by Klandermans & Oegema (1987).

The mobilization structure by Boekkooi is in accord with step 2 of the model by Klandermans & Oegema (1987), which identifies how these sympathizers are mobilized. The interviewees had several and different sources of how they knew that the protest was going to take place. First, the most often mentioned source (6 out of the 11 interviewees) was social media, including Twitter and Facebook groups. When referring back to the model of the mobilization structure by Boekkooi (2012), this relates to the online networks that play a role in the mobilization process. In the results of the Twitter analysis, the actual role of Twitter is being discussed. The interviewees who stated that online platforms were the main source, were often relatively young. The ages of these interviewees range from 17 to 32. It is assumed that often

younger people are more likely to use social media (Van Rooijen, 2020), which would explain the fact that the young interviewees mentioned social media. However, all the 11 participants stated that they make use of social media. Some relatively older participants stated that they have social media but that they do not really use it, this would explain the difference. On the contrary, only one participant stated that NOS, the traditional media, was the main source that he knew about the protest. This relates to the fact that traditional news media do not always cover issues that have not happened yet. This is related to the more reactive side of traditional media instead of already discussing issues before the actual event (Boulianne et al., 2020). However, 10 out of the 11 participants stated that they have seen messages on social media platforms about the protest. But this was for some not the main reason that they knew about it. The interviewees state that these messages were the date, the causes and the aim of the protest, but also calls to join the protest.

Second, acquaintances were the second largest group that was stated as a resource. 4 out of the 11 interviewees stated that they knew about the protest through their friends, colleagues, acquaintances or got the message indirectly. Because of the essence of acquaintances, informal networks are of great importance. This is in line with the mobilization structure of Boekkooi (2012).

Third, also SMO's were mentioned by 3 interviewees, which relate to the formal networks of the mobilization structure (Boekkooi, 2012). The participants that mentioned SMO's were relatively older than the rest of the participants. And even one person was engaged in the local government concerning farmers. The SMO's that played a role in distributing the information about the protest according to the interviewees were Agractie, Farmers Defence Force and LTO. All the interviewees talked in a positive manner about the organizations. Some say that the organization was crucial because they have made the protest happen. While others say that they are proud that the organizations exist because they defend the farmer's interests. In addition, a few interviewees state that these organizations keep everything running smoothly in the way to the protest.

Concerning the protest paradigm, wanted to be heard by the government and by the audience relates to the individual reason for participation in the protests. In the case of the Dutch farmers, according to several interviewees, they used tractors to draw attention from the media. This is in line with the definition of the protest paradigm by Chan & Lee (1992). However, the content of the attention that the protest received will be discussed later, to make the applicability of the protest paradigm on this particular case complete.

5.1.2 Role of Twitter in the mobilization process

One aforementioned aspect of the mobilization structure is the online social media platforms. Based on an analysis of the first Twitter data collection set, there has been looking at the content of the Tweets. The tweets contained several messages, including informing the audience about the protest, coordinating how the protest will look like, starting the conversation about the protest, and encouraging people to join the protest. The great majority of the tweets had the intention to start the conservations about the upcoming protest. In the tables below (Table 3 and 4) the metadata is visualized.

Table 3 - Distributors of tweets set 1

Twitter accounts	Number of tweets (total N= 275)
Farmers	105
Non-farmers	114
News accounts	8
SMO's	48

Table 4 - Content of tweets and corresponding distributors set 1

Codes	Number of tweets (total N= 275)	Tweeted by farmers	Tweeted by non-farmers	Tweeted by news accounts	Tweeted by SMO's
Conversation	176	68	92	0	16
Coordination	28	11	0	0	17
Information	13	0	0	8	5
Political mobilization	58	26	22	0	10

From the 275 tweets that were analyzed, 176 included conversation and discussions about the protest. These tweets included motivations, aims and causes for why the protest is happening. An example of a tweet containing conversation about the protest is a tweet by @henhan50, who is identified as a farmer: ''*Weeks in advance they talked about the #climatehysteria demonstration in the news and talk shows. The #boerenprotest of October 1st, you don't hear anyone about it. Measure with 2 sizes #nosjournaal #Wnl #NPO #Nieuwsuur #Nexit.*'' Similar tweets like this

containing information relating to the causes of the protest are tweeted by organizations or farmers. In addition, 92 non-farmers tweeted about the protest. A lot of non-farmers tweeted about the protest in a positive way and showed their support, using the hashtags #trotsoponzeboeren and #steundeboeren.

Furthermore, the second aim of the analyzed tweets are an encouragement to the actual political mobilization. 58 tweets contained action calls to motivate other people to join the protest, which is more than 20 per cent of the analyzed tweets. 26 of these tweets were tweeted by farmers, and 10 tweets were distributed by SMO's. This can be explained through the fact that these two groups are the ones that need change; therefore, it is logical that they want to encourage people to join the protest. Examples of tweets are: (1) *''This is the beginning of the massive demonstrations in the Netherlands. Let yourself be heard on October 1st! #boerenprotest''* by @GeLeHesjesNL which is identified as an SMO, and (2) *Come all to The Hague.. October 1st #boerenprotest #comeinresistance''* by @Leonora39768358, who is identified as a farmer.

Moreover, an example of a tweet containing information about the upcoming protest is a tweet by the news account @Overijssel_2020: *''The five most important viewpoints of the #boerenprotest are: (1) no forced shrinkage of the livestock, (2) independent measurements of carbon monoxide and nitrogen, (3) authorization of plant protection products based on facts, (4) revision of unworkable rules, and (5) long term policies.''* This tweet is tweeted by a local news association. News associations are able to transfer news without being biased, they just state the facts about the upcoming protest and the causes of the protest. However, only 13 tweets contained information about the protest. All these tweets are shared by news accounts. The limited number of tweets can be explained by the more reactive side of traditional media, this refers to the news accounts that are available on Twitter. In addition, often news accounts do not use hashtags on a regular basis compared to individual and other accounts.

Finally, another function that is found in 28 tweets is coordinating the upcoming protest, relating to the logistics. The high majority of these tweets were shared by SMO's. These organizations arrange the protest and want to make sure that the protest is perfectly organized. An example of coordinating tweets is: *''We would like to ask you to put on a yellow vest on Tuesday, October 1st when you are going to demonstrate in The Hague. Together = STRONG! #DenHaag #boerenprotest (please retweet)''* by @GeLeHesjesNL. What is remarkable is that Farmers Defence Force and Agractie joined Twitter in February 2020 and did not use Twitter as a means to encourage people to join the protest, while they were organizers of the protests. Accounts who did this are accounts such as @nieuweoogstnl, @ LTONederland and @GeLeHesjesNL.

When looking at framing by the farmer on Twitter, the farmers tweeted frequently, namely 105 of all the tweets that were collected were shared by farmers. Some tweets were about encouraging others to join the protest as well. But the majority of the tweets included conversations about the situation of the farmers. The tweets distributed by the farmers included bad policies and the disadvantages for the farmers. Moreover, there is also referred to the left-wing politicians in a negative light, for example to Jesse Klaver, Rob Jetten, but also about Mark Rutte. Hence, farmers are stating their situation and often referring to politics. In addition, the farmers are tweeting negatively about the situation.

5.2 Social media and protests

The Dutch farmers protest got a lot of attention on Twitter after the physical protest on October 1st 2019. The hashtag #boerenprotest was in the month of October 2019 often a trending topic. More than 19,000 tweets were posted on social media platforms, from farmers, non-farmers, news accounts etc. The different protest frames of the protest are examined and will be discussed.

5.2.1 Twitter media attention

From the 1,000 tweets that were coded, the majority of the tweets contained expressive content and debate content. Table 5 and Table 6 give a visualization of the numbers of the perceived codes and the distributors of the tweets. Firstly, the expressive content (N= 299) was mostly distributed by farmers and non-farmers that just wanted to speak their minds. These tweets often contained content that referred to expressions of the feeling of people without any underlying conversation or causes about the protest.

Table 5 - Distributors of tweets set 2

Twitter accounts	Number of tweets (total N= 1,000)
Farmers	239
Non-farmers	690
News accounts	10
SMO's	61

Table 6 - Content of tweets and corresponding distributors set 2

Codes	Number of tweets (total N= 1,000)	Tweeted by farmers	Tweeted by non-farmers	Tweeted by news accounts	Tweeted by SMO's
Debate	402	127	242	3	30
Expressive	299	56	236	0	7
Constitutional	14	5	0	0	9
Confrontation	27	2	25	0	0
Riot	8	0	8	0	0
Circus	52	18	23	7	4
Positive attitudes	121	31	79	0	11
Negative attitudes	77	0	77	0	0

On the contrary, the tweets that were coded as debate (N=402), contain 'real' conversations about the protest. These tweets contain criticism about the existing regulations, but also many tweets debated about how the protest is shown in the media, for example in talk shows such as Pauw and Op1. The latter tweets discuss the lack of discussing the actual causes of the protest in these talk shows. This is again in line with the protest paradigm because solely the circus frame is used instead of also mentioning the roots and aims of the protest.

Only a small number of Tweets, namely 14, consisted of actual calls for actions. These constitutional tweets are all shared by farmers and SMO's. An example of such a tweet is a tweet by the farmer @NarQieTweets: ''*RT RT RT RT #agractie #farmersprotest #greatawakening #yellow vests #qanon UNITE! #strongertogether.*'' These tweets are about the new protests that follow in the month of October. This small number of tweets can be explained by the fact that the first protest already had happened, and therefore, there is a relatively small amount of mobilization tweets compared to the tweets that were distributed before the protest on October 1st.

Confrontation and riot, which refer to tweets containing disputes between the police and the protesters and the society and the protesters, were barely distributed. With confrontation N=27, and riot N=8. This could be a result of the fact that these contents are more descriptive

than other tweets. In addition, this could mean that the dispute between the protesters and the police and society was limited.

Furthermore, 52 tweets were coded as circus, which indicates that only a small number of tweets referred to the size of the protest. Moreover, this also includes the sensationalization of the protest. These tweets contained the impressiveness of the protest, often referring to the enormous traffic jams and the great materials (tractors) and numbers that participated in the protest. An example of a tweet that includes circus is: *''Meanwhile, thousands of farmers took their 2,2000 #tractors to the streets to #protest in The Hague, Holland. + 2200 tractors, even on the beach and highways, + All-time #RushHour record #boerenprotest #farmersinaction#farmers #tractors''* by @StigSpielburg.

In addition, the positive and the negative attitudes towards the protest have been taken into account. 121 tweets were seen as positive towards the protest, on the contrary, 77 tweets were seen as negative tweets about the protest. Hence, the defence of the protest is greater than the criticism of the protest. This is in contradiction with how the farmers perceive social media attention. Positive tweets are tweets such as: (1) *''The solidarity between farmers, farmer's organizations and the citizens on the Malieveld was more than impressive on 1 October. Hold on to that. Only then, the sector can remain strong in the long term. @nieuweoogstnl @LTONederland #boerenprotest''* by @EstherdeSnoo, (2) *''Farmers protest 2019, how beautiful it was! #boerenprotest #agriactie #farmers #farmersinaction''* by @muntenverzamelaar. Both distributors are non-farmers who are defending the protest.

On the contrary, examples of tweets containing negative tweets towards the protest are: (1) *''#boerenprotest and what is the true story? The Dutch agricultural industry is an ultra-rich, over-subsidized, market-disrupting, environmentally polluting, unsustainable industry.''* by @dassema, and (2) *''#LESS farmers #LESS #LESS #LESS #LESS #boerenprotest''* by @SIGILUX. Both the positive and the negative tweets are often shared by non-farmers. This indicates that even when the distributors are not farmers, it results in high media attention. Hence, there can be seen great distinction between the two sides of the public towards the protest, this is often related to negatively animal welfare and positively the existing regulations that negatively influence the farmers. The right-wing and left-wing face each other in this issue.

5.2.2 Farmers viewpoints on social media attention

All participants were happy with the amount of media attention that it received. They all state that this was one of the reasons that they went protesting in the first place, they wanted to be heard and that was a success. As mentioned before, this is highly in line with the protest paradigm.

According to the interviewees, there were several reasons why they thought that the protest received this amount of social media attention. For example, three participants say because this was the first time that farmers went protesting in the Netherlands and that it was revolutionary. In addition, one participant stated that it got much attention because people have never seen that farmers could resist in such a way and that apparently so much was now imposed by the government that the farmers saw no other option. Another interviewee stated that it was new because there was togetherness among the farmers who are often divided. However, this is actually incorrect, the farmers protests have a long history. These statements can be explained because the participant that gave these explanations were relatively young, and they simply did not know anything about the previous protests. Moreover, another reason for the media attention that was given often was because of the large number and the material where the farmers went to The Hague with. Besides, the farmers went not only to The Hague but also to many other places in the country. This resulted in the highest traffic jam in The Netherlands ever, consequently, people could not have missed the protest. Furthermore, two interviewees stated that the media attention is a result of the high support of the people. They say that many people agree with the farmers, and only a small amount thinks differently about this.

The interviewees had different points of view regarding the content of the social media attention. The majority, 7 out of the 11 participants stated that they thought that the media attention was mainly negatively oriented, whereby there is a wide variety of explanations. Multiple participants stated that the social media messages do not include the reasons why the farmers demonstrated. One participant said: ''*There was not properly explained why we were there, they left out the causes and the aim of the protest.*'' Another participant stated something that is in line with the previous statement: ''*Often the messages started with the 'angry farmers' instead of demonstrating farmers, this already sets the tone of the message.*'' This is highly related to the protest paradigm. As mentioned before, the farmers wanted to be heard, this was one of the reasons for mobilization. However, they get much media attention, but this is often related to negativity and to terms as the 'angry farmer'. Adding to this, the causes and the aim of the protest is often not mentioned, which is the main aspect of the protest paradigm. Therefore, it can be said that the concept of the protest paradigm is applicable for the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019. In addition, according to two participants, the news about the protest was framed by the left media. They state that the left media only share news that has negative effects on the farmers, instead of also mentioning the positive sides. Moreover, two participants state that negative attention always occurs after a protest, even other protests regarding the aim of it. This is in line with the aforementioned protest frames. On the contrary, 4 of the 11 participants stated that the

social media attention is more positive oriented. They all refer to the fact that they are now being heard and get the attention that they deserve. Furthermore, they state that now their message is finally transferred to the wider public.

5.3 Political agenda-setting

In the Dutch House of Representatives [Tweede Kamer], the subject of the Dutch farmers protest was discussed nine times after the first protest happened on October 1st in the year 2019 (Tweede Kamer, 2019). Table 3 gives an overview of the dates and the content of the discussion that happened. In most of the conversations about the protest, the protest is just mentioned but no motions were submitted that indicate any policy changes. Three of the nine conversations were about the budget for agriculture. But the most important debate in the House of Representatives was the debate about the nitrogen problem, which was the main cause of the protest. This debate discussed possible solutions and motions in regards to the nitrogen problem. This debate led to the installation of a commission that improves the measurement and calculation of nitrogen emissions (Tweede Kamer, 2019). This is a great achievement for the farmers because according to them, the RIVM used an inaccurate measuring method (Van Rooijen, 2020). When solely taking the fact that the protest was discussed in the House of Representatives into account, the protest and the social media attention do have political agenda-setting. The protest and the social media attention that it received encouraged the House of Representatives to discuss the issue.

Table 7 - Discussions of the Dutch farmers protest in the House of Representatives

Date	Content
3 October	Arrangement of work
9 October	Discuss budget agriculture, nature and food quality 2020
10 October	Discuss farmers protest in meeting
15 October	Discuss farmers protest in question hour
16 October	Discuss farmers protest in meeting
17 October	Debate about nitrogen problem
6 November	Discuss budget education, culture and science 2020
14 November	Discuss farmers protest
26 November	Discuss budget foreign trade and development cooperation

In addition, not only the national government takes the Dutch farmers protest into consideration, but also on the regional level. The farmers were angry about the 'theft' of nitrogen laws. In order to reduce nitrogen emissions, external netting has been devised (Van der Groot, 2019). However, for the farmers, this is a very strict policy, where the farmers are always the disadvantaged. This policy is maintained more strictly on the provincial scale compared to the national scale. As a result of the protests and the social media attention, the provinces of Drenthe, Friesland, Gelderland, and Overijssel have put the measure on hold under pressure from the farmers protest (Van der Groot, 2019). Moreover, due to this misunderstanding between the provinces and the government, Schouten, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, got into conversations with the provinces to clarify the policy (ibid). Hence, the protests and the social media attention do have political agenda-setting when focusing on the regional scalar level.

In the longer term, the party Boeren Burger Beweging (BBB) [Farmers Citizens Movement] was upcoming. This is a Dutch political party that is committed to improving the livability of the countryside and the agricultural sector. Because of the protest and the social media attention, there was more attention for the farmers and their wants and needs. This resulted in eventually 1 chair in the House of Representatives in the parliamentary elections in March 2021 (BBB, 2021). This indicates that there was more awareness of the agricultural sector. This led to more engagement for the farmers, but also to more awareness of the policy changes.

On the contrary, the farmers protest did have negative consequences for policy implications (Smit, 2019). The aggressive manner of collective action by some farmers results in the cancellation of a meeting between the prime minister and Schouten.

Moreover, many politicians, such as Tjeerd De Groot and Jesse Klaver stuck to their point of view regarding the regulations for halving the livestock (Smit, 2019). This is again an indication of the controversy between the left-wing parties and the right-wing parties.

To conclude, the Dutch farmers protest and the received social media attention do have some political agenda-setting impacts when looking at the national and regional level. However, to go more in-depth into the political agenda-setting impacts of the Dutch farmers protest and its social media attention, more research is needed to obtain an integrated and holistic view.

6. Discussion

From the results above, one can see that there are many processes involved in the mobilization of protests. This chapter will elaborate more on these processes and discuss how they fit into the scope of this research. Reflecting on these interrelations will provide an important overview of the relation between the mobilization of protests and the social media attention that a protest receives. Hence, this chapter includes interpretations of the findings in relation to the conceptual framework and the broader literature. The most important findings will be discussed. Firstly, the individual motives for protest mobilization are identified and put in perspective and related to the protest paradigm. Secondly, there will be elaborated on the involvement of the mobilization structure for protest mobilization and how the different networks influence the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest. Thirdly, the reasons for high social media attention are discussed. Fourthly, the protest framing on social media platforms is examined. And finally, the agenda-setting impacts as a result of social media attention are debated.

6.1 Individual motives for protest mobilization and the protest paradigm

When referring back to the first part of the conceptual model, the mobilization of the protest, it can be said that all aspects, including the mobilization structure, the framing of the protest and the protest paradigm, are all included in the mobilization process of the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019. Based on both the interviews and the Twitter analysis, the Dutch farmers protest on the 1st of October had several aspects that contributed to the mobilization of the protest. Firstly, the individual motives for participating lie mostly in the existing policies that contribute to the fact that the farmers want to be heard and also want to have a say in policy making. The fact that they wanted to be heard, despite how they act or how they were presented, is in relation to the protest paradigm. This fits with the definition of the protest paradigm by Chan & Lee (1989), who identify the protest paradigm as wanting to be heard by the audience by using striking strategies in the mobilization of the social movement. This is also what happened in the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019. The participants of the protest used their tractors, and thereby caused enormous traffic jams, to get the attention of the audience and as a result obtaining negative media attention. According to the interviewees, this is indeed what happened in traditional media, where the farmers were presented in a negative way and frequently referring to them as angry farmers.

In addition, following from the results, the Dutch farmers protest is portraited on social media platforms in a certain way. When looking at the characteristics of the protest paradigm mentioned by McLeod (2007), one can see that not all five aspects are present on the tweets

concerning the protest. The media frames and demonization are present because there are several tweets containing the negativity and the size and the drama of the protest. Furthermore, the aspect of delegitimization which refers to the phenomenon that the media does not show the underlying reasons for the protest is not applicable to Twitter. This phenomenon is even contradicted because some tweets were referring to the fact that traditional media does not do this. In the case of the other two characteristics, reliance on official sources and invocation of public opinion, the aspects that relate to these characteristics are to a limited extent present on Twitter. These results indicate that the characteristics by McLeod (2007), are only to some extent applicable for social media platforms. When taking the research by Harlow et al. (2017) into consideration, the results of this research further the idea of the distribution of showing peacefulness instead of the violence of the protest. On the contrary, the media that was shared, this includes photos and videos, was often more related to the violence, which is in line with Harlow et al. (2017). Therefore, the results are consistent with the data on the protest paradigm obtained by Harlow et al. (2017). Hence, based on the protest paradigm is to some extent applicable for the Dutch farmers protest. The farmers wanted to be heard and therefore acted more violently to obtain media attention, however, when focusing on the social media platforms, the protest is not referred to as a negative event.

Moreover, together with obtaining attention, the current study found that several other individual motives are present for engaging in the protest. All the participants have therefore undergone the different steps of the model of Klandermans & Oegema (1984). Step 1 refers to the acknowledgement of the motives for mobilization. Secondly, step 2 looks at the influences of the mobilization. In step 3 people look at the benefits of participating and step 4 relates to the actual mobilization. Therefore, the individual motives for participation refer to step 1, which includes the different motives, whereby the participants agreed with the aims for the protest and therefore are seen as sympathizers.

6. 2 The involvement of the mobilization structure for protest mobilization

The findings show a trend of the involvement of informal and online networks in the process of mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest. Formal networks, including SMO's, are only to a limited extent seen as a mobilizer. SMO's spread limited information about the upcoming protest and stimulated people to unite in the protest. This happened both in real life as well as on online social media platforms, such as Twitter. However, informal networks are only limited involved in the mobilization of the protest. On the contrary, people knew about the protest through informal networks. Thus, friends, family, colleagues and acquaintances added to the mobilization process.

However, the most important network that was present was the online networks. These online networks played a major part in the mobilization structure and thus in the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019. In contemporary society with the increasing importance of the Internet, this is a growing phenomenon (Jost et al., 2018). In a study by Fisher (2018), only 10 per cent of the tweets contained encouragement for participation in that particular protest. In comparison, the tweets about the Dutch farmers protest had double the percentage of tweets about calls for mobilization. Hence, these results are partly in agreement with Boekkooi (2012), who indicated that formal, informal and online networks influence the mobilization process. According to Boekkooi (2012), the different networks make people aware of the upcoming protest. The formal networks inform people about the protest (Boekkooi, 2012), however, in the case of the Dutch farmers, the SMO's only did this to a limited extent. Informal networks are based on strong ties, encouraging people to mobilize (ibid). This phenomenon was also present for the interviewees, they were encouraged by their informal networks to participate. Lastly, online networks facilitate connections to inform and encourage people to mobilize in the protest (Boekkooi, 2012). The findings of this research strengthen this phenomenon because online networks are identified as the most present networks. In addition, this is also in relation with Fisher (2018), who states that social media platforms are the main source of obtaining information about current events. Obtaining information on social media platforms is in relation to both step 1 and step 2 of the model of Klandermans & Oegema (1984). The individual motives, from step 1, can be obtained on social media, by getting a feeling of recognition with the discussions on social media platforms, this is also what is applicable for some of the participants. While in step 2, the tweets about the farmers protest have the role of recruiting and encouraging participants through the distribution of tweets. These results further the idea of the fact that social media has a major influence on the mobilization of physical protests (Rheingolds, 2006). In addition, the aims of the tweets that were mentioned by Theocharis et al. (2015), to some extent present in the tweets about the farmers protest. The aims of the tweets that are confirmed by this research are encouraging political mobilization and conversations about the protest. These results confirm the research by Theocharis et al. (2015). However, coordination of the upcoming event and information on the causes of the event were limited present on Twitter. This can be explained by the fact that the tweets containing these aims are distributed by SMO's and news accounts.

6.3 Social media attention for the Dutch farmers protest

The results of the Twitter analysis indicate that the Dutch farmers protest received high media attention. These results are in accord with the recent study indicating that agriculturalists get an

increasing amount of social media attention (Reed & Keech, 2017). In addition, this can be explained by the lack of gatekeepers on social media platforms. This results in the fact that everyone is able to share information online, which in the case of the Dutch farmer protest led to high social media attention. According to the participants, the protest received high media attention based on the size of the protest, including the number of protestors and the tractors, but also because the geographical location of the protest was not limited to one place but included multiple locations. This is in line with the research by Andrews & Caren (2010). Andrews & Caren (2010) also suggested that the location of protests have an influence on the media coverage. The location of the protest is essential because the more important the location is and the more value the location has, the more value it has to people, which results in media attention (Andrews & Caren, 2010). This study supports Andrews and Caren's findings, because the Dutch farmers protest happened in multiple places in the Netherlands, among them The Hague, which can be seen as a valuable location because of the establishment of the Dutch government in The Hague. Hence, the circus frame that discussed the size of the protest is barely present on Twitter. This could be the main difference between traditional media and social media attention. Because the 'drama' makes the protest newsworthy, but due to the fact that there are no gatekeepers involved on social media platforms, the size of the protest is hardly discussed. The traditional media focuses mainly on the size of the protest (Van Rooijen, 2020), while this research identified that social media mainly focuses on debates about the protest and not referring to the size of the protest. This is because the gatekeepers and journalists need newsworthy stories to publish (McCombc & Shaw, 1993). On social media attention, there is no interference of gatekeepers and journalists and therefore the size, violence and drama of the protest are only limited present on Twitter.

6.4 Protest framing on social media platforms

On the question of framing of the Dutch farmers protest before the protest happened, this study found that the farmers and the SMO's frame the problem in a certain way. Many farmers tweeted about the protest and the underlying causes for the protest, hence, they framed the protest to their benefit to create a higher support base. In addition, SMO's used Twitter for coordination of the protest and for arousing people to participate. This indicates that the information distributed by these groups are by no means value-neutral, which is in line with Bennett & Segerberg (2012). These frames suggest that policies regarding the agricultural sector have to change which helps to construct meaning and sympathy for the audience. This result supports previous research on social media attention by Hon (2016) and research on agriculturalists by White et al. (2014).

When relating these frames to the mobilization, the distribution of tweets has helped to inform and encourage others because, for some participants, the tweets were the main source of information on the farmers protest. Therefore, this research confirms the theories by Hon (2016) and White et al. (2014).

From the second part of the conceptual model and the findings, it can be stated that the Dutch farmers protest got high social media attention after the physical protest happened. When relating this to the definition of Clayman & Reisner (1998), the high social media attention of the Dutch farmers protest results in more likeliness of the protest reaching the audience. The two important aspects by Gamson & Wolfsfeld (1993), standing and preferred framing, are also applicable for the Dutch farmers protest. 'Standing' relates to the presence of the particular group in the media, and 'preferred framing' refers to distributing messages without malformation (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Firstly, the concept 'standing' is present, based on the fact that SMO's and farmers are also represented on Twitter. Secondly, 'preferred framing' is present, whereby, the SMO's and the farmers are able to spread information on their ideas etc. without any distortion. This is the benefit of social media platforms because there are no gatekeepers, which means that no distortion of the distributed information is present (Amenta et al., 2009). These two aspects mentioned by Gamson & Wolfsfeld (1993) are important characteristics that help social movements creating their support base among the audience. In this study, it is therefore essential for the farmers and SMO's that these two characteristics are present.

According to Vreese (2017), conflict frames are barely present on social media, because positive issues are more present than negative issues. Therefore, one should expect that the protest got low media attention. However, the results indicate that the protest is seen as positive, and therefore, it is in contradiction with the research by Vreese (2017). On the contrary, a study by Reed & Keech (2017) indicates that agriculturalists receive positive social media attention. This is based on the fact that the agriculturalists are also able to put messages online. In this research, this was also the case because many farmers tweeted about the protest, which contributes to the positive view towards the protest. In addition, according to Harlow et al. (2017), protests are shown on social media platforms as positive and there is not referred to the violence of the protest. This research strengthens this idea because the majority of the tweets were in favour of the protest.

Furthermore, the most important finding regarding the presence of the protest frames, is that the debate frame is most present in the tweets about the Dutch farmers protest. According to McLeod & Hertog (1992), the presence of the debate frame functions as an informer of the particular issue for the audience. The results from this research strengthen this observation

because many tweets included causes and reasons for the protests. On the contrary, the circus, riot and confrontation frames are only present to a certain extent. These frames ensure that the participants and the protest are out in a certain light (McLeod & Hertog, 1992). In addition, because the positive attitudes outweigh the negative attitudes towards the protest, the Dutch farmers protest is seen as a positive event.

6.5 Agenda-setting impacts as a result of social media attention

The third part of the conceptual model identifies the possible agenda-setting impacts. The results of this research suggest that the social media attention on Twitter for the Dutch farmers protest do have agenda-setting impacts. In this case, there is referred to political agenda-setting. This strengthens the idea that social media attention decides what people and politics think about, which is in relation to the definition of agenda-setting by Cohen (1963). In the case of social media attention, there is no involvement of gatekeepers, who decide what the public is going to see, therefore journalists cannot influence the public's opinion. Therefore, this is in contradiction with traditional media whereby gatekeepers and journalists are in control (McCombs & Shaw, 1993). This indicates that the political agenda-setting impacts as a result of social media attention are based on the thoughts of the distributors of the tweets. Hence, the political agenda-setting impacts are in this case more retracted from the meaning of the audience, because the distributors are able to set the agenda by themselves. On the contrary, the agenda that is set by traditional media is based on news that was distributed and controlled by gatekeepers and journalists.

In addition, the fact that interviewees stated that they saw messages about the protest on social media platforms indicates that people on social media could have incidental exposure to political issues. This result is in accord with a recent study by Feezell (2017), who states that exposure to political issues leads to agenda-setting impacts. Feezell (2017) explains this by the presence of high relevance and high familiarity, which influence agenda-setting impacts. Relevance relates to the level of importance to society and uncertainty relates to the familiarity with the issue (ibid). Based on the results of the interviewees, the tweets do contain high familiarity because they all feel an affinity with the issue. Moreover, because the results show that many non-farmers also tweeted about the protest, there is also high relevance of social media content. Hence, because the social media attention for the Dutch farmers protest contained high relevance and high familiarity, agenda-setting impacts occurred. Based on the fact that people think the issue is relevant and that it is familiar to them, the public's opinion, but also the political opinion will be influenced by the social media attention (Feezell, 2017). Moreover, based on the result that farmers and SMO's also use social media platforms to share their ideas and political

opinions with the audience, this also results in political agenda-setting impacts according to Bakshy et al. (2012). Because the ideas of the farmers and SMO's are shared, the public will see these messages, which will result in forming the public's opinion as well as the political agenda.

Furthermore, the most interesting finding was that all political impacts were a result of the protest and its social media attention, therefore this research is in line with those of previous studies (Feezell, 2017; Bakshy et al., 2012; Salmon et al., 2016). The results of the installation of a new commission and the fact that there were political conversations in the Dutch House of Representatives indicate these political agenda-setting impacts (Rogers & Dearing, 1988). This is in line with research by Charron (2009), who states that one form of influencing political opinion is by establishing debate around certain issues. However, the impacts from the media attention and the protest were not always positive when looking at the results from the cancellation of a meeting due to the violent manner of protest (Smit, 2019). Nevertheless, this could be seen more as a result of the protest instead of a result of social media attention.

6.6 Reflection

This study's limitations are consistent with other studies about the topic of Twitter and social media. First, there cannot be definitely ascertained that the purposes and attitudes of the tweets that are used in this research are equal to the user's intentions. This is especially true for short tweets. Because a tweet only contains 140 characters it is difficult to identify the actual aim of the distributed tweet. Second, not all tweets are taken into account, solely the tweets with #boerenprotest and based on a random sample. Other tweets also could contain messages about the Dutch farmers protest. Therefore, due to practical constraints, this research cannot provide a holistic overview of the tweets regarding the Dutch farmers protest. Future research could usefully explore a wider variety of samples and also see in the process how the dynamics emerge on strong-tie social media platforms, for example, Facebook. In addition, case studies with a similar research design are needed to test the generalizability of this research.

Moreover, this research is unable to include all three forms the agenda-setting theory. The focus of this study only was on political agenda-setting instead of also discussing public and media agenda-setting. In addition, it was beyond the scope of this study to examine whether the political agenda-setting follows from social media attention or from the physical protest. However, according to Feezell (2017), this method is still justified based on the fact that it creates strong enough evidence.

The obtained results and conclusions of this research can be a valuable contribution for planning practice purposes because the importance of social media platforms in the mobilization

process and the results of social media attention have been identified. Therefore, Twitter can be used in the field of planning and in creating citizen participation. Twitter can function as a facilitator to create a support base among citizens and inform the audience about upcoming plans and ideas.

7. Conclusion

The relationship between the mobilization of protests and the corresponding social media attention was an understudied topic in the existing literature. In order to build upon the literature but also to widen the literature, the aim of this research was to identify the relationship between the mobilization of the Dutch farmer protest on October 1st 2019 and the social media attention that the protest received. This research contained in-depth interviews, a content Twitter analysis and desk research to provide an answer to this main question.

The interviews revealed the individual motives for engaging in the protest and the networks that played a role in the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest. Together with informal networks, online networks made people aware of the protest on October 1st 2019 and therefore played a role in the mobilization process. In addition, the results of the Twitter analysis showed that 20 per cent of the tweets included calls to mobilize. The farmers and SMO's informed people about the protest and also shared the aims and the causes of the protest to their advantage to create a higher support base. Hence, Twitter was used by SMO's, farmers and other activists to create a support base and to encourage the audience to mobilize, and therefore, Twitter played a significant role in the process of mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest.

Moreover, the interviews indicate that the protest received high social media attention based on the size of the protest. This includes the number of people joining the protest, the multiple locations of the protest, the traffic jams and the number of tractors. The most interesting finding from the Twitter analysis is that the debate frame is most present on social media attention for the Dutch farmers protest. This indicates that the social media attention on Twitter mostly contains debates about the Dutch farmers protest, including political ideas, causes, consequences and aims of the protest. In addition, people distributed more positive tweets regarding the protest instead of negative tweets. Hence, there can be stated that the high social media attention based on the size of the protest is framed in a positive manner towards the Dutch farmers protest.

As a result, this amount of social media coverage on Twitter results in agenda-setting impacts. The desk research revealed that the Dutch farmers protest was discussed nine times by the Dutch House of Representatives after the protest and the social media attention. In addition, not only on the national level the protest was being discussed but also on the provincial level implications were made. Moreover, a relatively long term impact that was found was the chair profit of the Farmer Citizen Movement (BBB). Furthermore, not all agenda-setting impacts were positive, as a result of the hard actions by the farmer. Overall, this indicates that the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019 and the media attention that it received had political agenda-setting

impacts, both on different scalar levels, positively and negatively and both the short and the long term.

To conclude, the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019 and the social media attention that the protest received influence each other positively. Both aspects, the mobilization of the protest and the social media attention have mutual relationships. Because of the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest, the social movement received high social media attention, which was essential for agenda-setting impacts, whereby the public's opinion in the form of the political agenda of the national and regional level was set. Moreover, the social media attention for the social movement created a support base for the protest, informed and made people aware about the protest and lastly, encouraged people to participate and mobilize in the Dutch farmers protest. Hence, there is a mutualistic relationship between the mobilization of the Dutch farmers protest on October 1st 2019 and the social media attention that the protest received.

This research identified several concepts concerning social media, therefore this research strengthens and builds on the increasing existing literature concerning the new digital media. Moreover, the importance of the mutualistic relationship between mobilization and its social media attention is understudied in the literature. This research builds upon in this literature. In addition, this research facilitates the fact that the relationship between the protest and the mobilization goes both ways and not solely focuses on one of the two factors influencing the other. The three different units of analysis give an in-depth overview of this particular relationship. Therefore, this research provides a holistic view of the role of social media in the mobilization of protests.

To identify a more holistic approach to agenda-setting, future research could include all three aspects and also go more in-depth in the causal relations between social media and the agenda-setting impacts. Therefore, future research could include the public, political and media agenda-setting as a result of social media attention. In addition, this study identified that Twitter encourages people to participate in social movements, therefore future research can identify if Twitter also encourages people to participate in planning practice.

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Appendices

A: Semi-structured Interview Protocol Example

Subject of analysis	Subcategories	Interview questions
Background	Broad questions as a base for the interview	1. Personal details: name and age 2. For what kind of firm do you work? 3. How long do you work there?
The mobilization of the Dutch farmer protest and the role of Twitter in the process	How was the Dutch farmers protest being mobilized?	1. Why did you join the Dutch farmers protest? 2. How did you know that the protest was going to happen? 3. How do you see the role of organizations such as the Farmers Defense Force for the mobilization of the protest?
	Wat was the role of Twitter in the mobilization process?	1. Do you use social media? 2. (If yes), before the actual protest happened, have you come across Tweets or posts about the Dutch farmers protest? 3. How do you see these Tweets? Where were the Tweets about in your opinion?
The high amount of (social) media attention for the protest and the way the protest is framed in the media	Why did the protest get a high amount of media attention?	1. How do you feel about the protest being in the news so much? 2. What do you think could be the reasons that the protest has received so much attention? 3. When comparing to other protest, do you think this protest is more important than other protests? And why do you think that?
	How was the protest framed in the media?	1. How do you see the news articles and other sorts of

		attention, more positive or negative?
		2. How do you think that people 'see' you now?
		3. What are your thoughts on the reaction on social media, by the Dutch people?
The agenda-setting impacts	Could there be any agenda-setting impacts?	1. Do you think the protest was successful? Why yes, or why not?
		2. How do you measure the impact that it was a success?
		3. How do you see the reaction of the government, and what do you think about that?
		4. How did attitudes change from the Dutch people towards farmers?

B: Characteristics interviewees

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Kind of firm
1	F	54	Dairy farm
2	M	30	Dairy farm
3	M	49	Dairy farm
4	M	19	No farmer
5	F	17	Dairy farm
6	F	24	Dairy farm
7	M	23	Fattening pigs firm
8	M	32	Dairy farm
9	M	57	Rearing young stock firm
10	M	20	Dairy farm
11	M	48	Dairy farm

C: Summary of findings in-depth interviews

Subject of analysis	Subcategories	Interview questions
Background	Broad questions as a base for the interview	Ages ranged a lot, from 17 to 54. Almost everyone worked on a dairy farm, with an exception of one person not being a farmer, one person having a fattening pigs farm and one person working on a rearing young stock firm.

The mobilization of the Dutch farmer protest and the role of Twitter in the process	How was the Dutch farmers protest being mobilized?	1. Reasons for joining the protest
		  - Government give the Dutch farmers the blame for nitrogen emissions
		  - Not looking at the alternatives of the farmers
		  - Respect from government and public
		  - Better regulation, more land for farming
		  - Being heard as a sector
		  - Against existing policies
		2. How did you know that the protest was going to happen?
		  - Facebook groups
		  - Tweets about the protest
		  - NOS news
		  - Contacts in the area
		  - Via WhatsApp
		  - Via telegram
		  - Via local board
		3. How do you see the role of organizations such as the Farmers Defense Force for

		the mobilization of the protest? - As a respondence to the government - Organizations that lead the protest - Organizations that inform the public - Establishers of the protest
	Wat was the role of Twitter in the mobilization process?	4. Do you use social media? - Everybody uses social media, however, two of the three older ones said that they had it but not often use it. 5. Saw tweets about the protest - Only one person has not seen the Tweets or post about the Dutch farmers protest 6. Information of the tweets - Announcement of the protest on the first September - Information about how the day was going to look like - It contained the aim of the protest that was going to happen - Encouragement for other people to join the protest as well - They state the reasons behind why they were going to protest - Announcement of where the protest was going to happen
The high amount of (social) media attention for the protest and the	Why did the protest get a high amount of media attention?	4. How do you feel about the protest being in the news so much?

way the protest is framed in the media		
		- Good to show people from the city how farmers have to run their firms
		- Good to be finally heard, after such a long time
		- Framed by the left media. So, not that positive
		- The message did not get across that well enough to the government in the Hague
		- Good to show that it cannot continue how it is now for the farmers
		- Good, but there were almost no explanations of why the farmers were there
		- Mostly sensation was shown
		- Good but often not positive
		- Farmers were often seen as 'angry farmers'
		5. Why so much media attention?
		- Because people have never seen that farmers could resist and that apparently so much was now imposed by the government that the farmers saw no other option
		- It was new, enormous solidarity between the farmers who are normally divided

		- It happened all across the country - It was revolutionary - Farmers have never protested before - The farmers were with so many and many equipment - Many people agreed with the farmers - Protest are often not that big in the Netherlands 6. Why more impact/attention than other protests The overall conclusion is that comparing to other protests, the number of people and especially equipment played an enormous role in the attention that it received.

	How was the protest framed in the media?	4. How do you see the news articles and other sorts of attention, more positive or negative?
		  - Positive:
		    1. Especially at first, because the government was kept alert that the farmers were there
		    2. Mostly positive reactions, it was seen as a proper way to transfer their message
		  - Negative:
		    1. Media attention does not tell where the protest was about
		    2. Many sensation seekers, who put

		the sector in a negative light 3. As many other protests, often are shown in negative light
The agenda-setting impacts	Could there be any agenda-setting impacts?	1. Successful or not - Yes: 1. Most rules are canceled 2. Otherwise the Hague just voted about farmers, no that is not the case 3. Young farmers wanted a future perspective and by making yourself heard like during the protest, you can achieve that 4. At first yes, but now there is not often spoken about 5. The people stood by the farmers in this case 6. The farmers are now being heard in the Hague. - No: 1. The aims of the protest have not been reached 2. The protest was impressive, but the government is doing nothing with it 2. How to measure success? - Looking at the measures from the government if they change anything - Looking at the Dutch people if they agree with the

		farmers and support them
		3. Reaction of government - Only at the beginning some things changed like the cancelled halving the livestock population - On the longer term: the farmers now have one chair in the 'Tweede kamer' - The prices of the products have gone up a little - The policy is not conducted with but about farmers, farmers do not have a say in anything - The government has its own agenda 4. Changing attitutdes - Positive: 1. Some citizens now see that the government cannot strip the agricultural sector alone 2. People are more understanding towards farmers about their points of view - Negative: 1. Still many citizens do not know what the farmers are doing daily 2. Farmers are seen as rebellious as a consequence of the many articles about 'angry farmers'

D: Coding scheme

Code	Label	Sublabel	Explanation
Personal background	Age	Age range	The age of the participant
	Occupation	Farmer	The kind of firm of the participant
	Years in sector	Number of years	The number of years the participants works in the agricultural sector
Reasons for participation	Individual reasons	Consequences for firm	Negative consequences for the individual
	Collective reasons	Existing regulations	The laws about emission rates etc.
		Attitudes towards farmers	The attitudes by the Dutch people
		Being heard	The lack of influence that farmers have
Mobilisation process	Formal networks	Social Movement Organizations	The influence of SMO's in the mobilisation process
	Informal networks	Acquaintances	The influence of acquaintances in the mobilisation process
	Online networks	Social media platforms	The influence of social media platforms in the mobilisation process
Media attention after protest	Positive	Good attitudes	The positive attention that the protest received

	Negative	Bad attitudes	The negative attention that the protest received
Impacts of the protest	Successful	Political impacts	Changes in policy for the farmers
		Positively changing attitudes	Positively changing attitudes towards farmers
	Not successful	No changes	The farmers perceive no changes after the protest
		Negatively changing attitudes	Negatively changing attitudes towards farmers