



Social acceptance in the Regional Energy Strategy (RES)

Avoiding resistance in renewable electricity projects in the brand-new policy context of the RES

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Preface

This master thesis, that you are now reading, has been written for the master programme Socio-Spatial Planning at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences. It forms (at least in the immediate future) the end of my academic education, almost five years after I started studying at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences. The completion of this master thesis is not only a completion of my academic education, but also a completion of my time as a student in the city of Groningen. It is therefore not only a key moment in my academic education, but also in my personal life, symbolising a transition into a new phase of my life.

This thesis has been written during an internship at Witteveen+Bos. The process of writing this thesis has not always been easy for me. During the writing process I often felt lost in the multitudes of possible perspectives on the Regional Energy Strategy and the often unclear procedures in the emerging policy context of the Regional Energy Strategy. But this also brought me valuable experience, as this is not an uncommon context for a planner to work in. Furthermore, the internship has been very intensive to me at times, mostly due to the many hours of travelling to and from the place of internship. I would like to thank Witteveen+Bos for their flexibility in this matter, allowing me to work from a nearby office, or even in Groningen, to alleviate this problem. I would also like to thank my internal supervisor at Witteveen+Bos, Teun van Breukelen, who always challenged me to improve on my initial products, and my colleagues at Witteveen+Bos and especially within the groups of 'Wind- and Solar Energy' and 'Energy and Space' for their expertise and most of all for making me feel welcome and like one of their own.

As it comes to persons who have been of great importance for this research, it is also important to thank all participants in this research. I would like to thank everyone who provided input for this thesis for their contribution. A final person that has been invaluable for successfully finishing this master thesis and therefore should absolutely not be forgotten is my supervisor from the Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the RUG. Dear Ferry, I would very much like to thank you for the feedback and critical remarks that you have provided me with and for the fact that you were always able to make time for reading my work and helping me whenever I got lost in this complex process.

Although the writing of this thesis has taken up a good chunk of my time for the past half year, I have not been totally isolated during this period. Luckily there were several factors that have provided me with valuable distraction so that I could start every week with fresh energy. First of all, I would like to thank my friends who thankfully were able to get me out of 'thesis mode' once in a while. I would also like to thank my band mates at the Bokito Brass Band and at the Resurrection who, although they claimed significant portions of the little spare time I had left, allowed me to unwind in the weekends and totally clear my head for the moment. Finally, I would like to thank my girlfriend and close family for their support in writing this thesis, most notably my parents, who allowed me to follow an academic education through their financial support in the first place.

I hope you will enjoy reading this thesis,

Martijn Graff

Groningen, July 2019

Abstract

In the concept version of the Klimaatakkoord, several measures are proposed to reach the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. One of those measures is the realisation of 35 TWh renewable energy (wind- and solar energy in practice) on land through the so-called 'Regional Energy Strategies' (RES). The RES aims to organise spatial integration of renewable energy goals with public involvement. It is crucial to incorporate the concept of social acceptance in this process, to avoid possibly extremist resistance to energy projects. This thesis research tries to describe the way that the RES tries to theoretically deal with social acceptance through analysing policy documents about the RES, to find out how this is taking form so far through interviews with people working in different RES-regions, and to suggest if and how the functioning of the RES with regard to social acceptance might be improved through consultation of theoretical and practical experts in the field of energy and planning.

What is striking about the RES-process in its current phase, is the vagueness of procedures. Although the importance of social acceptance in the RES-process is acknowledged, it is often unclear how this should be incorporated exactly. Therefore, in practice RES-regions so far seem to employ a mostly technical rational approach, mostly focusing on improving perceived distributional fairness in the project phase of the RES, ignoring the opportunities for increasing perceived procedural fairness in the process-phase of the RES already. However, there is also a call for a more communicative rational approach, employing an area-specific and participative strategy. These different trends are appropriate for different kinds of projects and in this thesis a process scheme for the RES is proposed in which a distinction is made between three different kinds of potential projects with different appropriate approaches.

In de ontwerpversie van het Klimaatakkoord worden verschillende maatregelen voorgesteld om de doelstellingen van het Klimaatakkoord van Parijs te bereiken. Een van die maatregelen is de realisatie van 35 TWh hernieuwbare energie (in de praktijk wind- en zonne-energie) op land via de zogenaamde "Regionale Energiestrategieën" (RES). De RES heeft als doel om doelstellingen voor ruimtelijke integratie van hernieuwbare-energie-doelstellingen te organiseren met publieke betrokkenheid. Het is cruciaal om het concept van sociale acceptatie in dit proces te betrekken, om mogelijk extremistische weerstand tegen energieprojecten te voorkomen. Deze thesis onderzoekt de manier waarop de RES probeert om te gaan met maatschappelijke acceptatie door beleidsdocumenten over de RES te analyseren, om erachter te komen hoe dit tot nu toe vorm krijgt door middel van interviews met mensen die in verschillende RES-regio's werken, en om te suggereren of en hoe de werking van de RES op het gebied van sociale acceptatie verbeterd kan worden door middel van consultatie van theoretische en praktische deskundigen op het gebied van energie en planning.

Wat opvallend is aan het RES-proces in de huidige fase is de vaagheid van procedures. Hoewel het belang van sociale acceptatie in het RES-proces erkend wordt, is het vaak onduidelijk hoe dit precies vorm moet krijgen. Daarom lijken RES-regio's in de praktijk tot nu toe vooral een technisch rationele benadering te hanteren, vooral gericht op het verbeteren van de waargenomen distributieve rechtvaardigheid in de projectfase van de RES, terwijl de mogelijkheden om de waargenomen procedurele rechtvaardigheid al in de procesfase van de RES te vergroten grotendeels genegeerd worden. Er is echter ook een roep om een meer communicatieve rationele benadering, waarbij gebruik wordt gemaakt van een gebiedsspecifieke en participatieve strategie. Deze verschillende trends zijn geschikt voor verschillende soorten projecten en in deze thesis wordt een processchema voor de RES voorgesteld waarin een onderscheid wordt gemaakt tussen drie verschillende soorten potentiële projecten met verschillende geschikte benaderingen.

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List of Abbreviations

BZK:	(Ministerie van) Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties [(Ministry of) Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations]
EZK:	(Ministerie van) Economische Zaken en Klimaat [(Ministry of) Economic Affairs and Climate Policy]
IPCC:	International Panel on Climate Change
IPO:	Interprovinciaal Overleg [Interprovincial Consultation]
MER:	Milieu-effect rapportage [Environmental Impact Assessment]
NEP:	New Ecological Paradigm
NIMBY:	Not-in-my-backyard
RES:	Regionale Energiestrategie [Regional Energy Strategy]
UNEP:	United Nations Environment Programme
U.S.:	United States (of America)
UvA:	Universiteit van Amsterdam [University of Amsterdam]
UvW:	Unie van Waterschappen [Union of Water Boards]
VBN:	Value-Belief-Norm theory
VNG:	Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten [Association of Dutch Municipalities]
WMO:	World Meteorological Organization

List of Symbols

kW:	Kilowatt
MW:	Megawatt
TWh:	Terawatt hour
° :	°C; temperature in degrees Celsius

List of Dutch policy terms

Energie-akkoord:	‘Energy Accord; Dutch accord containing agreements on energy savings and renewable energy.
Energie-Nederland:	Trade association for all energy companies in the Netherlands
Handreiking Participatie:	‘Participation Guide’; part of Handreiking RES, serving as an inspiration for participation in the RES-process.
Handreiking RES:	‘Guide to the RES’; Policy document helping RES-regions in the RES-process.
Klimaatakkoord:	‘Climate Accord; Dutch accord spearheaded by the Klimaatberaad and containing measures needed to arrive at the goals set in the Paris Climate Agreement.
Klimaatberaad:	‘Climate Council’; the coordinating body to arrive at a national Climate Accord. Consisting of chairmen of the sectoral round tables and civil society organisations, relevant government parties and non-governmental organisations (NGO’s), headed by Ed Nijpels.
Netbeheer Nederland:	Trade association of all energy network operators in the Netherlands.
Omgevingsplan:	‘Physical environment plan’; contains rules on the physical environment, issued by municipalities.
Omgevingsvisie:	‘Environmental vision’; strategical long-term vision for the physical environment, issued by municipalities, provinces or National Government.
Omgevingswet:	‘Environment and Planning Act’; simplification and bundling of all laws and rules in the Netherlands on development and maintenance of the physical environment.

1. Introduction

The topic of this master thesis is social acceptance in the renewable energy goals of the RES and is written from a socio-spatial planning background. In this thesis policy documents have been examined, interviews with professionals working in several RES-regions, an interview with planning professor Gert de Roo and a focus group with several planning experts from the field have been employed to describe the way that the RES tries to theoretically deal with social acceptance, to find out how this is taking form so far, and to suggest if and how the functioning of the RES with regard to social acceptance might be improved.

This chapter serves as an introduction to this Master Thesis. First, the reasons for writing this Master Thesis will be covered, as well as the relevance of the topic. After that a short explanation of the regional energy strategy (RES) will be given, so that the reader will know what is being referred to when talking about the RES and related issues, partly answering sub-question 2 (see section 1.4). Thereafter, the purpose of the research and the different research questions that this research aims to provide an answer to will be outlined. Finally, the thesis structure will be covered in the reading guide, explaining which information can be found in which chapter, and how the different chapters contribute to the overall aim of the research.

1.1 Reason & relevance

Climate Change and the Regional Energy Strategy

The concept of (human-made) climate change has been around for some time. Growing concern about this phenomenon has led to the establishment of the IPCC in 1988 by the World WMO and the UNEP (IPCC, 2018a). Since then, the phenomenon has been increasingly studied, and there has been an increasing awareness of and consensus on the problem, both in science and, more recently, also in politics.

The effects of climate change are numerous. One of them is sea-level rise (Rahmstorf, 2007), that is of particular concern to coastal regions like the Netherlands, because it can threaten the integrity of coastal defence systems, with potentially catastrophic results. Other negative effects include decreasing food production (especially in development countries) (Rosenzweig & Parry, 1994), loss of species of plants (Willis, et al., 2008) and animals (McCauley, et al., 2015), an increase in so-called 'extreme weather events' with implications for food production and pests (Rosenzweig, et al., 2001) and possible disasters regarding loss of human lives like droughts, floods, mudflows and landslides (Mirza, 2003), not to speak of the economic effects of all this (Tol, 2009).

These problems have been broadly acknowledged by quite some world leaders with the signing of the Paris Agreement and the pledge to try to limit global warming to well below 2°, aiming for 1,5° (UNFCCC, 2015). The Netherlands is one of the countries that signed this agreement (van Vuuren, et al., 2017), and is now in the process of translating the goals from this agreement into national policies. The so-called 'Klimaatberaad' is in the process of producing a 'Klimaatakkoord'. The final version is being worked on, and right now only the concept version is published in which the goal is set to reduce CO₂ emissions in 2030 with 49% and eventually in 2050 with 95% relative to the 1990 level (Figure 1) (Klimaatberaad, 2018a).

A lot of the policies and agreements that are being made in the Klimaatakkoord are on a national level. However, some issues, like the increase of renewable energy production on land that this thesis is concerned with, are tackled regionally. This will happen in newly created regions that each have to deliver a so-called Regional Energy Strategy (RES), in which regions (amongst other things) make plans on how to increase the share of renewable energy production. This process will be a collaboration between local and regional governments, partners in civil society, network operators (for gas, electricity and heat), businesses

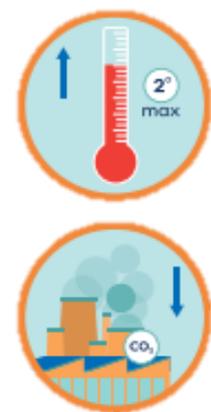


Figure 1: aims of the Klimaatakkoord (Rijksoverheid, 2018)

and industry and 'if possible' local inhabitants (Klimaatberaad, 2018a). A more detailed explanation of the RES will be given in section 1.2.

Acceptance of renewable energy production

Despite the Klimaatakkoord calling for more renewable energy production on land in the Netherlands, the realisation of these types of projects has been somewhat problematic in the past. Wind energy projects have historically encountered a lot of resistance (Figure 2) (Dagblad van het Noorden, 2019; Het Streekblad, 2019; RN7, 2019; RTV Drenthe, 2019). This has recently culminated in radical actions like the dumping of asbestos at proposed wind farm locations (RTV Noord, 2019) and the threatening of a contractor involved in a wind energy project, causing its subsequent withdrawal from the project. A researcher on radicalisation on the UvA even stated that these protests could be viewed as terrorism, as they try to influence decision-making through scaring people (RTV Drenthe, 2019b).



Figure 2: Example of resistance to wind-farms in the Noordoostpolder (GinoPress B.V., 2018)

Not only wind energy projects have been hampered by resistance. Albeit less intense than in the cases mentioned above, resistance is also occurring when it comes to solar farms (Atsma, 2019; Rutgers, 2018; Broek, 2019), and news articles mentioning protests against wind farms seem to be increasing recently.

As can be seen from the examples above social acceptance of renewable energy projects is often problematic. This also has its effects on politics. In the most recent provincial elections almost all parties stress the importance of public support and social

acceptance of residents near renewable energy projects, and several parties straight out oppose new wind farms on land or solar farms on agricultural land (de Jong & Meindersma, 2019). In one vote match (stemwijzer) for the province of Groningen the very first statement was about involvement of citizens in wind energy projects with all major parties indicating that citizens should have a determining voice in the placement of wind farms (Citizens & NU.nl, 2019).

Relevance

Two things can then be drawn from the issues stated above: firstly, there is an increasingly recognised need for environmental policies, resulting in national goals for more renewable energy production and secondly renewable energy projects are known to be highly susceptible to protests, with potential radical extremes. Several regions in the Netherlands are tasked with translating the national goals to specific energy projects through a Regional Energy Strategy. They will have to find a way to contribute to the national goals, whilst at the same minimising opposition and maximising acceptance for these policies.

Although this research is in no way able to present a definite approach to deal with this issue, it might help to gather insight in the concept of social acceptance and how that relates to the RES-process, as well as identifying potential problems in the process and making suggestions on policy directions to cope with this concept in the context of the Regional Energy Strategy.

Not only might this research be relevant to society by shedding light at an issue of public concern, but it might also yield interesting scientific insights. First of all, the Regional Energy Strategy is a brand-new instrument resulting from a new regional partnership. Therefore (almost) no research

has been done yet on this topic and any insight gathered on the form and features of the RES and the process by which it comes to be will be new academic insights.

Furthermore, there has been a shift in planning in which planners are increasingly seen as mediators applying a more communicative approach, instead of technical experts (Taylor, 1999). Planners are no longer purely designers searching for an optimal solution between a set of alternatives, but rather making sense of a world filled with ambiguity together (Forester, 1988). A similar distinction has been observed by de Roo (2013) who distinguishes between a technical rationale, stemming from a modernist tradition, and a communicative rationale, stemming from a postmodernist tradition. These different positions have consequences for the way in which acceptance of planning measures is dealt with and therefore positioning the approach taken in the RES in this debate can create interesting insights.

Social acceptance is not only an issue that planners are concerned with, but it originates from the academic field of environmental psychology. In this specific field there is already a lot of research on social acceptance, but most of it seems to be focused on social acceptance in specific, isolated cases. Although not strictly the focus of these researches, they can provide some interesting insights in the importance of social acceptance for planning projects. Interesting examples are for instance the U.S. where social acceptance for congestion charging is low and forms a barrier for these initiatives (Odioso & Smith, 2009), and the changing attitudes towards congestion charging in Stockholm as a trial was carried out (Börjesson, et al., 2012). An interesting insight from research in wind-farm support is the breaking down of opposition in different groups instead of labelling them all as NIMBY, and the importance of public support as compared to institutional arrangements (Wolsink, 2000). Although these examples are interesting and give an indication of the role that social acceptance can play in planning projects, it is important to further highlight how social acceptance might be involved in such a large-scale planning issue as that with which the RES is concerned.

Also, outside of the field of planning, the importance of social acceptance is being noticed. In a recent report the IPCC has been stressing that with the current efforts the goals stated in the Paris Accord will not be reached (IPCC, 2018a). In this last report not only technical aspects of climate change and climate policy were being treated, but also the more socio-psychological aspect of ‘public acceptability’. This research will elaborate on this topic and aims to contribute to help dealing effectively with climate change by focusing on social acceptance as an important factor contributing to successful pro-environmental policies.

1.2 The Regional Energy Strategy

What is a regional energy strategy (RES)?

As has been mentioned in section 1.1, the RES is one of the results of the Klimaatberaad. The Klimaatberaad, and the Klimaatakkkoord are structured in five ‘sectoral round tables.’ These are Mobility, Industry, Agriculture and Land Use, Electricity and the Built Environment (Figure 3).

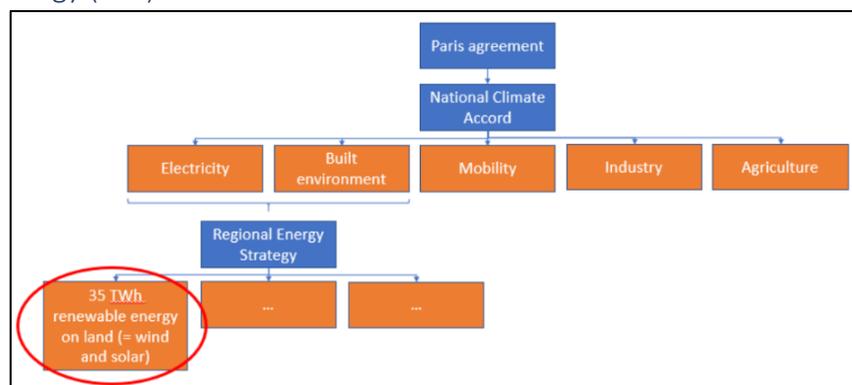


Figure 3: Relation of the RES to Paris Agreement

The core of the Klimaatberaad consists of representatives from the Dutch central government, representatives from the Dutch decentral governments represented by their umbrella organisations UvW, IPO, VNG), and representatives from several non-governmental organisations (e.g. nature organisations, labour unions and employers’ organisations) (Klimaatberaad, 2018b). For each sector table, this is supplemented with organisations and representatives from industry and

business-sectors that are relevant to this specific sector table, as well as the relevant department of the national government (Klimaatberaad, 2018c).

The decisions that are being made in the Klimaatakkoord need to be put into practice. This is where the RES comes in. The RES' are a facilitating instrument of the Klimaatakkoord aimed at organising spatial integration with public involvement of (some of) the agreements that have been



Figure 4: RES-regions (Rijksoverheid, 2018)

made in the Klimaatakkoord (Rijksoverheid, 2018; PBL, 2019). To achieve this, thirty regions have been constructed covering all of the Netherlands (Rijksoverheid, 2018). The IJsselmeergebied is sometimes counted as an extra region, but this region will be allocated to the surrounding regions. How exactly this region may be used in contributing to the national electricity goals will be further detailed later (Rijksoverheid, 2018). In scalar level these regions are somewhere between the province and municipality, with regions always consisting of one or multiple municipalities and smaller than or the same size as the existing provinces (Figure 4).

Each region needs to produce a RES, containing the measures needed to reach the goals of the Klimaatakkoord (IPO; UvW; VNG, 2018). The RES is mainly focused on the aforementioned sectors Electricity and the Built Environment. The RES' should contain plans for the generation of renewable energy on land, the heat transition in the built environment

and the storage- and energy-infrastructure needed for the previous two points. Although these issues are the main concerns of the RES-regions, agreements from other sectoral tables may also be incorporated in the RES (Rijksoverheid, 2018).

This thesis will specifically focus on the electricity goals for the RES. The specific goal for electricity is 35 TWh large-scale (>15 kW) renewable energy production, collectively produced by the regions, including the capacity that has already been realised over the years (Klimaatberaad, 2018a). This is expected to mainly consist of wind and solar energy and is not specified for each region separately (Klimaatberaad, 2018a), meaning that each region can individually decide what their specific realistic contribution to the national goals will be, taking into account social acceptance, spatial quality and technical potential of the region (Rijksoverheid, 2018). This roughly translates to an average of 177 wind turbines (3 MW) or 19,4 km² of solar field per region (Rijksoverheid, 2018), but this is expected to vary per region as the population, area, technical potential and political and social context vary considerably between regions. The exact height of the overall goal may also still vary, as the Klimaatakkoord has not been officially signed yet.

Organisational structure

The RES-programme consists of a national and a regional component. On the national level there is the 'National Programme RES'. The responsibility for designing and executing this programme lies with the IPO, UvW, VNG and the ministries of EZK and BZK (Klimaatberaad, 2018a). The main function of this programme is to facilitate and monitor the formation of the RES. However, the National Programme RES will itself not be responsible for the content and formation of the RES. Within the National Programme a steering group will be formed in which the five responsible governmental departments will take place, as well as Netbeheer Nederland, Energie-Nederland and a representation of societal organisations (Klimaatberaad, 2018a).

On the regional level so-called working structures are being formed (Klimaatberaad, 2018a). All decentral governments (municipalities, provinces and water boards) take part in the working

structures within their administrative borders (IPO; UvW; VNG, 2018). Furthermore (regional) net-operators, trade- and industry stakeholders and a representation of societal organisations are invited to join these working structures. Together all these parties are responsible for the realisation and the content of the RES. Furthermore, the provinces and municipalities have the explicit duty of enabling the RES spatially and grounding it in their planning policies (Omgevingsbeleid) (Klimaatberaad, 2018a).

Timeline

The RES-process is planned to start with the signing of the Klimaatakkoord (Figure 5) (Rijksoverheid, 2018). At the moment of writing work is still ongoing on the Klimaatakkoord. Nevertheless, regions are advised to already start preparing a ‘starting note’ for the decentral governments to sign, so that commitment is created for the goals, planning, organisation and democratic and spatial assurance of the RES once the Klimaatakkoord has been signed. Regions are also encouraged to already start with making an inventory and analysis of the current energy-use, ongoing or planned energy projects, current renewable energy production and technical potential for energy production (Rijksoverheid, 2018).

Six months after the signing of the Klimaatakkoord, the regions need to deliver a Concept-RES. For the Electricity sector this document will contain the capacity and expected contribution to the national goal for renewable energy production (35 TWh), as well as the consequences for the energy-infrastructure, while keeping in mind the spatial quality and public acceptance. In addition to this, potential search areas for the development of wind and solar energy projects will be provided, including a description of the process needed to further specify this and narrow this down (Klimaatberaad, 2018a). The status of these search areas is not further defined and it is unclear which level of detail will be acceptable. If possible, these areas should be marked on a map (Rijksoverheid, 2018). All concept-RES’ will be checked and calculated to see if they add up to the national goal and are feasible and realistic. If the total expected renewable energy production of the different RES’ will fall short of the national goals, the RES-regions are asked to divide the remainder (Rijksoverheid, 2018).

Based on the feedback on the concept-RES the regions will then go to work on the RES 1.0, that was set to be finished one year after signing the Klimaatakkoord, although it is speculated that regions might get 6 more months to realise this (Nationaal Programma RES, 2019). The RES 1.0 will further specify the search areas and the process that needs to be followed in order to realise the RES.

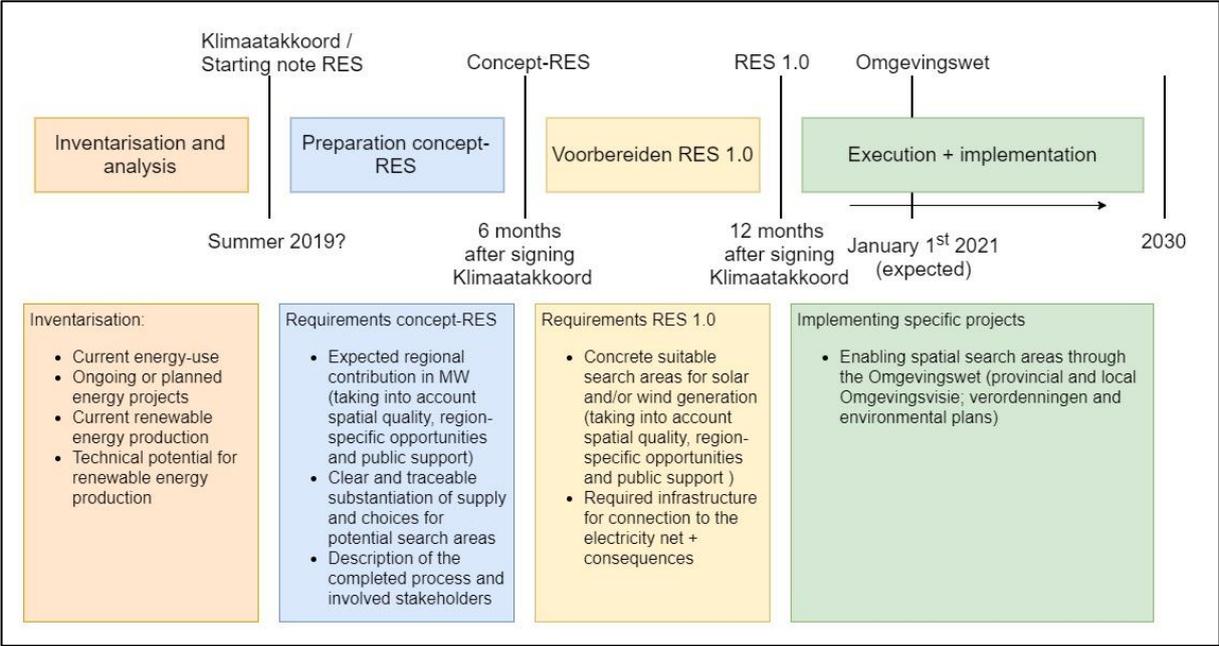


Figure 5: Timeline RES (based on (Rijksoverheid, 2018))

The collective RES 1.0 should again amount to the national goal of 35 TWh. If this does not lead to the desired results the central government can take the initiative and enforce the ‘proper’ distribution of the national goals, although the process that will be followed for this is not yet specified (Klimaatberaad, 2018a). Minister Kajsa Ollongren (BZK) has suggested that the Government might allocate specific locations for renewable energy if regions fail to add up to the national goals (van der Laan, 2019).

Once the RES 1.0 has been approved, the RES will enter the implementation-phase (Rijksoverheid, 2018). The RES in itself has no juridical status, meaning that it entails no spatial rights or obligations for stakeholders (PBL, 2019). Therefore, it needs to be incorporated in the regional and local omgevingsvisies (PBL, 2019), ordinances and omgevingsplannen (Rijksoverheid, 2018). On the basis of the omgevingsvisies several implementation programmes for specific projects can be made from where the RES can be implemented. From here on the RES will be a cyclical process. The RES will be regionally monitored and will be recalibrated and altered every 2 years if necessary. The accompanying implementation programmes will be reviewed yearly (Rijksoverheid, 2018).

This timeline means that the period in which the research is carried out will overlap with the inventory and analysis phase of the RES-process, before the official signing of the Klimaataakkoord. This will have consequences for the availability of data and the research design which will be further detailed in chapter 3.

1.3 Research purpose and questions

Although the importance of social acceptance and support in the RES is acknowledged in policy documents (Rijksoverheid, 2018; Klimaatberaad, 2018a), research in the way that social acceptance is dealt with in the RES-process remains important to see if and how the different RES-regions might effectively deal with this issue. This research aims to describe the way that the RES tries to theoretically deal with social acceptance, to find out how this is taking form so far, and to suggest if and how the functioning of the RES with regard to social acceptance might be improved. The conclusions of this study will hopefully yield interesting scientific insights in the positioning of this new administrative partnership and the way in which social acceptance as a concept is given a place in the realisation of (environmental) planning issues and help to implement RES-regions to realise a share of the national goals for renewable energy production on land without too much resistance and the potential radical extremes mentioned above.

This results in the following research questions:

Main question: In what way is the concept of social acceptance incorporated in the brand-new RES-process of realising additional renewable energy production on land and what could be suggestions to further improve this process?

Sub-questions:

1. What does the concept of social acceptance mean?
2. What is the Regional Energy Strategy, what are the goals for renewable energy production and how is it related to the concept of social acceptance?
3. How can the RES programme be positioned and valued from a planning-theoretical perspective?
4. What is the current state of affairs on the subject of renewable energy production on land in the RES-regions, specifically as it comes to social acceptance?
5. What challenges and opportunities are encountered so far in the RES-process on the subject of renewable energy production on land as it comes to social acceptance, and what challenges and opportunities could be foreseen for the future?
6. How could the functioning of the RES be improved as it comes to social acceptance on the subject of renewable energy production on land?

Although the importance of social acceptance and participation is mentioned several times in the several policy documents on the Regional Energy Strategy it is expected that the decision-making process in the RES regions is mostly dominated by technical considerations because of the relatively short time span of the RES-process and the prominence of the national goals. This would mean that the issue of social acceptance would receive less attention than it should in order to avoid resistance and increase acceptance and that therefore policy suggestions on how to deal with the issue of social acceptance in the electricity question of the RES could benefit the RES-process.

1.4 Reading Guide

The structure of this thesis is summarised in Table 1:

Table 1: Thesis structure

#	Name	Purpose
1	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outlining reason and relevance of thesis - Introducing subject of thesis - Introducing research purpose, aim and questions
2	Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Explanation of the concept of Social Acceptance from environmental-psychological background o Introduction of two planning-theoretical models aimed at analysing and criticizing planning approach in the RES
3	Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Description and explanation of choice of methods - Philosophical and ethical considerations
4	Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation and discussion of results of first data-gathering phases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Phase 1: Policy Documents o Phase 2: Interviews RES-regions
5	Policy suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulation of policy suggestions, based on last data-gathering phase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Phase 3: Expert consultation
6	Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Answering of sub-questions and main question of research
7	Reflection and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflection on research - Implications of research - Directions for future research

2. Theory

In this chapter concepts, models and theories from scientific literature relevant for the subject of this thesis will be presented, explained and discussed. First the concept of social acceptance and the different aspects of this concept will be discussed, providing an answer to sub-question 1. It is important to understand the different aspects of this concept in order to assess how the RES might deal with it. Then a theory about cycles of policy formation and adoption (Winsemius, 1986) will be presented to help further analyse the case of the Regional Energy Strategy. Thereafter a planning-theoretical model by Gert de Roo (de Roo, 2013) is introduced that could help in systematically analysing the planning context of the RES. Finally, another planning-theoretical model (de Roo, 2013) is introduced that can help in systematically analysing the planning context of the RES. At the end of the chapter a conceptual model will be presented and discussed, combining insights from the theories, concepts and models presented in this chapter.

2.1 Social acceptance: three dimensions

Social acceptance, and its closely related concepts policy acceptability, public acceptability, public (policy) acceptance, decision acceptance and public support are all increasingly recognised and studied in relation to climate policies (Colvin, et al., 2016; Gross, 2007; Hall, et al., 2013; Kyselá, 2015; Rhodes & Jaccard, 2013; Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013; Skitka, et al., 2003; Steg & Vlek, 2009; Stern, 2000; Stigka, et al., 2014; Wolsink, 2000; Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007). Indeed, in its report on the impacts of and global response to climate change of 1.5°C the IPCC also recognises public acceptability as one of the factors of influence on a successful and effective implementation of policies and measures limiting global warming to 1.5°C (IPCC, 2018a; IPCC, 2018b).

In many studies and reports touching on these concepts, it is assumed that the reader knows what these terms mean. And because it seems reasonable to assume that most readers will have some idea as to what these concepts mean (e.g. the degree to which citizens accept a certain policy or measure) many writers do not bother to define the concepts precisely (Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007). However, there different terms meaning different things to different people are often used interchangeably. For example, the terms public support and public acceptance are often used synonymously. In this thesis the term acceptance is used as it seems more modest to strive for acceptance of projects than for public support. Furthermore, there are different dimensions and approaches to social acceptance and the related concepts (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013; Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007). Therefore, it is useful to make a distinction between different aspects of the concept.

Wüstenhagen et al. (2007) come up with a useful conceptualisation that distinguishes three aspects of social acceptance. Each aspect has different features and might impact the RES in a different way. Therefore, it is useful to further examine this model. Wüstenhagen et al. (2007) take the concept of social acceptance as the core concept, and conceptualise it by distinguishing three dimensions of this: socio-political acceptance, community acceptance, and market acceptance (Figure

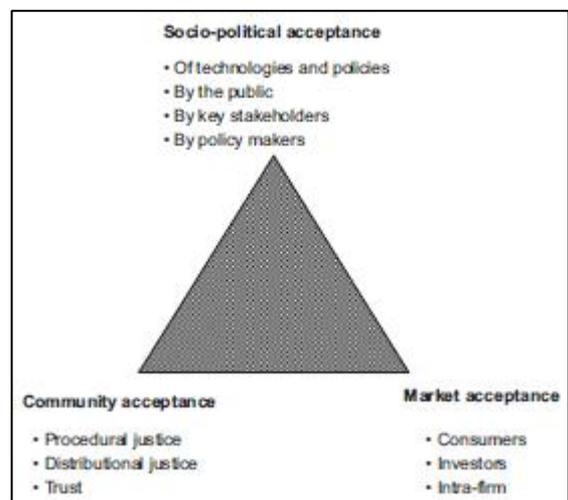


Figure 6: Dimensions of social acceptance (Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007)

6. Socio-political acceptance is a kind of social acceptance on a very broad and general level, mostly pertaining to technologies and general policies (Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007). For example, the technology of solar energy production, or a government policy subsidising electrical cars can have a degree of socio-political acceptance. Socio-political acceptance is not only a feature of the general public, but also of policymakers and key stakeholders (Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007).

Another dimension in the categorisation of social acceptance of Wüstenhagen et al. (2007) is community acceptance. In this dimension the focus is no longer on a general policy level, but on a specific and local project level. Community acceptance is therefore concerned with local stakeholders like residents and local authorities. Examples of situations where community acceptance is of importance in environmental policies are siting decisions (e.g. wind parks) and road pricing schemes.

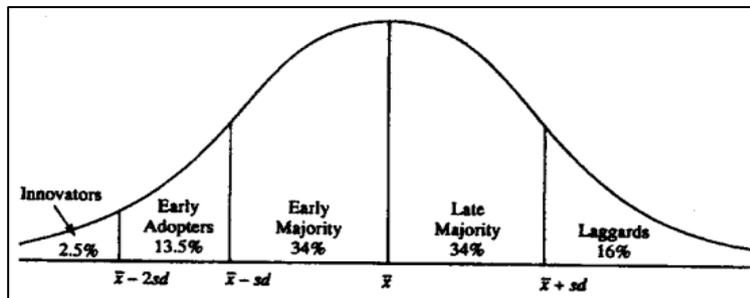


Figure 7: Adopter categorisation on the basis of innovativeness (Rogers, 1995)

spreads among consumers, differentiating between different categories of adopters (Figure 7). Next to this focus on how consumers in a market accept new innovations the concept of market acceptance also has to do with investors and intra-firm acceptance.

Although this framework provided by Wüstenhagen et al. (2007) certainly makes a useful distinction between different dimensions of social acceptance, not all three of them apply to the same extent to the case that is being considered in this thesis. As Wüstenhagen et al. already mention, market acceptance becomes more evident, “particularly as we move along from wind energy to smaller-scale renewables” (Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007, p. 2685). However, the challenge for renewable energy sources on land that the RES is concerned with is specifically for more large-scale energy production (> 15 kW), and will mainly consist of wind and solar energy (Klimaatberaad, 2018a). One could argue that market acceptance is of influence on which renewable energy techniques are feasible to implement in the RES, resulting in wind energy and solar energy as most viable options. However, since it is not part of the aims of the RES that this research is concerned with to change the viability of different energy techniques, but simply to implement 35 TWh of large scale (>15 kW), mostly wind and solar energy production (Klimaatberaad, 2018a), the role of market acceptance in the implementation of the RES can be disregarded. Therefore, only the other two dimensions of social acceptance will be further examined.

Socio-political acceptance

As mentioned, socio-political acceptance concerns social acceptance at the broadest and most general level of either a technique or policy (Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007). In the case under consideration here this would mean acceptance of renewable energy techniques and policies involving the use or stimulation of these techniques. Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad (2013) mention that one of the ways to view acceptance of environmental policies is as a form of pro-environmental behaviour. Stern (2000) explains this as ‘non-activist behaviour in the public sphere’ as opposed to environmental activism and private-sphere environmentalism; two other forms of pro-environmental behaviour, all of which can be explained by looking at people’s values and beliefs (see Appendix 1: Value-Belief-Norm Theory for a more detailed examination of the topic).

What needs to be established next is how statements could be made about the level of socio-political acceptance. There are several conceivable indicators of high socio-political acceptance. For instance, in a well-functioning democracy, one can assume that the policies being implemented by the government have the support of a majority of the population and the elected officials that are responsible for making national policies, while also respecting minorities voices. Therefore, assuming that the Netherlands has a reasonably functioning democracy, the fact that the Dutch government is working on a Klimaatakkoord to combat climate change and that there is a House Majority in favour

of environmental policies in order to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement, is one indication of socio-political acceptance of climate policies like wind and solar energy.

Furthermore, research suggests that socio-political support for wind energy is generally high (Wolsink, 2000; Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007; Devine-Wright, 2004; Stigka, et al., 2014; Krohn & Damborg, 1999; Gross, 2007; Colvin, et al., 2016). And indeed, in a recent study commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs it was shown that 77% of respondents to a questionnaire have a positive attitude towards stimulating sustainable energy in the Netherlands with 78% and 85% of the respondents indicating that wind and solar energy respectively should become a larger share of the total energy usage in the Netherlands in the coming years (van der Lelij, et al., 2016). Therefore, the socio-political acceptance as relating to the RES seems (for the moment) to be sufficient. However, it is no given that this situation will stay this way as Forum voor Democratie, a climate-sceptical party, was one of the big winners at recent elections (NU.nl, 2019).

Community acceptance

Where socio-political acceptance is mostly concerned with general policies, community acceptance is concerned with specific renewable energy projects and siting decisions (Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007). Since one of the tasks of the RES is to translate the general pro-environmental goals into specific projects that can and will be carried out, this is the kind of acceptance that the RES will have to deal with. At this level some of the negative features and/or concerns about wind energy, like noise pollution, spoiled scenery and interference with natural areas (mostly regarding birds) (Wolsink, 2000) start to become really pronounced.

Wüstenhagen et al. (2007) note the importance of trust and (perceived) justice and fairness in this dimension of social acceptance. Justice and fairness are two closely related terms that are being used interchangeably in the literature on social acceptance. Since the word fairness has a slightly more subjective ring to it and the perception of the fairness of outcomes and procedures is often the relevant variable, the word fairness will be used to refer to issues of fairness and justice. An important distinction when it comes to perceived fairness in relation to social acceptance is between procedural fairness and distributional fairness (Hall, et al., 2013; Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007; Gross, 2007).

Distributional fairness

Distributional fairness (also referred to as outcome fairness) is concerned with distributing outcomes fairly (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013). It is closely related to, and often equated to the concept of outcome favourability. This equation of the two concepts happens on the assumption that people generally believe positive outcomes to be fair, and unfavourable outcomes to be unfair (Skitka, et al., 2003). However, Skitka et al (2003) have demonstrated that the concept of outcome fairness and outcome favourability are psychologically distinct concepts and should therefore be assessed separately. This suggest that there is more to perceived distributional fairness than only the (relative) favourability of the outcomes.

One way of improving acceptance of policies is by considering the perceived distributional fairness of policies (Gross, 2007). However, the concept of distributional fairness can be broken down in different aspects. People perceive an outcome as fair based on a certain reference point. This can be intrapersonal, by comparing one's own situation over time or with an internal norm. It can also be interpersonal, by comparing one's own situation with that of others or by employing fairness principles to assess the fairness of distribution among people. Finally, it can be intergenerational, by assessing the distribution of outcomes of a policy between generations (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013). Examples of these reference points are given in Appendix 2: Aspects of distributional fairness

Procedural fairness

Not only the distribution of outcomes determines the acceptance of a project. Also, the procedures that lead up to a certain project are of importance to the acceptance of a process (Gross, 2007). This can be captured under the term 'procedural fairness', that is concerned with how fair procedures are (perceived) that are used before and during the implementation of projects and policies (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013). This is especially interesting in the case of the RES, as there is a possibility to include people from a very early stage in the decision-making process.

There are a lot of aspects to the concept of procedural fairness that are being mentioned in scientific literature, although the exact aspects mentioned vary. Examples of these aspects are representation, voice, adequate information, respect, unbiased decision making, consideration, transparency and logic (Maguire & Lind, 2003; Smith & McDonough, 2001; Gross, 2007; Hall, et al., 2013).

Although the exact aspects of procedural fairness are not totally clear yet, it seems that the perceived fairness of processes certainly has an influence on social acceptance. Procedural fairness might enhance acceptance both because it is believed that fair processes will, or is more likely to, result in a more fair distribution of the outcomes (Gross, 2007; Maguire & Lind, 2003) and because a fair procedure is inherently valued by people (Maguire & Lind, 2003).

This is also linked to a phenomenon called the 'fair process effect'. This means that people are inclined to accept even negative outcomes if the procedure used to arrive at them is fair (Skitka, et al., 2003). This effect is stronger for outcome favourability. That is to say: fair processes have a larger influence on the perceived outcome favourability than on the perceived outcome fairness. The connection between procedural and distributional fairness is also in the opposite direction. Procedural fairness does not only alter perceived distributional fairness, but a higher perceived distributional fairness does also alter the perceived procedural fairness (Skitka, et al., 2003).

Gross (2007) also mentions that both fairness types should be considered, because both play a role. Furthermore, the two fairness types differ in importance for different groups and individuals. As it comes to distributional fairness, she finds that people with the most at stake (both morally and physically/financially) because of the project are influenced more by outcome favourability, while people in the community that are a bit further away from the project (e.g. the neutrals or the silent majority) are influenced more by fairness principles. Procedural fairness is to be of importance to all groups, although the groups further away from the project are influenced most by it.

This goes to show that both concepts are relevant in the context of acceptance because they are both influencing community acceptance directly, but also indirectly through each other. Therefore, any approach that will only focus on one of these issues will be only partially effective.

Trust

One last concept of importance is the concept of trust (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013). Trust can be defined as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (Rousseau, et al., 1998, p. 395). Siting decisions for renewable energy are often coupled with environmental, economic and social risks for actors involved (Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007). This makes involved actors vulnerable. For accepting this vulnerability and cooperating with the project actors need to believe in the good intentions of the leading party. For that trust is needed.

Trust can be thought of as the result of fairness judgements, meaning that a high distributional and procedural fairness shows that authorities can be trusted (Smith & McDonough, 2001). Trust is important if people are to accept authorities and their policies (Smith & McDonough, 2001), and a lack of trust may discourage political cooperation and reduce acceptance of new information, while higher levels of trust may increase tolerance for uncertainties, and openness to new information and alternatives (Huijts, et al., 2007).

The concept of trust thus also introduces an element of time. Procedural and distributional fairness in previous projects result in a certain level of trust, and this can be confirmed or altered

during the project (Hall, et al., 2013). This element of time in the concept of trust is characterised by the ‘asymmetry principle’, suggesting that it takes a long time to build, but can be lost quickly (Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007).

The concept of trust could be of relevance to the RES in several ways. Firstly, as has been mentioned in chapter 1, energy projects have not always been as successful in dealing with social acceptance in the past. The procedural and distributional fairness judgements in the past might influence the trust in the current challenges. Furthermore, it is important to realise how current practices shape the trust in authorities and projects going forward. For the RES, goals for electricity production have only been formulated for the year 2030. However, one can imagine that with the goal of 95% CO2 reduction for 2050 even more renewable energy production will need to be implemented (Klimaatberaad, 2018a). This means that current practices can have a profound influence on the challenges faced in regard to social acceptance in the future.

Participation (or involvement) is linked explicitly to influencing perceptions of procedural and distributional fairness and trust in authorities (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013; Maguire & Lind, 2003; Smith & McDonough, 2001; Gross, 2007). Furthermore, participation can be an opportunity to find out about the aspects of distributional fairness that play a role for the residents that are in some way affected by certain developments. However, it should be noted that there are different degrees of public participation (Arnstein, 1969), considering procedural fairness aspects in different degrees. Public participation is not desirable in and of itself, but only valuable as long as the principal of procedural fairness is kept in mind, responding to what is considered and experienced as fair by citizens (see also Appendix 3: Public participation for a more detailed explanation).

2.2 Policy models

Policy life-cycle model

Since the RES is a brand-new policy, it is still partly in development. A model on the development of policies and policy fields might thus be useful to illustrate the current stage of

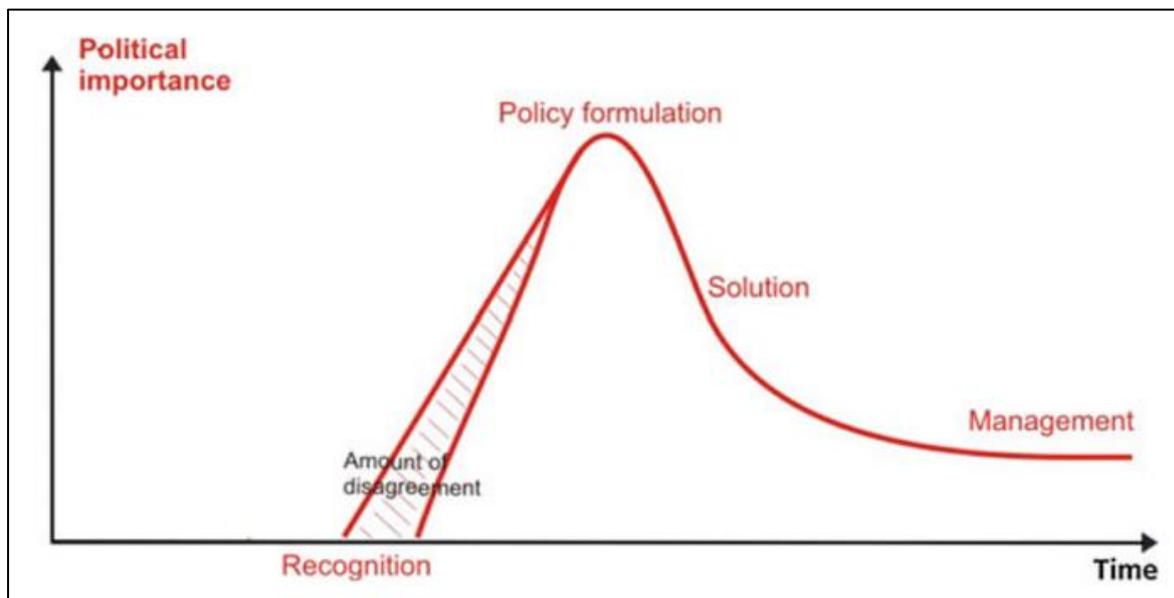


Figure 8: Winsemius' (1986) policy life cycle (from (Mampuy & Brom, 2010))

development of the policy and its corresponding features, as well as to indicate the expected future path of development. One such model is the model of policy life-cycles that has been introduced by Winsemius (1986) (Figure 8).

The model shows an initial situation (Recognition) in which there is a lot of disagreement on the relevance of the problem and on possible solutions and in which the political importance is relatively low. Over time, there is a growing consensus on the relevance of the problem as the

political importance is rising and a policy is formulated (Mampuy & Brom, 2010). After a solution has been adopted the disagreement decreases to a minimum and the political importance decreases again as the resulting policy will be routinely monitored (Mampuy & Brom, 2010). Finally, in the Management phase, the political interest even decreases a bit more (Mampuy & Brom, 2010) as the problem is reduced to acceptable proportions (Boogerd, 2005). Effects of the policy will be monitored and it will be checked if the problem does not worsen again. This could lead to the insight that the problem has not been sufficiently dealt with, at which point a new policy life cycle would start (Boogerd, 2005).

It should be noted that the policy life cycle is not exactly the same for all different layers of government. For instance, a policy is often further in the policy life cycle on national level than on a provincial or local level, as national goals and norms often precede regional and local ones (Beck, et al., 2013). A link can be made here to the multi-level perspective which will be discussed later in this chapter.

In Winsemius' policy life cycle, the RES - at the time of writing - can be placed at the beginning of the second phase. The political importance of reducing CO2-emissions is currently quite high, with the national government signing the Paris Agreement and being in the process of producing a final version for the Klimaatakkoord. At the same time however there is still some level of disagreement. Although there is some consensus on policy directions (for example that the RES should play a part in the realisation of renewable energy production) the Klimaatakkoord has not been signed yet and not all of the details and procedures of the RES-process are clear yet (see Chapter 1).

Multi-level perspective

Another policy model that is useful to frame the RES and to analyse the context in which it operates is the multi-level perspective, as it enables us to not only consider the RES process in isolation, but also consider it within its context. This perspective comes from the realisation that a planning issue can never be understood as an issue in what Gert de Roo (2013) calls 'splendid isolation'. Rather, planning issues should be viewed as open systems that can be heavily influenced by the context and different subsystems (de Roo, 2013). The view of a planning issue as such is represented in Figure 9. A planning issue is related to different spatial extents in which different processes play a role. The exact extent of the 'micro', 'meso' and 'macro' level differ. For instance, the macro level may be the extent of a city network or the European Union, depending on the planning issue at hand. In the same line the micro level can be both local traffic rules, individual behaviour or municipal policies. The power of this model is not in defining these extents precisely, but rather in the realisation that planning issues do not exist in 'splendid isolation' and that there often is one or more level above and beneath the planning issue under consideration that this planning issue is connected to.

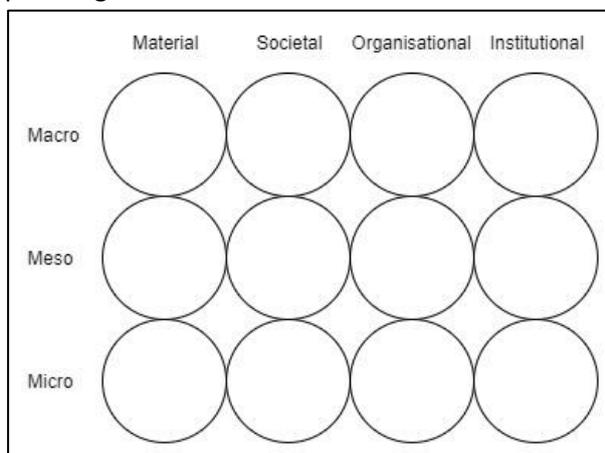


Figure 9: Multi-level perspective on planning issues (based on de Roo (2013))

The planning process as a whole consists of different processes. First of all, planning can be seen as a socio-material process. The decisions that are being made in the planning process influence the physical environment and are aimed at improving social well-being (de Roo, 2013). It is therefore important to consider the range of effects that a planning issue might have on the physical environment and social well-being and how society should be approached and involved. De Roo (2013) uses the terms material and societal alternately for this aspect. In the context of social acceptance, there is often a societal

reaction or opinion to material changes. Therefore, a distinction will be made between these two realms as well in this thesis.

Planning is also partly an institutional and political-administrative process. It is institutional in the sense that it is important to know which rolls, resources and actions policy makers have at their disposal when dealing with a planning issue (de Roo, 2013). This is inherently political because planning issues almost always have to deal with conflicting interests in which cooperation, deliberation, negotiation and decision making are required.

Finally, planning is an organisational process, tying the institutional and socio-material process together. It is about organising the process, and taking necessary actions so that the process moves from knowledge to action (de Roo, 2013). When trying to deal with a planning issue all these processes play a role, and should be considered in the planning process. De Roo (2013), mentions that it would be useful for planners to define planning issues on the basis of a multi-level perspective. This model will be applied to the context of the RES in the next section, partly answering sub-question 3.

Positioning of the RES

When viewing the RES from a multi-level perspective, the RES itself can be positioned on the organisational meso-level. It is a way of organising the process so that the macro-level institutional decisions (35 TWh renewable energy on land) can be translated to micro-level socio-material outcomes (specific energy projects). Several other levels and dimensions are noteworthy in the context of the RES.

First it should be noted that the RES is not alone at the organisational meso-level in this context. The RES should serve as a building block for the omgevingsvisie, which can itself be located at the meso-organisational level. Staying at the meso-level, it should be noted that the RES also has an institutional dimension. Although the RES itself can be seen as a way to organise the process of realising renewable energy goals with public involvement, the content of the RES will be the result of a political process on the regional level, involving local and regional politicians.

The RES is also connected to other levels. The RES is a result of the talks about the Klimaatakkoord. These talks can be seen as a macro-institutional process in which political choices will be made, while the Klimaatakkoord is a macro-organisational product that directly influences the functioning of the RES by determining its extent, form and goals. The level of socio-political acceptance in the form of non-activist behaviour in the public sphere can be seen as a macro-societal issue. This dimension is also important to consider in the context of the RES, as it directly influences the macro-institutional level, that is important in shaping the RES at the meso-organisational level.

However, there is even a level above: the Klimaatakkoord is an attempt to mitigate climate change. The problem of climate change can be seen as a super-macro-material issue which can have micro-material consequences. Dealing with this global challenge requires a global effort. This has been agreed to in the Paris Agreement, which can itself be seen as a super-macro-organisational product.

On the other hand, there is also a level below the RES that it is connected with. The RES will need to result in specific energy project that will influence the physical environment on specific locations. Therefore, the RES will have micro-material consequences. The material consequences of the RES are also potentially problematic as it comes to community acceptance, which can be located at the micro-societal level. Also, after being grounded in de Omgevingsvisie on meso-institutional level, the RES will also need to be grounded in planning policies at the micro-institutional level.

What can be taken away from this is that the RES can be seen as a policy instrument at the meso-organisational level that is aimed at translating the macro-political decisions to combat (super)macro-level material problems with potential micro-level material consequences, to meso- and micro-level planning policies that will have micro-level material consequences and micro-level societal reactions. Although this model is useful in identifying the different dimensions at play in the context of the RES, it fails to take the factor of time into account. For instance, by using this model no

difference is made between short term micro-material consequences (energy projects) and long-term micro-material consequences resulting from climate change. This might be relevant however in the context of the NIMBY-phenomenon that will be introduced next.

Debunking the NIMBY phenomenon

As has been shown above, acceptance is related to the RES at multiple levels. However, the dynamics in the macro-societal level are often quite different than in the micro-societal level. There is a relatively broad socio-political support for renewable energy in the form of wind and solar energy (van der Lelij, et al., 2016). However, individual projects often encounter a lot of resistance (Solar Magazine, 2019; RTV Drenthe, 2019; Dagblad van het Noorden, 2019; RN7, 2019; Het Streekblad, 2019), sometimes even leading to radical actions (RTV Drenthe, 2019). The phenomenon that renewable energy has a high level of socio-political acceptance, while renewable energy projects can encounter harsh resistance is also detected in literature on social acceptance of wind and solar energy (Krohn & Damborg, 1999; Devine-Wright, 2004; Gross, 2007; Wolsink, 2000; Wüstenhagen, et al., 2007; Colvin, et al., 2016).

Often this tension between socio-political acceptance and community acceptance is attributed to the so-called NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) syndrome (Krohn & Damborg, 1999). This syndrome implies that people are generally in favour of facilities that benefit societies on the long term (in this case these facilities are wind farms or solar fields), but will resist specific projects for these facilities as they experience negative consequences for themselves or for their local community on the short term (e.g. through noise, degradation of visual quality, shadows etc) (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013). In this respect, the NIMBY syndrome represents a public goods dilemma.

Public goods dilemmas are a specific type of social dilemma in which, the realisation of common goods depends on individual contributions, but the outcomes are accessible to all people (von Borgstede, et al., 2013). In this kind of social dilemma, in the short-term perspective it is costly for individuals to contribute, but all individuals are collectively better off in the long term if all individuals contribute. Not contributing while still enjoying the benefits is called free-rider behaviour, and is the most lucrative for individuals (Wolsink, 2000; von Borgstede, et al., 2013). However, if every individual tries to engage in free-rider behaviour, the common good will not be realised.

In the case of renewable energy, this NIMBY phenomenon explains how it could be that individuals support the idea of wind and solar energy, but oppose specific projects on a local level. The public good is large-scale renewable energy, which benefits society as a whole by reducing CO₂-emissions and helping to minimise negative effects of climate change like sea-level rise (assuming that other countries will also work on reducing CO₂-emissions). If realised, these results will be accessible to all people. Therefore, each individual would be best off by trying to engage in free-rider behaviour: to try and let other people contribute to solving the problem (by accepting the negative outcomes of wind and solar energy projects in their vicinity) while the positive outcomes are there for everyone. This would then manifest itself as opposition on the local level. It should be noted, that if everyone engages in this behaviour, renewable energy will collectively be underused (Wolsink, 2000).

While the NIMBY-syndrome offers an explanation for the difference in acceptance on different levels, it is often assumed that this personal cost-benefit calculation resulting in free-rider behaviour is the only factor at work. This view, however, is too simplistic and reduces a complex system of interests, motives and risk perceptions to one motive of self-interest. Only the aspects of outcome favourability seem to be incorporated in this line of reasoning. According to Wolsink (2000), 'by labelling all protests as NIMBY one misses the multitude of underlying motivations' (p. 57), while a NIMBY motive only accounts for a fraction of the resistance, which is often caused by other factors, like procedural fairness, or distributional fairness based on fairness principles, can play a much larger role in resisting projects.

Therefore, when dealing with the issue of acceptance for specific renewable energy projects in the RES it is crucial to not simply label all opposition as NIMBY, but try and understand the

diversity of the opposition, by being aware of the different motives for resistance and the different fairness aspects playing a role for different individuals. This way the process surrounding the implementation of renewable energy projects can target the roots of the opposition specifically instead of applying a one-size-fits-all approach. This is connected to the way that governance processes are organised, which will be discussed in the next section. A further analysis of breaking down the NIMBY-concept can be found in Appendix 4: Breaking down the NIMBY-concept

Framework for planning-oriented action

Not all planning issues require the same approach. Different types of actors can be involved, and their role can differ according to the approach that is chosen. Also, one spatial issue can be concerned with only one, or multiple often interrelated goals. It is possible to create a framework (Figure 11) connecting the aspect of goals and that of interaction through the concept of complexity (de Roo, 2013).

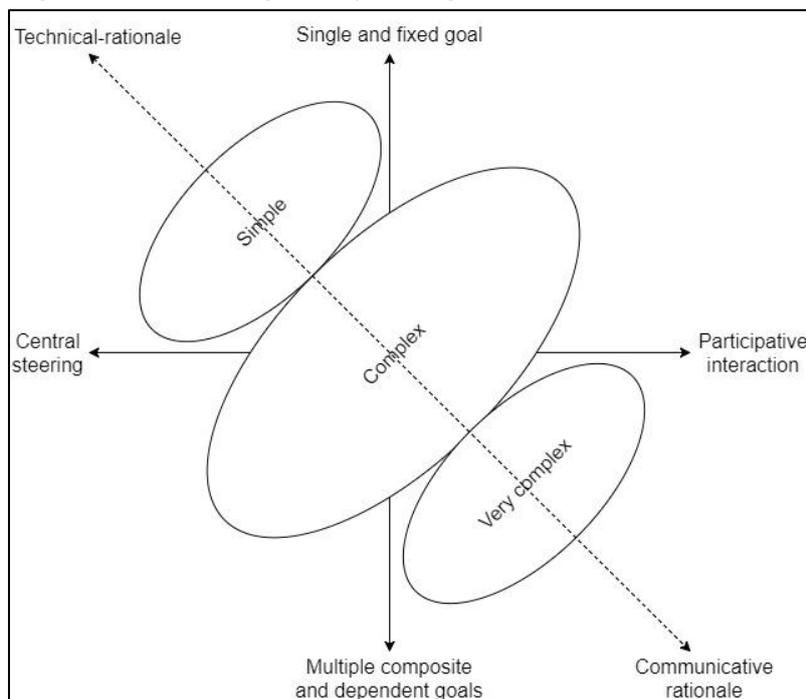


Figure 11: Framework for planning-oriented action, in which the relation between goals of and interaction in planning is expressed on the basis of complexity (de Roo, 2013)

On the one hand there are 'simple' planning issues in which there is a consensus on the problem and in which only one or a few different interests play a role. These issues can be best approached through a 'technical-rationale', where a single, fixed goal is set, and central steering is appropriate because the interaction and number of involved actors is low. On the opposite side of the spectrum are very complex issues in which there is disagreement on the problems and possible solutions and in which a lot of different interests might

play a role. These issues can be best approached through a 'communicative-rationale' in which multiple, composite and dependent goals are set and where participative interaction is appropriate due to the number of actors involved. The technical and communicative rationale are two ideal-typical extremes. That is to say, that the bulk of planning issues are located in the middle of the framework, in the realm of the 'complex' issues (de Roo, 2013). As such, these issues can be approached less unambiguously with a clear-cut approach (de Roo, 2013). To understand the bandwidth in which planning issues can be positioned, it is useful to closely examine the ideal-typical extremes.

Technical-rationality

The technical-rational approach, at the upper left of the framework (Figure 11), (also called functional rational approach) is concerned with the simple planning issues (de Roo, 2001). Some of the terms used by other authors to refer to it are 'instrumental' (Dryzek, 1993), 'technical' (Healey, 1997) and 'procedural' (Faludi, 1973). It stems from the modernist tradition, and assumes

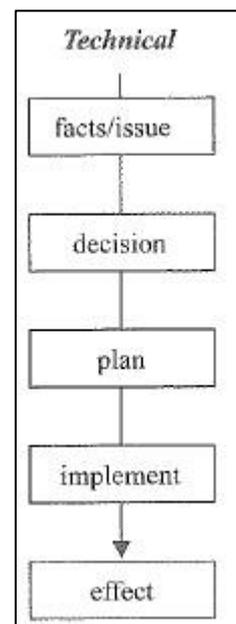


Figure 10: Technical planning process (de Roo, 2007)

that based on all the information at hand at the start of the planning process, clear outcomes can be defined and exact results can be predicted (de Roo, 2007). A typical planning process in the technical-rational approach will therefore look like Figure 10, Figure 12 and Figure 13 are variations of the framework for planning-oriented action (Figure 11). As can be seen in those pictures, a technical rational approach is concerned with goals in the form of norms and standards. This makes sense considering that this approach has a logical-positivist perspective, assuming one true reality (de Roo, 2012), that is objectively observable (Zuidema & de Roo, 2004) so that absolute norms and standards

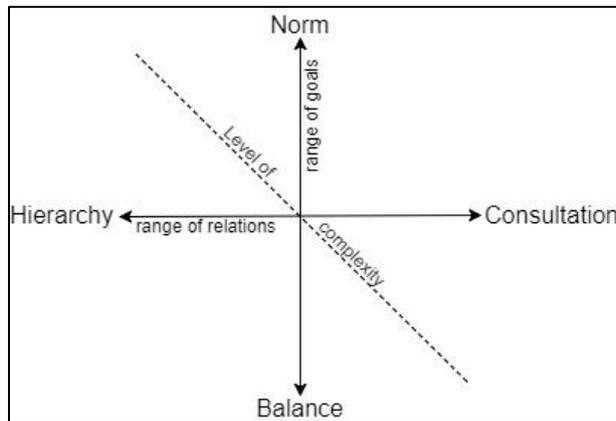


Figure 13: Planning approaches related to complexity (de Roo, 2001)

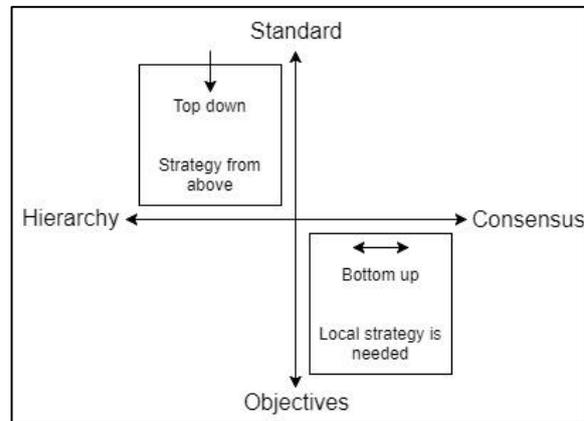


Figure 12: Planning approaches translated to policy strategies (de Roo, 2003)

could be utilised. Another notion that is connected to this technical rational approach is that of hierarchy. (Figure 12, Figure 13).

The norms and standards in combination with hierarchy result in a top down planning strategy. This is linked to the government control (de Roo, 2007). In this approach, the government is able to articulate the public interest (based on their objective and scientific approach) and come up with the best strategies and policies (Martens, 2007). In this approach, the actors that are governed by the government (e.g. companies, citizens, public transport operators etc) are often seen as objects to be steered in the right direction, or at best as suppliers of information (Martens, 2007). This view was popular during the 50's and early 60's (de Roo, 2002). A well-known example of technical-rational approaches to planning is the blue print planning that enabled a post-war Europe to quickly rebuild after the Second World War (de Roo, 2007). However, when it comes to more social issues, where different goals and actors play a role, complexity increases and the technical-rational approach is of less use (de Roo, 2001). Nowadays this era, where almost every planning issue was approached in a technical fashion, is regarded as an era of 'primitive optimism' (Voogd, 1995), for the level of certainty assumed in this technical rational view was seldomly realistic.

Communicative-rationality

At the other side of the framework in Figure 11 (bottom-left) we find the communicative rationale (Healey, 1997; de Roo, 2007), also known as participatory (de Roo, 2007), or argumentative or interpretative (Healey, 1997). This is the domain of the very complex issues. It is related to the Habermasian understanding of communicative rationality, stressing the importance of intersubjectivity (de Roo, 2002), with planners seeking a negotiated or 'agreed' certainty (de Roo, 2012). Planning issues are not seen as 'realities' in an objective world, but as abstract constructions of a variety of actors involved in the issue (de Roo, 2007). As can be seen in Figure 11, Figure 12 and Figure 13, as it comes to the range of goals, communicative rationality is concerned with a balance of multiple more abstract and interdependent objectives. Important here is that governments are no longer considered as the only authority

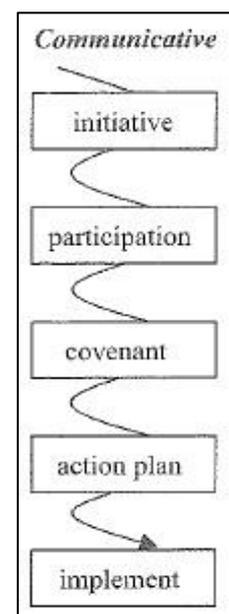


Figure 14: Communicative planning process (de Roo, 2007)

determining what is in the public interest (de Roo, 2007). Healey (1997), mentions as one of the emphases of communicative planning a ‘recognition that all forms of knowledge are socially constructed’. It is therefore not surprising that as it comes to the range of relations, communicative rationality is associated with participation, consensus, and consultation (Figure 11, Figure 12 and Figure 13).

In combination, this leads to a bottom-up strategy for planning (Figure 12). Many parties can influence planning processes, resulting in uncertainty with regard to interests, opinions and social values playing a role in these processes (Zuidema & de Roo, 2004). The problem definition and solution strategy are heavily influenced by a participatory decision-making process (de Roo, 2001). This happens increasingly on a local or regional level, due to the growing wish for subsidiarity: “the needs for flexibility in respect of local or regional interpretation of rules and regulations, and to handle issues on the level at which they occur” (de Roo, 2007, p. 109). Thus, the typical communicative rational planning process will look like Figure 14, with a decentralised and participatory decision-making process.

Positioning of the RES: (sub)optimal policies

Now that the framework has been laid out and explained by zooming in on the two extremes, it is possible to try and locate the challenge of renewable energy sources on land that the RES is concerned with, on the spectrum, providing a partial answer to sub-question 3. This way it can be identified which planning approach is appropriate for the RES and to what extent the current situation of the RES is in accordance with this appropriate approach.

On the one hand, the RES undeniably has some elements of a simple technical-rational problem. The issue seems clear-cut: the CO₂-emissions are too high. One obvious solution that is implemented through the RES seems to be to switch from a CO₂ emitting form of electricity production, to more sustainable forms of electricity production like wind and solar energy. Therefore, the Dutch national government has come up with a quantitative national goal in the concept version of the Klimaatakkoord: in 2030 the amount of large-scale renewable energy produced on land should be at least 35 TWh (Klimaatberaad, 2018a).

This is at odds with a different part of the strategy proposed. The eventual implementation of the goal mentioned above, is decentralised to a collaboration between local and regional governments. These should decide on how much to contribute to the national goal, how this is to be done, and where this is to be done. It is also mentioned several times that public support and acceptance, issues related to a communicative rationale, should be addressed at a local level (Klimaatberaad, 2018a).

A parallel can be drawn here with the issue of social acceptance mentioned earlier: there is a tension between the general policies on a national level, and the specific projects on a regional level.

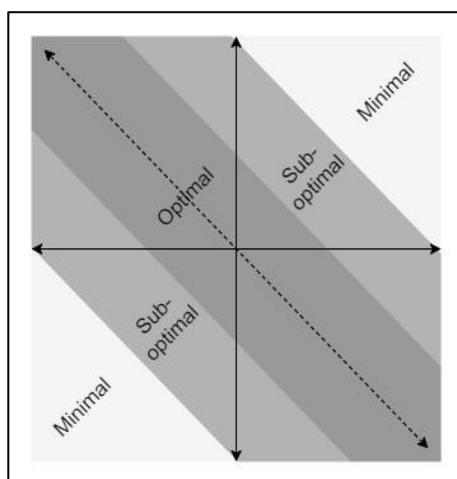


Figure 15: optimal policy and policy implementation (de Roo, 2013)

At a national level, the problem seems relatively simple, and the solutions straightforward. There is a high level of support and there are absolute, quantitative standards to reach. On a local/regional level however, specific projects are to be implemented. The number of actors involved, and therefore the number of interests, values and opinions is much higher, and community acceptance should be carefully managed in order for projects to succeed. Participatory strategies are likely to be required, which generates tension with the absolute national goals.

De Roo (2013) argues that optimal policies are located on the diagonal axis of Figure 11, with policies further away from this axis being sub-optimal or even minimal policies (Figure 15). In the optimal case, the position of a planning issue on the range of goals should be

in accordance with its position on the range of relations (Figure 13) (de Roo, 2013). This means that for a simple planning issue, technical rational goals should be combined with technical rational relations and that for a very complex planning issue communicative rational goals should be combined with communicative rational relations.

Since the quantitative national standards in the context of the Regional Energy Strategy seem more towards the technical realm, but the decentral approach and the actor involvement required on a local/regional level is oriented more towards the communicative realm, it could be argued that the issue of renewable energy production on land in the RES would end up somewhere in the upper right quadrant of the framework in Figure 11. This would be problematic because, as can be seen in Figure 15, this is away from the diagonal of optimal policies. However, this thesis will serve to further research the way that the RES is currently functioning, the extent to which the policy is, or can be expected to be sub-optimal and to suggest policy directions to potentially improve the policy.

2.3 Conceptual model

Figure 16 shows the conceptual model for this thesis. The conceptual model connects the concepts presented and explained in section 2.1 to the RES:

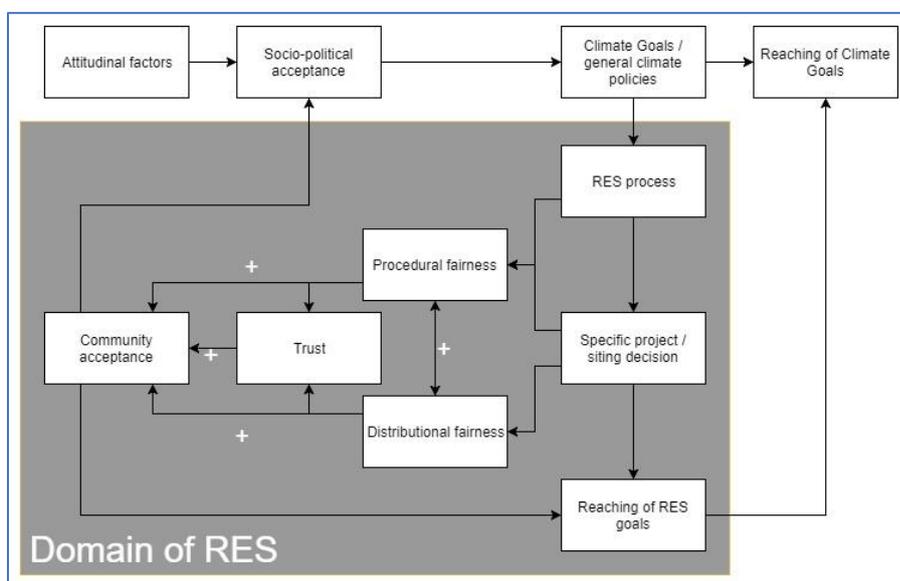


Figure 16: Conceptual Model

The conceptual model shows how the concept of social acceptance is connected to the RES-process. Attitudinal factors determine the level of socio-political acceptance of climate policies which in turn results in climate goals (as formulated in the (concept) Klimaatakkoord). Part of these goals are to be carried out via the RES. The RES will result in siting decisions for specific renewable energy projects. The way in which people have been included in the RES-process, as well as in the process of realising the specific projects resulting from the RES determines the perceived procedural fairness of those projects. The way in which the outcomes of the projects resulting from the RES are distributed determine the perceived distributional fairness.

The plusses in the conceptual model symbolise a positive relationship between the concepts. For example, a higher perceived distributional fairness will also lead to a higher perceived procedural fairness and a lower perceived distributional fairness will lead to a lower level of perceived procedural fairness and vice versa. The level of trust is influenced by distributional and procedural fairness experienced (now and in previous projects) in which positive experiences slowly build trust but negative experiences quickly break it down. Procedural fairness, outcome fairness and trust together influence the community acceptance. A high community acceptance can have a positive

effect on the socio-political acceptance and contributes to a successful realisation of the RES goals, which in turn leads to a successful realisation of the climate goals.

It should be noted that only the concepts from section 2.1 have been incorporated explicitly in the conceptual model. This has been done for clarity's sake, as a model incorporating every theory that has been discussed would become overcomplicated and complex. However, these theories can be connected to the conceptual model. The multi-level perspective is implicitly present in the different levels that are represented and connected in the conceptual model, where the link is made between the macro-level political process, resulting in a macro-level organisational product (the Klimaatakkoord) which calls for the meso-level organisational process of the RES, which results in micro-level material outcomes which may lead to micro-level societal responses. The policy life cycle model can then be connected to the different organisational processes that each have their own policy life cycle, describing the disagreement and political importance of the policy on this level.

Furthermore, the framework of planning-oriented action can be thought of as the way in which the steps in the conceptual model are carried out. For instance, the RES-process can be carried out in a technical rational or a communicative rational way, or somewhere in between. This might have consequences for the perceived procedural and distributional fairness and trust and therefore for the community acceptance and the success of the Regional Energy Strategy. The way in which the RES process currently is, and should be organised, and its position in the framework of planning-oriented action and the possible consequences are part of the research carried out in the remainder of the thesis.

3. Methodology

This chapter starts with some philosophical considerations regarding ontology and epistemology in relation to the subject matter in section 3.1. This will result in a study design in section 3.2, in which the choice of methods will be elaborated on. In section 3.3 it will be further detailed, on the basis of section 3.2 how the chosen research methods have been used in this research. In section 3.4 some comments will be made on the positioning of the researcher in this research and finally, in section 3.5 the research ethics will be discussed.

3.1 Philosophical considerations

In order to come up with a logical and coherent research design it is important to know the researcher's worldview, in particular as it comes to issues like ontology and epistemology. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy describes ontology as a first approximation as 'the study of what there is', dealing with the existence of certain things or entities, their features, and how we could find out what exists (Hofweber, 2017). In the example John eats a cookie, the common-sense view is that there exists a person called John who is eating another existing object: a cookie. Things however get more complicated when more abstract entities are considered. For example, do numbers have real existence or does God exist; and how should we find out about it?

One such domain where things get more complicated is the social world, which is also the domain that this research is concerned with. The specific branch of ontology concerned with the nature and properties of entities in the world that arise from social interaction is called 'social ontology' (Epstein, 2018). One of the central questions in this field is whether social entities (e.g. social groups, laws, and institutions) are objective entities that exist outside of social actors or should be considered as subjective social constructs, resulting from perceptions and actions of social actors. These two positions can respectively be broadly referred to as objectivism, associated with quantitative research, and constructionism, associated with qualitative research (Bryman, 2012), although further distinctions and more nuanced positions are possible.

Another important field of philosophy that should be considered when conducting research is that of 'epistemology', which could be described as 'the study of knowledge and justified belief' (Steup, 2005). It is concerned with questions like 'What is knowledge?' and 'What are sources of knowledge?'. In the specific field of social sciences epistemology is in particular concerned with the issue whether the social world can and should be studied in the same way by the social sciences that the natural world is studied by the natural sciences (Bryman, 2012).

This view is advocated by the position of 'positivism', associated with quantitative research methods, which is contrasted by the epistemology called 'interpretivism', which proposes a strategy by which the scientist is able to grasp the subjective meaning of social action, associated with qualitative research methods (Bryman, 2012). Again, it should be noted that further distinctions and more nuanced positions are possible.

In this thesis a constructivist viewpoint is adopted. From an objectivist viewpoint organisations, such as for example the RES-process, can be seen as tangible objects, containing rules, procedures, job descriptions, hierarchy etc that exist outside of the individuals in the organisation (Bryman, 2012). A constructionist position on the other hand would view organisations more as a 'negotiated order', where numerous agreements are continually being established, renewed, revised, revoked etc and the order is accomplished in everyday interaction (Bryman, 2012). This latter view seems to be more representative of the way in which organisations function, and in particular the RES-process that is brand new and consists of many different actors working together, meaning that a lot of establishing, renewal, revoking and revision will be going on. This means that the order of the RES will probably change continually, resulting from everyday action, especially early on in the process. Therefore, a constructivist viewpoint seems preferable in this case.

This constructivist ontological orientation is often associated with an interpretivist epistemological orientation. Indeed, it seems more logical to research a process like the RES by striving for an understanding and interpretation, which fits interpretivism, than by striving for a

causal explanation like in many natural sciences, which fits positivism. These philosophical considerations have consequences for the possibility to achieve ‘true’ statements. True statements seem to be inseparable from an external objective reality, in which true statements are statements that correspond with the objective reality. By rejecting objectivism for this research, no true statements in this sense are possible. Instead, one should try to strive for statements that are highly probable, in the sense that a well-argued and logical connection can be made between the data, existing theories and the statements.

The philosophical positions of interpretivism and constructivism fit a qualitative research method, because a qualitative research method rejects practices and norms of the natural scientific model emphasizing the way individuals interpret and socially construct the social world and embodies a view of social reality as ‘a constantly shifting emergent property of an individuals’ creation’ (Bryman, 2012). This qualitative research method will be outlined in the next section.

3.2 Study design

The aim of this research is to find out how the RES deals with social acceptance, describe how that is currently taking form and suggest if and how the functioning of the RES with regard to social acceptance might be improved. These aims are dealt with in different phases of the research. In order to fulfil these aims several methods of data collection have been chosen, all of which are qualitative in nature, which are listed in Table 2, and further examined below.

Table 2: Research aims with corresponding data collection method

Phase	Research aims	Data collection methods	Related sub-question
1	What is the RES and how does it deal with social acceptance?	Policy document analysis	3
2	How is the RES currently functioning with regard to social acceptance?	Semi-structured interviews	4, 5
3	How might the functioning of the RES with regard to social acceptance be improved?	Focus group; semi-structured interview	6

Policy document analysis

Policy documents are among the data sources of this study. When using documents as a data source, it is important to consider the quality of the documents used. Some criteria for this are authenticity, representativeness, credibility and meaning although these criteria might differ in importance according to the nature of the types of documents considered (Bryman, 2012). In this research, policy documents have been used to describe what the RES is and if and how it is supposed to deal with the issue of social acceptance. Therefore, mostly the authenticity and credibility of the documents is important in considering the suitability of the documents, whereas the representativeness and meaning of the documents are part of the analysis.

Semi-structured interviews

Interviewing is a widely employed method in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). Its advantage over several other qualitative research methods (like participant observation or diary-keeping) is its flexibility. It is a relatively non-intrusive and non-disrupting way for researchers to be able to gather in-depth information on a given subject (Bryman, 2012). This means that an interview can easily be scheduled and demands relatively little time and flexibility is needed from the side of the respondent. This method has been chosen for getting insight into the current situation in the RES-process regarding social acceptance, because it is desirable to collect data from multiple RES-regions to get a somewhat broader picture of the progress in several regions, rather than in only one. Also, possibly busy schedules of respondents make the flexibility of interviewing desirable.

There are several types of interviews that a researcher could employ to gather information; most notably the structured, semi-structured and unstructured interview, forming a continuum. Structured interviews are at one side with predetermined and standardised questions, while unstructured interviews where conversation is directed by the informant is at the other end. Right in-between are semi-structured interviews that allow for some degree of predetermined order but also for flexibility for addressing of issues by the respondent (Longhurst, 2010). This form of interviews is also most preferable for this research precisely because it on the one hand ensures inclusion of important themes identified by the researcher in the interview and on the other hand creates room for respondents to identify important themes. Semi-structured interviews usually follow a list of questions or themes (Longhurst, 2010). For this research only themes have been listed, in order to maximise flexibility and room for respondents in the interview, as well as for the researcher to adjust questions to fit themes emerging from the conversation.

In order to analyse the vastness of information that results from interviewing, answers should be coded (Bryman, 2012), meaning that information in the transcripts or summaries of the interviews that deals with a particular theme is tagged with a label referring to this theme. A distinction can be made between pre-coding and post-coding. Pre-coding means that themes and categories have already been defined before the interview. The interview questions are then simply used to determine in which category the answers of the respondent belong. In post-coding on the other hand the labels are only applied after the interview (Bryman, 2012) and new codes may emerge from the data after careful study. In this research a combination of pre- and post-coding has been used. In this way it is guaranteed that conclusions can be drawn on important themes identified beforehand, as well as allowed that important themes that the researcher might have missed beforehand can find their way in the conclusions.

Focus group

Focus groups are very similar to the semi-structured interviews above in that they both allow for an open response and an informal and conversational tone (Longhurst, 2010), as well as being somewhat structured so that the researcher can specifically treat certain themes. The difference between an interview and a focus group is that a focus group consists of a group of people, usually 6 to 12, allowing for, and relying on interaction between members of the group (Longhurst, 2010). This interaction is the reason that a focus group has been chosen for this research: it allows for different perspectives on one issue and most the trading and consideration of other perspectives between people.

3.3 Research strategy

Phase 1

As has been mentioned, phase 1 of the research aims to describe what the RES is and how it deals with the issue of social acceptance. The data used to fulfil this aim are policy documents about the RES. As has been mentioned, it is important to consider the authenticity and the credibility of these policy-documents. The policy documents have been listed in Table 3 below, as well as the author or authoring organisation(s), the date it was published, and the purpose of the document.

These documents will be used in two ways. First, they will be summarised to provide an overview of the organisation, planning and products that are required in the RES process. Then this summary will be interpreted by making a connection to the planning-theoretical models that have been treated in chapter 2. All documents are available and collected online and are stored on an electronic database.

Table 3: Overview of policy documents on the RES

Document Title	Publishing date	Author(s)	Purpose
Voorstel voor hoofdlijnen van het Klimaatakkoord	10-07-2018	Klimaatberaad (commissioned by the National Government)	Informing about the outlines that have been produced by the Klimaatberaad
Concept Handreiking RES	01-11-2018	VNG, UvW, IPO	Helping regions to quickly start making a RES, offering insight in the expectations of the RES and describing the national rules of the products, plans and process of the RES
Handreiking RES	21-12-2018	Rijksoverheid, IPO, UvW, VNG	Idem
Ontwerp van het Klimaatakkoord	21-12-2018	Klimaatberaad (commissioned by the National Government)	Informing about the concrete package of measures and instruments that have been agreed on by the Klimaatberaad
Publiekssamenvatting RES	01-10-2018	IPO, UvW, VNG	Explaining the RES to interested parties / individuals
Factsheet RES	January 2019	Commission voor de MER	Showing how a MER can already be useful early on in the RES-process

Phase 2

In phase 2 insight is being created in the current state of affairs as it comes to the RES and social acceptance. For this, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with six different professionals working on the RES in six different regions Table 4. These professionals have been contacted via professional contacts of the researcher and via contact persons of the national programme RES. All interviews have been conducted in the month of April either in person at a location of choice of the respondent, or, if practical reasons did not allow for that, via the phone. The interviews had a length between 45 and 75 minutes, although the target time was 30 - 60 min.

Table 4: overview interviews RES-regions

Respondent	Date	Length of interview	Location of interview
1.1	April 4 th 2019	49:42	Phone
1.2	April 9 th 2019	56:15	Phone
1.3	April 10 th 2019	58:38	Workplace of respondent
1.4	April 23 rd 2019	1:12:05	Workplace of respondent
1.5	April 24 th 2019	1:26:17	Workplace of respondent
1.6	April 25 th 2019	59:40	Workplace of respondent

All interviews have been recorded, transcribed and coded, using a mix of pre- and post-coding. The transcripts and recordings are being stored in a password protected digital location and

an anonymised version can be acquired by contacting the author of this research. The interview guide for this phase can be found in Appendix 5: Interview Guide RES-regions

Although the systematic transcription and coding of interviews is a laborious process, it is necessary in this phase of the research to ensure that the concepts highlighted in Chapter 2 are systematically identified in the interview transcripts. A small example is given, to shed some light on the coding process. Take for example the following quote:

“Let's just say that the sky is the limit. So where there is support for large-scale generation - wind or sun or bio or gas - and everything that can be applied between now and 2030, we are mainly looking for the opportunity, and the opportunity is not only in terms of spatial design, but also economically. Because energy transition also offers a number of economic opportunities. Where within the region - that is, of course, typically Randstad-like - we mainly want to look at how we can capitalize on those opportunities in favour of the economic development of the region. Strengthen the economic position of the region. So with that we cannot really put a number on what we are actually going to reduce, because in theory that can still go in all directions.”

This quote (or parts of it) has received the following labels: *afwegingskader* (assessment framework), *ontwikkelmodel* (development model), *grootte opgave* (size of tasks), *distributional fairness*. The full list of codes can be found in Appendix 9: List of codes

Phase 3

The interpretation of phase 1 and 2, based on the theoretical framework are used in this research to make suggestions for a process scheme for the remaining RES-process. This process scheme will be further developed by discussing it with experts in phase 3, the results of which will be presented in chapter 5. For this a focus group with practical experts with different backgrounds (in acceptance and participation, in engineering and in planning) and an interview with Prof. Dr. Gert de Roo, a theoretical expert on planning policy and author of several of the models used in this thesis, has been used.

For the focus group, 6 experts have been invited and it had a scheduled length of 1 hour. The actual length of the focus group was approximately 70 minutes and it was organised at the place of work of the experts. A proposal for a process scheme for the RES has been provided to all participants of the focus group to encourage discussion. The focus group has been recorded and transcribed and both the recording and the transcript are being stored in a secure digital location. The interview with de Roo took place in his office at the University of Groningen and took 50 minutes; slightly less than the scheduled hour. The guide for the focus group and the interview with de Roo are available in Appendix 6: Guide Focus Group and Appendix 7: Interview Guide Gert de Roo respectively and the input for the focus group has been included in Appendix 8: Input Focus Group

3.4 Research ethics

When conducting scientific research, several ethical issues might arise that are important to consider. The main areas of ethical concern in social science relate to harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception (Bryman, 2012). Ethical concerns are of particular prominence when dealing with respondents. The names, function and corresponding RES region of respondents in round 2 have been kept anonymously, so that the quotes cannot be traced back to a specific individual. This way it can be guaranteed that respondents will sustain no harm by participating in this research. Furthermore, the privacy of respondents will not be invaded any more than necessary. The same goes for participants of the focus group in phase 3. An exception has been made for De Roo, as his expertise and the fact that he created several of the models in the thesis is of relevance for the interpretation of the results. Permission was asked to use his name in this thesis research.

For the same reason, the full transcripts have not been included in this research, as the background of the respondents might be deduced from them. To still maintain scientific integrity, the author of this research can be contacted to acquire an anonymised version of one or more of the transcripts.

Furthermore, at the start of all interviews and focus groups it is explicitly stated what the research is about, that the interview/focus group will be recorded, that the data collected will be used for this research only and stored in a secure location, who will have access to it and that participants can retreat from the research at any time. Respondents are then asked if they want to participate in the research under these conditions. This way informed consent can be guaranteed and deception can be avoided.

4. Data

In this chapter the results of the data-gathering of this thesis research are presented. The data have been gathered in three phases, with the second and third phase building on the discussion of the previous phases. Therefore, the results and the discussion of the results are treated per phase instead of all at once.

In the first phase policy documents have been used to outline what is written in policy documents about dealing with the issue of acceptance in the RES and to what extent this is obligatory, partially dealing with sub-question 2. After that a round of interviews with people working in the RES-process has been conducted to gather how the RES-process is taking shape in practice so far, providing input for answering sub-questions 4 and 5. Since the discussion of the results of phase 2 is already giving meaning to the results, providing a first step towards policy suggestions, this has been included in chapter 5.

4.1 Phase 1: Policy documents

Phase 1: Results

One of the first questions that is relevant to answer about the RES is what the legal status of the RES is. In the concept-Klimaataakkoord, there is a section called “obligatory Klimaataakkoord” that states that there are several circumstances intervention is needed to ensure successful fulfilment of the goals formulated for the RES. These circumstances are that the contributions of all RES-regions together are below 35 TWh, that the RES results in super-regional infrastructural problems, that one or more of the involved governments do not want to contribute to the formation of a RES or to the implementation of the RES into policies, that the RES is not being carried out and that the agreements that have been made turn out to be impossible to fulfil. If one of these things happens, the first measure is to try and come to a consensus within the region. If results are not sufficient the parties within the steering group of the National Programme RES will try to find a solution. Ultimately, if regions are not able to come to a consensus on the issue, the province, or even the national government might force specific goals on regions so that the goal of 35 TWh will be met. The exact details of these procedures - like which (legal) instruments the National Programme RES could use or which procedural steps have to be taken before the national government can step in – are not further specified. It is mentioned that further details will follow in the 2nd quarter of 2019 at the latest. This has not yet happened at the time of the interviews. (Klimaatberaad, 2018a).

When reading the policy documents that have been produced to outline the RES - whether it is a chapter in the Klimaataakkoord dedicated to the RES or a document to update local and regional governments on the RES - one thing becomes clear. Social acceptance is considered an important aspect of the RES-process. For instance, the Concept Handreiking RES mentions that one of the most important reasons to choose for a regional approach to the challenges that the RES is concerned with, is that “public support and ownership of the transition is necessary (...)” (Werkgroep RES, 2018). Furthermore, the chapter in the concept version of the Dutch Klimaataakkoord about the RES has a section dedicated to participation in which it is stated that the RES-process should be ‘inviting’ and that “the participation of interest-groups, companies and residents should be grounded.” (Klimaatberaad, 2018a). This importance is also mentioned several times in other RES-related documents (Rijksoverheid, 2018; Klimaatberaad, 2018c; Commissie MER, 2019; IPO; VNG; UvW, 2018).

Furthermore, the Handreiking RES (2018) stipulates that in the Concept-RES and the RES 1.0 public support should be taken into account. How exactly this is operationalised is not exactly clear yet. For instance, it remains to be seen if actual participation is required in the formulation of these products or that it would be enough to just write a section about the subject of acceptance in the RES. Only in the step of implementation, after the formulation of the RES 1.0 it is explicitly stated that the actual *creation* of support amongst civic organisations and citizens is an important theme (Rijksoverheid, 2018). For this phase, also the ambition is formulated to reach 50% local ownership in

energy projects, meaning that revenues generated from energy projects would come back to the local area. Again, this is only formulated as an ambition and it is unclear to which extent regions are expected to reach this ambition and which financial models would be counted under this ambition.

This seems to suggest that participation and dealing with acceptance is mostly of importance in the last phase of the RES. However, it should be noted here that when the importance of social acceptance in the RES is stressed, often the RES-*process* is stressed. That means that not only the projects resulting from the RES should deal appropriately with the issue of public acceptance, but that it should also have its place in the process of formulating a RES. In the 'Handreiking Participatie' (referred to in the concept Klimaatakkoord), which contains suggestions for designing public participation, it is mentioned specifically that the suggestions are for including participation in the RES process, not in the projects resulting from the RES (Rijksoverheid, 2018). Also, in the 'concept Handreiking RES' it is mentioned specifically that "participation is an important theme in the *development* of the RES" [emphasis added] (Werkgroep RES, 2018).

Participation

Although there is still a lot unclear about dealing with social acceptance in the RES-process, one thing seems somewhat clearer. In the Handreiking RES (2018) it is mentioned how outcomes resulting from the RES process need to be grounded in the provincial and municipal planning policies; most notably the Omgevingsvisie. This will need to happen via the new 'Omgevingswet'. This new law has its own requirements for participation. Therefore, it is advisable to shape the participation process in the RES so that it meets the minimal requirements for the Omgevingswet. These minimal requirements are recorded in the 'Omgevingsbesluit' (Rijksoverheid, 2018).

In the Omgevingsbesluit, amongst other things, the minimal participation requirements for the instruments of the 'Omgevingswet' are recorded. For the Omgevingsvisie the minimal requirements consist of justification (*motiveringsplicht*). This means that authorities need to outline in the decision announcement of an Omgevingsvisie how citizens, trade and industry stakeholders and societal organisations and administrative bodies have been included in the preparation of the Omgevingsvisie, what the results of this inclusion are and how these results have been processed. The specific form and intensity of participation is not further detailed. Every administrative body needs to give its own interpretation to the participation trajectory and to the way in which all parties are included in the realisation of the decision. This is because the interpretation depends on the instrument, the specific issues in the built environment that are being tackled and on the involved parties. There is however an 'inspirational guide for participation', but this is only inspirational and is not a legally binding requirement (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2018).

To further guide the participation process of the RES, the Handreiking RES contains an appendix called the 'Participation Guide'. This guide is about participation in the RES-process, and not about participation in the implementation phase of the RES. In this guide four steps are outlined (Rijksoverheid, 2018):

- **Step 1 - Analysis and ambition: why are we doing this?** In this step, three actions are advisable. Firstly, it is important to create an accurate picture of the energy challenge of the region under consideration, via a so-called energy-analysis. In this analysis the current situation, the ambition and the potential of the region are considered. Next to this, a stakeholder analysis can be helpful to create a good overview of the citizens, societal parties and companies in the region and their respective needs. Finally, it is advisable to create a plan of action for the participation process. E.g. the different stakeholders that will be involved in the process, when they will be involved, and in which way.
- **Step 2 - What? How much?** The challenge and general ambition from step 1 can be further detailed in a concept plan with (general) choices for an energy mix and global aspiration (e.g. energy-efficiency; a certain percentage of wind or solar energy; possible search areas). For this, participants could be involved and informed through 'spatial ateliers.' It is also advisable

to determine the conditions and general starting points for energy-projects in the region as it comes to participation and public involvement.

- **Step 3 - When?** The establishment and monitoring of a planning by a regional steering group for the RES on the basis of the results from step 2 is advisable. In this, decisions can be made about when the detailing and implementation will start, but also about the way in which plans and policy can be combined. Furthermore, it can be made clear in this how and when the RES will be grounded in the planning policies. The involvement of and information provision to stakeholders in this phase is advisable.
- **Step 4 - Where? How?** The assessment and general choices from step 1 and 2 have to be detailed to a project level. In this step a broad group of stakeholders on area-level will start talks about possible locations and the way of integration and elaboration for specific projects (e.g. choices in financial participation model). Here, the general starting points from step 2 will be used. Extra attention in this step needs to be given to the inclusion of the whole population of an area.

Although this ‘Handreiking Participatie’ does offer some inspiration about different stages that can be differentiated in the RES-process it serves only as an inspirational guide. Therefore, it is unclear which stakeholders are to be involved in which steps and how much say participants in participatory steps would have. The explicit note in step 4 that the whole population of the area should be included in this step seems to suggest that participation in earlier steps would take place through representation or samples of the population.

Phase 1: Discussion

What becomes clear from the policy documents on the RES is that the importance of acceptance and participation is stressed. However, the procedures surrounding the RES and the topic of social acceptance are rather vague. This seems to support the hypothesis from the theoretical framework that the RES is at the beginning of the second stage of Winsemius’ policy life cycle, in which policy directions are somewhat clear, but there is still a lot of uncertainty on the details of procedures as the policy is not yet routinely executed.

This also means that from the policy documents on the RES it remains unclear where the RES should be located on the framework of planning-oriented action. It should be noted however that because the technical quantitative norms and the strict timeline seem to be outlined more clearly than the communicative participatory trajectory it could be expected that the approach taken in the most RES-regions would shift somewhat more towards the realm of technical rationality.

As it comes to social acceptance in the RES the importance of participation and support in the RES-process is stressed, which could help to improve procedural fairness. However, the detailing is a bit scanty and it is unclear if any meaningful citizen participation (on the higher rungs of the Arnstein ladder) would be necessary in the RES-process according to the policy documents. The RES policy documents are a bit more detailed as it comes to the implementation phase in which direct participation of all involved citizens is suggested (influencing procedural fairness) and 50% local ownership of energy projects is set as an ambition (influencing distributional fairness). In the next section the results of interviews with six different persons working in a RES-region are being presented to see how the RES’ are currently taking shape in practice.

4.2 Phase 2: Interviews RES-regions

Phase 2: Results

Importance and definition of social acceptance

First of all, the importance of social acceptance that was stated in policy documents was confirmed by most of the respondents, with almost all of them mentioning that it has been given at least some thought in the process thus far. One of the respondents even goes as far as stating:

“yes, it is perhaps the most important element in the entire process”
(respondent 1.1).

Some respondents even mention that the technical challenges of the RES could be relatively easily solved, suggesting that the biggest challenges are in the field of social and political support:

“Technically, but that’s my opinion, it would be a breeze to generate 35 TWh sustainably. No problem. (...). But of course your thesis is about support. And the experience is very different”
(respondent 1.6).

And

“Solving this problem is not that difficult at all. It all sounds very exciting, but actually it’s not that bad. At the moment it is much more difficult to find a good, solid path in the administrative arena - and in the division that we have created together.”
(respondent 1.2)

Although the need for social acceptance in the RES is a shared notion, several respondents are still trying to define the concept. One respondent mentions that social acceptance could mean that a project has a lot of supporters, or that it could mean that a project meets little resistance. If there is a large group of people that are not in favour of, or against the project these two different definitions could have quite different consequences for the perceived public support. The respondent points out that it is up to administrators to further decide on this issue and that this can be a dilemma for them (respondent 1.4). Another respondent also mentions that they are still in the process of defining social acceptance together with the involved parties (respondent 1.1). Finally, there is one respondent that mentions that for now the local council can function as an indicator of social acceptance, until talks will be about specific locations (respondent 1.5).

Current state of affairs

Most of the interviewed regions are roughly at the same point in the RES-process: the local governments have agreed to start preparations for the RES-process, which will officially start with the signing of the Klimaatakkoord. There is only one region that has already started work on the concept-RES. Two things that all regions are doing in this preparation of the RES-process are collecting relevant information to produce a concept-RES and designing the process to produce a concept RES.

The information collection is mostly about gathering factual data and making an inventory of projects that are currently underway. As one respondent puts it:

“Yes that means getting all kinds of map information: different types of landscape present in Overijssel, area descriptions, maps of the energy-network, maps with existing policies from which you can deduce which restrictive rules exists in which areas”
(respondent 1.1)

Several respondents mention that this factual background is necessary before you can start with participation because “that’s what the conversation will be about” (respondent 1.4) One respondent specifically mentions the gathering of data on socio-cultural identity in the area that might be used in crafting a message that ‘fits’ the area.

Part of this inventory is the amount of renewable energy production that is already realised or will be realised on the short term because of projects that are currently being carried out. The

numbers here vary considerably. One respondent mentions that with the projects currently under construction, the energy production in the region will already be around 3,5 TWh (or 10% of the national goals) in just a few years. The respondent also points out that this might have an impact on the acceptance and the willingness to realise even more for the RES:

“[there are people who think] with what we’ll have realised in 2022/23 we are already at the forefront in the Netherlands. We’ll be already at 10% then; why should we do even more?”
(respondent 1.3)

One of the questions was if regions already had an estimation of the amount of renewable energy that they would be able and willing to provide. Some of the regions did not have an indication of this yet and indicated that this would be decided after the RES-process has officially started. Although other regions did have some indication, none were willing to share because the bandwidth was still large, or because it was still up for political debate.

One respondent specifically mentioned that part of the preparatory work that is carried out in the region consists of creating awareness with the local and regional governments and improving their knowledge on the subject:

“We’re also there to inform that it is coming. That the plan [the RES] is coming. But we’re also there to provide substantive information, to provide more knowledge about the subject.”
(respondent 1.6)

Process design

As it comes to the process-design of the RES there are some differences between regions. Some regions have a temporary organisational structure that is at work in preparing the RES-process, which will be replaced with a permanent organisational structure when the official go-ahead is given by the national signing of the Klimaatakkoord and the regional signing of the starting note. There are also regions that will carry on with the same team that is now doing the preparatory work.

This is connected to another issue on which the respondents seem to be divided: the amount of involvement of the local council that is desirable. According to the Handreiking RES (Rijksoverheid, 2018), the local council will only have to agree to the RES 1.0 and not to the concept-RES. Some regions do however think it is desirable to also have the local council to formally agree to the concept-RES. However, this formal process will take some time and in order to reach the deadline the concept-RES should be finished one or two months earlier, so that the local council will still have time to review it. One of the respondents states that this is “impossible” (respondent 1.6). According to another respondent this is only possible by already starting to think about the content of the concept-RES and by keeping the same organisational structure after the signing of the Klimaatakkoord.

The tight timeline for a thoughtful decision-making process in which the local councils are kept aboard seems to also be a concern of other regions than the ones that have been interviewed. In newsletter #5 of the National Programme RES it was reported that several regions have expressed concerns about the timeline of the RES and have asked for more time in order to facilitate a careful decision-making and participation project. The governments involved in the national programme have concluded that it might be desirable to extend the deadline of the final RES with half a year. There is no definitive answer on this topic yet, but further information will follow after the 7th of June (Nationaal Programma RES, 2019).

Social acceptance

When looking at the process design for social acceptance, there is one striking finding. Although all regions outlined the importance of social acceptance, concrete plans for managing this

(for instance by participation and communication) were still lacking. Many regions do have ideas of how to deal with public acceptance (which will be dealt with in the subsequent section), but often this has not yet been integrated in a coherent strategy and into the process of producing a concept-RES. As one of the respondents puts it:

“So yeah, we’re working on that [= a communication plan], but I can’t tell you yet: ‘this is the strategy’ or ‘these are the meetings’ or ‘these are the newsletters’. Because, well, all that has still to be made because we have not even had the official go-ahead.”

(respondent 1.1)

Some things are already clear however. One thing that is clear from the interviews is that communication regarding the RES or its resulting projects will be mostly done by municipalities. It is mentioned several times that the municipalities are closer to citizens and can tailor their message to connect to other developments in their municipality. For instance:

“Those things [= energy projects in the municipality] are already running. And they are getting much closer to people.”

(respondent 1.5)

It is also mentioned how the RES is not known amongst citizens and some regions are thinking about not using the concept at all during their communication:

“[...] I can [...] imagine that the word Regional Energy Strategy won’t be used at all, and we’ll have a few new solar parks. And should that be done under the name Regional Energy Strategy? I don’t think that it matters much to the citizen.”

(respondent 1.3)

One respondent mentions that a website will be made to communicate from the RES-region, but that this website will mostly function to provide information to stakeholders in the RES-process instead of communicating to the general public.

As it comes to participation the picture is less clear. It is most often mentioned in the context of specific projects. As one respondent notes, participation in this phase is most logically organised by municipalities, as they are already obliged to do some form of participation in the creation of plans that allow for the projects that result from the RES. Several respondents note that citizen participation only becomes relevant at this stage, and not in determining the contribution that the region will make to the national goals:

“I cannot imagine reaching out to citizens like: ‘tell me, how many windmills did you think you wanted? [...] There must first be a story about how much we think we will need together.”

(respondent 1.3)

There is one respondent however who notes that participation can play a role earlier in the process, where workshops can be organised to gather ideas and include the population in the initiation-phase already.

Policy ideas for social acceptance

As has been mentioned, there are no definite strategies on how to integrate social acceptance in the RES-process as of yet. However, there are a lot of ideas on how to deal with (aspects) of social acceptance; some in the RES-process, but mostly in the projects resulting from the RES. Those ideas will be outlined here.

Among the respondents, the development models for wind- and solar energy are often looked at as a way to possibly increase social acceptance of the energy projects resulting from the RES. One respondent states that it is about reasonably sharing the “benefits and the burdens”. One way to do that is by ‘financial participation’ (respondent 1.4) in energy projects. One respondent describes the mechanism as to how that might improve public acceptance as follows:

“So by models in which people participate. And also benefit from it. Because a windmill that yields a euro for every round; you look at it differently than if it only yields drop shadow in the house every round.”

(respondent 1.3)

Another possible model that is mentioned in this respect is to invest (parts of) the profit of wind- and solar projects in social purposes in the areas where the energy projects are being realised (respondent 1.1). This can either be done by local governments, reinvesting the profit that is made on energy-projects in a “sustainability fund” (respondent 1.1) or by bottom-up initiatives like energy-cooperations. One respondent uses the example of a local swimming pool that can only be funded because of the profits from a local windmill (respondent 1.2). Several respondents are stressing the importance of framing energy-projects like opportunities that can yield financial or societal profits.

In combination to these development models, the role of energy-cooperations is often outlined by the respondents. Regions are actively inviting energy-cooperations (respondent 1.5; 1.2) in the RES-process. Respondent 1.3 mentions the rising number of energy-cooperations in the region, and that they might play a role in letting people participate.

“And the chance of the energy cooperative is one that gives great opportunities for participation. [...] they are supported by the local population because often, financial or social benefits might result from them.”

(respondent 1.2)

The inclusion of energy cooperatives in realising the energy challenges of the RES is part of a broader strategy of avoiding resistance-prone projects. Several respondents mention that there are a lot of opportunities to realise relatively small-scale energy projects with little resistance. This can for instance be done by embracing local initiatives.

“There is a huge pile of low-hanging fruit available where we can realise but have not yet done so. And that low-hanging fruit can be supported very easily - well not very easily - relatively easily in terms of realisation by involving energy cooperatives in the entire process.”

(respondent 1.2)

On the question if this will suffice to realise the ambitions for renewable energy, the respondent answers this:

“Ultimately you’ll need both of them [small- and large-scale projects] to achieve your realisation. Because what you see now is that the somewhat smaller energy cooperatives, they cannot handle large-scale projects. They are simply not capable of that in terms of executive power”

(respondent 1.2)

Another respondent takes the example of small, solitary windmills with a power of just over 15 kW (Figure 17: popular small, solitary windmills (respondent 1.3)). The respondent admits that you will need 200 - 300 of those to get the same results as one more large-scale windmill, but mentions that they still might play a role:

“I think there are many more people who think they [small windmills] fit within the landscape than people who don’t. In any case more people than in the case of those large windmills. [...] So that makes it a lot easier in terms of acceptance to do part of your assignment with wind.”
(respondent 1.3)

Solutions and strategies on how to deal with acceptance within the process of formulating a Regional Energy Strategy are only sporadically mentioned. One respondent mentions the possibility for municipalities to develop a vision on wind energy by asking respondents about the topic:



Figure 17: popular small, solitary windmills (Wattisduurzaam, 2017)

“ ‘Where would you think the windmills should come?’ Well, you will get an answer to that. And that answer is not always like: ‘well, they shouldn’t be anywhere’. It’s more nuanced than that.”
(respondent 1.3)

This energy-vision could then be used in the process of formulating a RES. However, this is no structural part of the RES-process in that region, but rather something that municipalities might do. Another respondent mentions the importance of already involving people in the initiation-phase of the RES-process:

“The trick is that by not starting out like ‘this is what we came up with, what do you think’ but by rather asking ‘think with us, how could we solve this together’, the chances of encountering resistance later on in the process will already slightly decrease.”
(respondent 1.2)

Finally, there is one respondent who mentions that part of their strategy in dealing with public acceptance is by crafting a strategy and message in communicating about the RES that fit the social-cultural identity of the region and of different areas within the region (respondent 1.1).

Procedural problems

When interviewing the respondents, several problems come to light in the challenge that lies ahead for these regions. Some of those problems are related to the way that the national-RES programme is organised, and some are difficulties that regions encounter in dealing with the issue of public acceptance. Both will be dealt with subsequently.

Organisational problems in the national programme

As has been mentioned above, not much work has already been done in the regions that have been interviewed in coming up with a specific integrated approach for dealing with public acceptance. This is partly due to the dependence of the RES-process on political decision-making. Oftentimes the RES-process in regions is only in a preparatory phase because official authorisation to start the full process is still pending, awaiting the Klimaatakkoord. One respondent mentions that it is hard to get and keep the RES-process up to speed administratively (respondent 1.4).

The RES-process is also dependent on the political composition of the local governments. For instance, in one region the province has put a stop on the construction of new wind parks:

“Whether that restriction will be removed is partly determined by the colouring of the new coalition within the province. And the colouring of the new coalition is of course determined by which parties are currently having a conversation with each other and who want to form a coalition with each other.”

(respondent 1.2)

Another respondent talks about the different stances that different municipalities take towards the RES-process, ranging from municipalities stating that their municipality cannot provide any more renewable energy, to local governments who have formulated visions that are more ambitious than the (concept) Klimaataakkoord (respondent 1.4).

Another procedural issue, according to respondents, is that the documents outlining the Reginal Energy Strategy are at times rather vague. For example, one point in the Handreiking RES states that it is the ambition of the RES that 50% of the energy projects consists of projects with ‘local ownership’ (Rijksoverheid, 2018):

“[about the ambition] But it doesn’t explain what that means. [...] No definition is given.”

(respondent 1.6)

The Handreiking RES simply states that ownership and profits of energy projects should land more in the surroundings of the energy projects and therefore 50% local ownership is the ambition (Rijksoverheid, 2018). It does not specify when a project is owned locally. It is unclear whether for example a sustainability fund (mentioned in the previous section) would qualify for this. One participant notes that this ambition can be a useful guideline, but that it is unclear whether or not it is obligatory to reach that target, or to strive for it (respondent 1.5).

The safeguarding of the procedures regarding the RES-process in general is something that the respondents are concerned with:

“At the moment, there are zero consequences in the RES for not reaching the targets.”

(respondent 1.6)

One respondent notes that the only possible consequence could be a national redistribution of the national goal of 35 TWh renewable energy, but that it is unclear how this process would work in practice (respondent 1.5). However, another respondent does see the possible national redistribution as a sufficiently powerful tool to motivate regions to get to work:

“And if you do not come up with a bid [concept-RES] - or a bid that’s far below standards - you will receive an extra target from the government. So yes, there is a hard stick behind the door to come up with something.”

(respondent 1.1)

As has been mentioned in section 4.1, there is still a lot unclear about the procedures that will be followed if the national goals are not met. One respondent mentions that it is important to improve on this point:

“[...] a better embedding of the RES [is] important. If it is mandatory, governments will do it.”

(respondent 1.6)

Several respondents commented on the status of the RES, noting that the RES itself has no decision-making power:

“[...] the regional cooperation of the RES [is] not an administrative body in itself [...]. It actually has no decision-making power in itself. So you always have to go back to all those separate colleges to decide something.”

(respondent 1.1)

And:

“It is impossible for the RES organisation to take over the decision-making from the municipalities. That is not possible. The powers are not there. [...] The RES is a partnership. [...] But the decision-making takes place at the municipalities.”

(respondent 1.6)

And:

“The RES is a partnership. But it’s nothing more than that.”

(respondent 1.5)

Several respondents note that this might complicate procedures if there is political disagreement and that it might decrease a decisive approach to the energy problems that the RES tries to solve. One respondent also mentions that the decisiveness of the RES might be decreased because municipalities do not always have the proper authorisations to intervene and implement policies decisively:

“The more powers you place with the municipalities to be able to make policy, the faster you will get results.”

(respondent 1.6)

On the question if the regions have sufficient capacity (in money, knowledge and/or manpower) to progress in the RES-process, almost all respondents answer that they have no direct needs. One respondent however, mentions they have capacity problems:

“[There is a] great lack of knowledge. Technical knowledge and process design. This should be considered in a RES 2.0.”

(respondent 1.6)

Problems in dealing with social acceptance within regions

Respondents also mention some substantive problem as it comes to dealing with social acceptance within the RES. Several respondents mention how the framing of the discussion can be problematic. This can for instance be on project level, because previous projects have not turned out well, damaging trust:

“I do not think that anyone will even consider another project in [unsuccessful project location]”

(respondent 1.3)

Another example of framing on project level is the NIMBY-effect mentioned by one respondent, where people are generally in favour of the larger goals, but in opposition to specific projects (respondent 1.1). This can manifest itself in protests. There is according to the respondent also a counter-movement resulting in entrepreneurship in the energy transition, for example in the form of energy-cooperations:

“Look, you actually see the appearance of two movements. On one side you have the opponents with banners like ‘use your mind, plants in the fields; solar parks NO’ in their fields, or in opposition of wind turbines. And on the other side you see the rise of energy-cooperations and people who are saying: ‘well, we’ll do it ourselves and then we can also generate profit to invest again somewhere else”

(respondent 1.1)

Another respondent formulates it like this:

“The great risk that I can see myself is that the imaging that is being generated on the topic of energy-production, that it is currently being framed so negatively by everyone, so that we’re not willing anymore to look at the good possibilities. So we slam the door shut in advance, without looking who’s in front of it”

(respondent 1.2)

The respondent stresses that there is a need for the reframing of the debate, to focus more on the positive side of energy production, and the societal and economic benefit that it might have for regions. The respondent also thinks that the RES can play a role in this (respondent 1.2). Another respondent mentions that there is lacking communication and marketing in the RES. The RES can be an opportunity to redesign society and has connections with a lot of topics outside the energy-domain, but at the moment this story is lacking and the discussion is mostly technical. According to the respondent, the RES could use an artistic or creative point of view for this (respondent 1.4). Two other respondents mention that it is important for regions and municipalities to take back ownership of the narrative surrounding energy-production (respondent 1.2; 1.5).

“[...] together we’ll have to be willing to, to be able to, and to dare to say: ‘come on guys, let’s do this.”

(respondent 1.2)

The need to create a local / regional narrative to reframe the discussion surrounding the energy-transition was also affirmed by Dr. Zuidema at a symposium in Groningen about public participation in the energy transition (Zuidema, 2019).

One final issue that some of the respondents were concerned with was the delimitation of the RES. Several respondents mention the imbalance between population and energy use on the one side, and potential area suitable for renewable energy production on the other side. This imbalance can exist both within regions, as well as between regions. It is noted that this could mean that the more rural areas would have to contribute more to the national goals than the more urbanised areas. However, there can be unwillingness for rural regions to do so:

“Yeah, and then you get the discussion: ‘oh, so we have to generate electricity for the Randstad?’ Or within [region] again that some people may get the feeling: ‘oh so we as rural area have to generate energy for the city?’”

(respondent 1.1)

It may help if there is some kind of incentive for regions to produce more energy:

“give a little, take a little”

(respondent 1.4)

The respondent also mentions that for this a broader view can be used than strictly the energy-perspective. Another respondent formulates it like this:

“Yeah, for that matter we’re trying to think in a somewhat larger urban-rural system, in which energy is one of the services that the rural area can deliver somewhat more to the city, but that the city can also just as well render services to the rural area. In the sense of industrial production, highways, junctions... Things you all use, but whose negative effects - the smoke from the factories - mainly end up in the city. But that is quite complicated. To look at all of this at a somewhat higher scale.”

(respondent 1.1)

Within regions the RES provides a consultation structure in which these issues might be touched upon. Respondents state that there is not yet an official conversation going on about this topic between different regions.

5. Policy Suggestions

Although already some interesting points start to become clear when the results of the interviews are presented, those points are summarised and connected to the theoretical models from chapter 2 in order to give meaning to those results and answer sub-questions 4 and 5. Then, on the basis of phase 3 of this research, consisting of a focus group and an interview with Gert de Roo, policy suggestions are done on how to improve on the current RES-process, answering sub-question 6.

5.1 Phase 2: Interviews RES-regions

Phase 2: Discussion

Social acceptance

Firstly, it seems that the importance that is placed on social acceptance in the policy documents about the RES is generally shared among the respondents that have been interviewed. However, most respondents that have been interviewed indicate that in their respective regions at the moment not a lot has happened yet as it comes to strategies for dealing with social acceptance within the RES. Most regions seem to be waiting for the signing of the Klimaatakkoord, before officially starting the RES process. At the moment, mostly factual background information is being gathered and the administrative structure for the RES process is being laid out. It is only after the signing of the Klimaatakkoord that those regions seem to be able to start working substantively on the issue of social acceptance.

Furthermore, the concept of social acceptance is a very broad concept, that could mean different things in different contexts to different people. Respondents indicated that there are several ways of looking at the concept. A respondent mentioned that the concept can either be defined as little resistance or as much support, with different appropriate approaches for both points of view. One can imagine a situation in which inhabitants are only to be involved after decisions have been made in order to deal with possible resistance, as opposed to a situation in which citizens are involved at the front to come up with plans together that are broadly supported.

Although the focus of the Klimaatakkoord lies on the 49% CO₂-reduction in 2030, it will also contain a perspective towards 2050, in which society should function (almost) CO₂-neutral. One of the current goals of the RES is to realise 35 TWh renewable energy production on land by 2030, but one could imagine that in order to reach the emission-goals for 2050 even more renewable energy production on land would be necessary. By focussing on maximising support in the process phase instead of minimising resistance in the project phase not only the goals for 2030 might be realised successfully, but also a better starting situation is created for reaching potential targets for 2050. This is also where the concept of trust comes into play again. By focusing more on maximising support right now by improving procedural and distributional fairness perceptions trust will be maintained or even improved, making it easier for future projects to be carried out.

The downside of an early and extensive involvement of citizens in the RES-process is that it will take relatively much time as well as resources. One respondent mentioned a need for more knowledge in order to design a suitable RES-process, and an additional six months before the deadline of the RES 1.0 to facilitate a more thorough participation process is being considered at the moment (Nationaal Programma RES, 2019).

Although substantive work on the issue of social acceptance seems to be delayed by the signing of the Klimaatakkoord, a lot of ideas already exist on how to deal with social acceptance. It is to be noted that those ideas are mostly focused on the projects resulting from the RES, rather than on the RES process itself, even though policy documents about the RES stress that participation is also important during the RES-process.

What is interesting to see, is that the ideas that have been put forward almost exclusively deal with distributional fairness. A lot of attention seems to go to balancing the benefits and the burdens, suggesting that principles of equity and equality might be of importance in the context of

the RES. Respondents for example mentioned models in which people could profit from wind farms in their vicinity. This could possibly alter the distributive fairness judgement and outcome favourability of projects, leading to an increase in public acceptance. Respondents also mentioned how rural regions delivering part of the energy requirement for urban regions should get some form of compensation (either financially or socially), and again, provided that this political compensation mechanism is communicated well, this might alter the distributive fairness judgements leading to an increase in the level of public acceptance.

However, the other aspects of community acceptance have received far less attention. For example, procedural fairness has been given little attention, although the literature suggests that it might be just as important to social acceptance as distributional fairness. The concept of procedural fairness also offers possibilities to work on the issue of public acceptance early on in the process. Where distributional fairness is concerned with the outcomes of a policy and the distribution of those outcomes– and therefore only becomes relevant in the project-phase of the RES – procedural fairness is concerned with the fairness of the process with which one arrives at the outcomes. The RES-process is the process with which one in the end arrives at specific energy projects, and therefore procedural fairness as a concept should already be part of the RES process early on, in order to improve social acceptance.

Another interesting finding is that according to several respondents, local initiatives could and should play an important role in the RES process and could be a way to realise part of the goals with relatively high social acceptance. For instance, initiatives by energy cooperations or individuals could be facilitated. However, it is also mentioned by respondents that large scale projects would be needed as well, but strategy on how to deal with social acceptance as it comes to these projects seems to be lacking so far.

Planning-theoretical rationales

In the theoretical framework, it was already pointed out that there was a possible tension between the top-down goals of the RES that fit relatively simple planning issues and a technical rationale, and the call for bottom-up initiative and participation that fit more complex planning issues and a communicative rationale. Currently, several different trends seem to be going on, that can be located at different places in the framework of planning-oriented action Figure 18.

Firstly, the current approach that most regions that have been interviewed take seems to be rather technical. For instance, most regions have not yet been working on a strategy for public acceptance, instead focusing on organising the process to get to a contribution of the national goals and seem to mostly consider social acceptance in a way that focuses on acceptance of the outcomes of the process, instead of also focussing on acceptance of the process itself. This trend could be located in the upper left quadrant of the spectrum: the discussion seems dominated by the national goals, and the governments take on a steering role. It should be noted however that the single goal is only fixed at a national level and not at a regional level, and that there is ‘decentral steering’. This would locate this trend more to the lower right of the upper left quadrant.

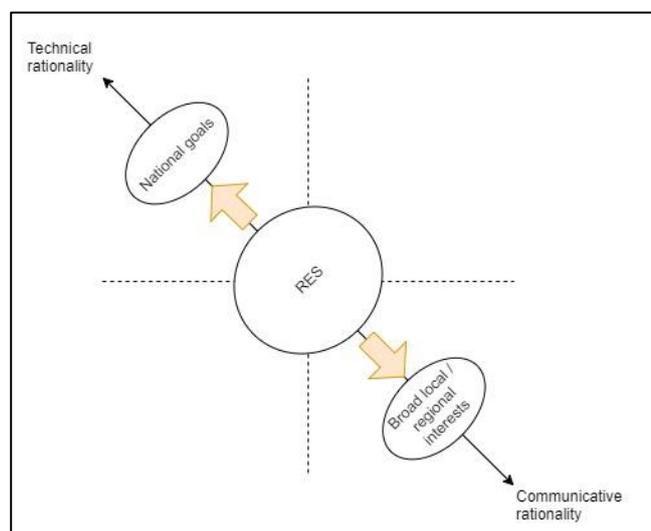


Figure 18: trends in the RES-process (placed in framework of planning-oriented action by de Roo (2013))

This might be connected to two issues that were touched upon in the interviews: the vagueness and the legal grounding of the RES-process. A lot of details in the RES-process seemed to be unclear, again pointing out that the RES currently is at the beginning of the 2nd phase of the policy life cycle of Winsemius. However, there was one issue that the respondents seemed to agree upon: the concept-RES should collectively add up to 35 TWh, or else the national government might need to take further measures. Although there is no legal obligation to produce a RES, respondents mentioned the obligation to put effort in trying to reach this goal, with one respondent specifically stating that the possible national intervention was enough grounding for the RES-process. As for social acceptance, the importance is often mentioned, but only suggestions are done and no clear obligations are presented, possibly causing it to be less prioritised by regions at this point in the process.

On the other hand, a second trend seems to be going on at the opposite side of the spectrum. Several respondents are calling for a way to 'broaden' the domain of the RES, mentioning how connections could be made with other societal challenges. Respondents also mention opportunities here for distributional fairness: compensation outside the energy domain could be an incentive for regions or municipalities to contribute more to the national goals. This trend is a shift on the vertical axis of the spectrum: the single fixed goal (35 TWh renewable on land) will be complemented with multiple composite goals.

Another call that is made by several respondents is the need to take ownership of the RES as not only something that is made mandatory by the national government, but to create a narrative in which not only the burdens, but also the benefits of the energy transition are communicated and that fits the local place identity. The RES could then be framed as an opportunity to redesign society. A potential link could be made here with the broadening of the RES mentioned above and such an approach would offer opportunities to improve procedural fairness by creating this narrative in a participative process, early on in the process. This development would take place in the bottom-right corner.

5.2 Phase 3: Expert consultation

Phase 3: Results

First of all, the conclusion from section 4.2 that not a lot has happened yet as it comes to actual involvement of residents in the RES-process is confirmed by several participants in the focus group. One participant (2.1) mentions to be involved in a RES-process in a municipality where an inventory is made of the technical potential for renewable energy production. The respondent mentions that involvement is only covered through representation by involving energy cooperations in the process, but states that only a small proportion of the population is covered this way. The respondent also mentions that it would be interesting to gather information from citizens about preferred locations in this phase, but it is mentioned by several respondents that this is not happening as far as they know.

Participant 2.1 mentions that this possibly has to do with the vagueness of the process:

“... it is not very clear within municipalities as to how it will all be implemented. [...] So it's not entirely clear really. The process. Also for that municipality. It may have gotten better in the meantime, but in [municipality 1] it was not yet completely clear. In [municipality 4] neither.”
(participant 2.1)

Participant 2.2 mentions that the organisational structure of the RES makes it hard to come up with a solid strategy. The ambition determines the level of participation required, but at the same time the RES-process allows for determining the ambition in a participatory process. Respondent 2.4 calls this a chicken-and-egg discussion.

In the focus group and the interview with Gert de Roo there was one worst practice as it comes to the planning of renewable energy projects that was often referred to. De Roo mentions that the planning of wind farms in the Energie-akkoord has led to a lot of resistance:

“Yeah, with wind energy... it exploded. Around the corner here... In Meeden and places like that it has gone wrong completely.”

(Gert de Roo)

And

“[...] in that wind energy story, the societal response has really been underestimated. And if that collides... With wind energy, it has gone wrong.”

(Gert de Roo)

Participant 2.1 also mentions that “a lot of problems emerge” in the Veenkoloniën because of the approach that was taken in the Energie-akkoord because the national government decided on the number of turbines to be built in each province and residents had the feeling that the decisions had been pushed through without consideration of opponents of the projects.

De Roo mentions how the technical rational approach of the national government in the Energie-akkoord has been problematic:

“The moment Kamp came with his windmills, all of that [plans for integral energy landscapes] was brushed aside. Resulted in a lot of misery. So that means the process towards it has been really technical rational. Only on the basis of coordination and numbers and you achieve nothing smart.”

(Gert de Roo)

Improvements in the RES

When asked about suggestions on how to organise the RES-process several things were mentioned. Respondents in the focus groups mentioned that it could be useful to divide the RES-process in several phases and describe for each phase what could happen if the process was carried out only in a technical rational way on the one extreme, or what could happen if the process was to be carried out only in a communicative rational way on the other extreme.

Several phases that would ask for different steps in a participatory trajectory could be, according to respondent 2.2, an exploratory phase in which the utility and the necessity of the measures should be discussed, as well as determining the boundaries within which a project should be designed. This is somewhat analogous to parts of step 1 and 2 of the Handreiking Participatie. When detailing plans and it is known that specific citizens will be affected by the project it is important to involve them personally and not only through general consultation evenings. And when the project is being realised it is mostly about avoiding nuisance. Respondent 2.3 objected that the utility and necessity of the RES is covered on a national scale already and that the role of the RES regions in this is probably small. Respondent 2.2 then made a distinction between utility and necessity of the RES as a whole (which has already been decided on and can only be explained) and the necessity and utility of the projects resulting from the RES in which it is important to involve the public.

As it comes to the content of participatory moments, respondent 2.5 mentions that it is important that correct and relevant technical information is provided to citizens in participatory moments so that the results from participating can actually be used in the process. Respondent 2.2 mentions how it is important to be transparent about the process to avoid ‘unwanted surprises’:

“So how you should always think is: ‘okay, how do I shape my process in such a way that the moment we make a certain decision, and we are going to communicate that decision to the outside world, that people were already aware of the fact that the choice made was one of the options on the table.”

(respondent 2.2)

Gert de Roo mentions that three levels are of importance to the RES: the national government that wants to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, the region that needs to carry out the RES and the local level where the negative consequences of renewable energy projects are experienced, with the first level operating in a technical rational way, the last level asking for a communicative approach, and the RES-regions needing to decide their approach. De Roo proposes an approach in which a distinction is made between different kinds of projects in the RES: projects that are already being implemented, projects where an energy component can be relatively easily integrated and projects that can only be realised if time is taken for an elaborate participatory trajectory. De Roo mentions that the former two categories would consist mainly of solar-energy projects since the experiences with wind energy have been problematic in the past. For the latter category De Roo stresses that an area specific approach is needed in which measures are taken to improve the outcomes for residents near energy projects.

For this area-specific approach De Roo mentions that financial participation models could be interesting. Also, De Roo mentions how energy projects could be made more interesting for local residents by linking them to improvements in the quality of the landscape. De Roo mentions that it is important to investigate which opportunities local residents themselves see to improve the quality of the landscape in energy projects.

Participants in the Focus Group also mention that it can be interesting to link energy projects to local opportunities. Respondent 2.5 even goes as far as stating that for regions in which other societal problems are more urgent and have a higher priority this linking can be the only way in which an energy transition could be achieved.

This area-specific approach does however create some new problems. First of all, it would take a lot of time to carefully execute such an approach. Respondent 2.5 mentions that the time span of the RES is a big problem, but seems to suggest somewhere else that the consequences of not realising the national goals within the set timespan would not be too bad and that it would yield better results in the long run. Also, de Roo seems to suggest that a slow communicative approach to type-3 projects would be desirable over a quick technical approach.

Another potential problem is the leverage that RES-regions have. It is mentioned both in the focus group and by Gert de Roo that the municipalities might wish to incorporate additional goals into energy projects, but that a developer cannot be forced to implement these additional goals. Municipalities would then have to use their own assets to realise these additional goals, which would make the whole energy transition more expensive.

Finally, Gert de Roo mentions that only type-1 projects can currently be implemented in the Omgevingsvisie, as a location is needed for this. Since the designation of a location is such a sensitive issue, this should not yet be done in type-2 and 3 projects until a participatory trajectory has been completed which could also further delay the RES-process.

Phase 3: Discussion

A first point that stand out from these results is that the respondents of the focus group seem to confirm that at the moment not a lot seems to be happening as it comes to involving residents in the RES-process. What is interesting is that it is suggested that the vagueness of the procedures in the RES might be causing this. The fact that the RES is still at the beginning of the second phase of the policy life cycle in combination with the strict timeline for the RES-process might therefore be problematic, as it seems unclear to the actors within the RES-region what exactly is expected while there are still deadlines that need to be met.

Furthermore, it is interesting what is mentioned by respondents about the Energie-akkoord. It is mentioned that respondents felt that decisions were pushed through, suggesting that the perceived procedural fairness was low. Gert de Roo also suggested that solar energy would be preferred over wind energy because a previous technical rational approach has led to negative past experiences. This suggests that the experiences of the Energie-akkoord have decreased trust in wind-energy projects, making it a less viable option.

Gert de Roo also employed a multi-level perspective, suggesting that three levels are of particular importance, with different positions in the framework of planning-oriented action: the national government employing a technical rational approach, the regions asking for a communicative bottom-up approach and the regions that need to somehow combine this.

De Roo suggests a distinction between different kind of projects that ask for different approaches. His input has been used to generate Figure 19.

The projects in the top left are relatively simple. Because they are already in the implementation phase the goals have already been defined and the utility and necessity have already been established. In the present phase of the RES it is of importance to make an inventory of these projects so that they can be incorporated in the concept-RES. A technical approach seems best suited for these projects, since a lot of decision-moments have already been passed and the room for participative interaction is therefore small.

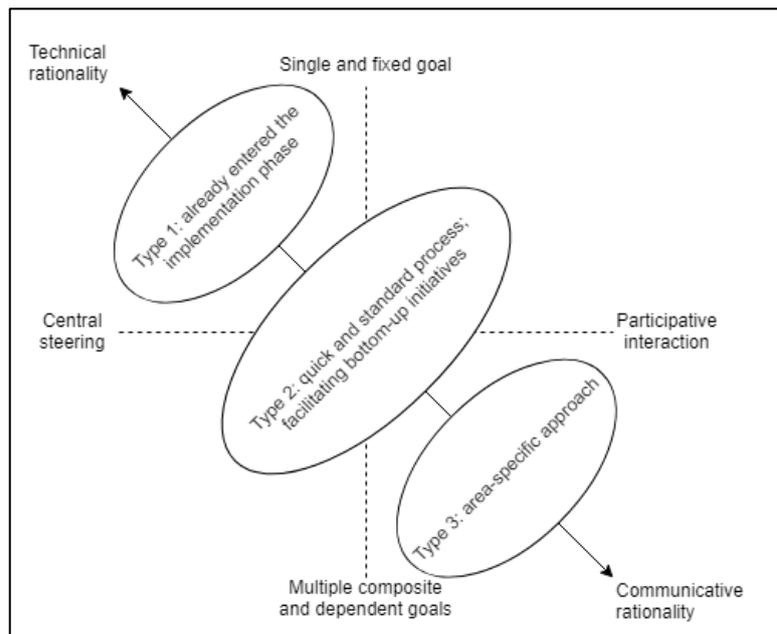


Figure 19: Differentiation of different kinds of projects in the RES (based on interview with De Roo and (de Roo, 2013))

Next it is important in the current phase to create an overview of potential projects that could be carried out. For this it is useful to analyse the technical potential of a RES-region, to see what areas would be suitable for renewable energy production. This could be combined with an inventory of places where residents of the RES-region see potential for energy projects, as well as with an inventory of bottom-up projects (for instance by energy cooperations). This way two types of potential projects emerge: somewhat complex projects (Type 2) where there is some kind of support from residents or a bottom-up initiative and very complex projects (Type 1) which could only be realised with an area-specific approach.

In Type 2 projects, the decision could be made to start working on energy projects and the main participatory input would revolve around the question of how the project is realised. In this a transparent participatory project is desirable to improve procedural fairness, as has been mentioned in the focus group, as well as financial participatory models that could improve distributional fairness. De Roo seemed to suggest that mainly solar energy projects would qualify for this category as the level of trust in wind energy projects has suffered from the experiences from the Energie-akkoord.

Type 3 projects are a whole different story. In these potential projects, participation revolves not only about how the project should be carried out, but in the first instance if the projects should be carried out. Since it cannot simply be assumed that these projects can be realised, they should not be part of the Regional Energy Strategy in the first instance.

To improve the chances that these projects could be carried out an area-specific approach is necessary in which linking opportunities are considered. Financial participation models and

improvement of the local landscape could be used to improve distributional fairness and outcome favourability of the proposed projects. It is important to find out which issues local residents think are of importance so that a combined narrative could be created in which the energy projects are part of an integral strategy targeting multiple issues. This is also in line with what Prof. Dr. Ig. Anke van Hal (2014) calls the 'Merger of Interests' perspective. She writes:

“... we believe that in the selection of sustainability interventions in the context of the built environment, not only rational interests and the general sustainability interest should be taken as a starting point. You should also look for what people desire; what they really want and what makes them happy. How can you evoke positive emotions with sustainability interventions?”

(van Hal, 2014, p. 47)

Although the distinction made by de Roo intuitively makes sense, it has its problems. For instance, the approach to Type 3 projects is not in line with the strict timeline proposed by the RES. It could be hard for regions to force developers to take on this approach, possibly pushing municipalities and provinces in RES-regions to invest their own assets in this process. It is yet unknown if regions can afford this and if the National Governments will allow regions to deviate from the timeline. That being said, an ideal-typical distinction can be useful to show the bandwidth of projects that might be considered in the RES, as well as what might happen if a wrong approach is

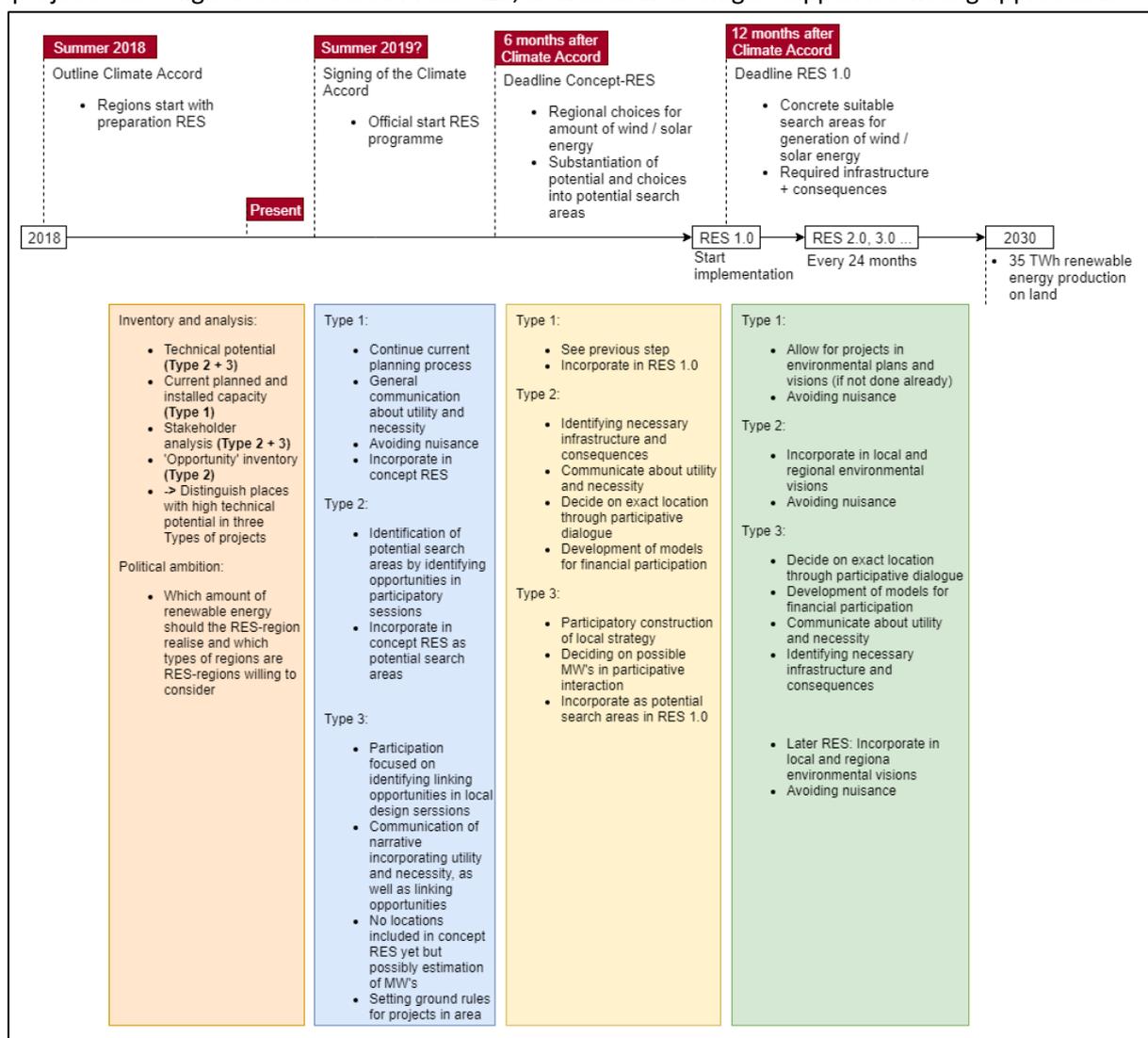


Figure 20: proposed scheme for the RES-process

chosen. A proposal for a process scheme for the RES, in which the distinction is made between those different kinds of projects is presented in Figure 20: proposed scheme for the RES-process.

As can be seen in this scheme, every project type follows a different process. For instance, the Type 1 projects follow a mostly technical approach that is mostly focused on realising the projects, as the utility and necessity have already been dealt with in a previous phase. Employing a communicative approach for these types of projects would only slow down the process by discussing decisions that have already been made. Social acceptance for these types of projects is mostly about distributional fairness and avoiding nuisance.

Type 3 projects on the other hand follow a mostly communicative approach in which no decisions can be made about implementation of these projects before there is a broadly shared consensus about the utility and necessity of an area-specific approach that does not only tackle the energy challenges in the region, but also of other societal challenges. Employing a technical approach for these kinds of projects would result in a lot of resistance. This is because perceived distributional and procedural fairness is low as residents might get the feeling that the outcomes are forced upon them without consideration of their opinions, as has been the case in some of the projects resulting from the Energie-akkoord. Type 2 projects follow a sort of intermediate approach.

It could of course be the case that the goals of the RES will already be reached when only Type 1 and 2 projects are being implemented. Whether Type 3 projects will need to be considered depends both on the ambitions of the local governments in the RES-regions and on the response of the national government if the concept-RES' or RES' 1.0 do not add up to the desired 35 TWh. However, it is important to realise that if these projects will be considered they require a communicative approach in which procedural and distributional fairness are incorporated through an integral area-specific approach for which will cost both additional time and money; something that the future RES-process should accommodate for.

6. Conclusion

The topic of this master thesis is social acceptance in the renewable energy goals of the RES. In this thesis policy documents have been examined, interviews with professionals working in several RES-regions, an interview with planning professor Gert de Roo and a focus group with several planning experts from the field have been employed to describe the way that the RES tries to theoretically deal with social acceptance, to find out how this is taking form so far, and to suggest if and how the functioning of the RES with regard to social acceptance might be improved. The main question of the thesis will now be shortly answered, with the of the subsequent answering of the sub-questions providing additional detail:

In what way is the concept of social acceptance incorporated in the brand-new RES-process of realising additional renewable energy production on land and what could be suggestions to further improve this process?

The RES is a brand-new policy context in which the importance of social acceptance is broadly shared. However exact procedures are often unclear and the RES-process seems mostly focused on the fixed national goal of 35 TWh renewable energy on land, associated with a technical rationale. Suggestions for ensuring community acceptance seem to be mostly focused on issues of distributional fairness in the project phase of the RES. At the same time there to be a call within RES-regions for a broader, area-specific approach in which the energy transition is part of a broader approach. Early involvement in this process offers opportunities for distributional and procedural fairness.

The RES-process might be improved by following different trajectories for different kinds of projects within the RES. Especially the very complex Type 3 projects (see section 5.2) could benefit from the area-specific approach referred to above, although it might conflict with the strict timeline of the RES. Whether or not these projects are incorporated in the RES is a political choice, but if these projects are not combined with such an approach, chances are that severe resistance will be encountered.

What does the concept of social acceptance mean?

In the theoretical framework it is explained that the concept of social acceptance has several aspects to it. On the one hand there is a socio-political acceptance of macro-institutional goals and renewable energy techniques that is based on attitudinal factors. This is generally high for both wind and solar energy. On the other hand, there is community acceptance of specific local outcomes of the macro-institutional goals, determined by perceived procedural fairness, perceived distributional fairness in which fairness principles are of importance and trust. The regularly occurring difference between socio-political acceptance and community acceptance is often labelled as NIMBY-ism, in which the negative outcome favourability of projects nearby often drives people to resist local projects. Scientific research however suggests that there are often more factors at play in creating this resistance, like procedural fairness, fairness principles that are of relevance to distributional fairness or trust.

What is the Regional Energy Strategy, what are the goals for renewable energy production and how is it related to the concept of social acceptance?

The Regional Energy Strategy is a facilitating instrument of the Klimaatakkoord aimed at organising spatial integration with public involvement of (some of) the agreements that have been made in the Klimaatakkoord. There has been established a national goal of 35 TWh large scale (>15 kW) renewable electricity production on land. Thirty regions have been constructed, covering all of the Netherlands that will each have to make a Regional Energy Strategy (RES) that outlines how much and where the region can contribute to the national goals. Regions have a timespan of six months to come up with a concept-RES in which the expected contribution to the national goals is

detailed as well as potential search areas and a reasoning behind the concept-RES. They then again have six months to generate the RES 1.0 to further specify the search areas and the process needed to realise the RES 1.0.

A lot is still unclear about the Regional Energy Strategy. The policy seems to be at the beginning of the second phase of the policy life cycle, suggesting that there is still disagreement on details and exact procedures. This is also the case for the way that the RES deals with social acceptance. Although the importance of participation and public support is often mentioned in policy documents, there are no specific requirements on participation in the RES. Although involvement representative participation seems to be encouraged in the RES-process already, it is not entirely clear if direct citizen participation is mainly encouraged in the project-phase, or already in the RES-process. Involvement in the RES-process could positively influence procedural fairness.

How can the RES-programme be positioned and valued from a planning-theoretical perspective?

A multi-level perspective can be used to analyse the RES-programme. The RES-programme can be seen as a meso-organisational instrument, resulting from (super)macro-institutional processes, aimed at solving (super)macro material problems. At the same time the RES-programme has micro-material consequences that evoke a micro-societal reaction. A technical rational approach seems to be used at the (super)macro level in the form of a national goal of 35 TWh renewable energy production and the possibility of government intervention. At the same time, at the micro-societal level a lot of different interests and actors are affected by the possible outcomes of the RES, which would place the RES more in the communicative realm. Since the RES has not yet reached the end of the policy life cycle there are a lot of strategies possible within the framework of the RES. However, a strategy is needed in translating the technical rational goals at the macro-level to specific problems at the micro-level or the RES might end up as a suboptimal or minimal functioning policy. Technical rational approaches at the micro-level in the Energie-akkoord seem to have resulted in a lot of resistance and a loss of trust in wind-energy projects.

What is the current state of affairs on the subject of renewable energy production on land in the RES-regions, specifically as it comes to social acceptance?

All respondents from RES-regions stressed the importance of maintaining social acceptance in the RES-process. That being said, it seemed that at this moment in the RES-process not a lot has happened yet as it comes to including citizens in the RES-process, which was affirmed by the focus group. This can be partly explained by the fact that the Klimaatakkoord has not yet been signed, which will be the official starting point for the RES. Several regions seemed hesitant to fully commit to the RES-process until this has happened.

Furthermore, it was striking that most ideas that were suggested by respondents from RES-regions were focused mostly on issues of distributional fairness, mostly in the project-phase of the RES. The distribution of benefits and burdens was mentioned, suggesting the importance of fairness principles in distributional fairness perceptions. Issues of procedural fairness in the process-phase of the RES were not often mentioned. It should be noted however that as most regions have not started yet with substantial work on the concept-RES it could be that it will be incorporated later in the process.

Finally, two broad trends were observable in the RES-regions. Firstly, as most regions have not yet started working on a strategy for social acceptance, instead mostly focussing on organising the process to get to a contribution to the national goals, the current process seems rather technical-rational. This means that most regions seem to be mostly focussed on reaching the fixed goals with a centrally steered approach, based mostly on technical analysis with little room for local participation. Although this approach can be very swift, chances are that it will encounter a lot of resistance if many interests are at stake at the project location that are not appropriately dealt with in this approach.

On the other hand, the respondents from the RES-regions called for a broadening of the RES-goals so that connections could be made with other societal challenges. Furthermore, some

respondents called for a narrative in which local governments take ownership of the energy by creating a narrative in which the energy transition is used as an integral approach to redesign society. These two issues suggest a more communicative rational approach in which no single fixed goal is leading, but local interests are also acknowledged and incorporated in a process of participative interaction in which energy projects will only be carried out with local support or acceptance, therefore focussing on making residents profit (whether or not financially). Although this approach might work to reduce resistance to projects, it will take considerable time and resources.

What challenges and opportunities are encountered so far in the RES-process on the subject of renewable energy production on land as it comes to social acceptance, and what challenges and opportunities could be foreseen for the future?

A problem with the RES that is identified by respondents from the RES-process as well as the focus group is the vagueness of the RES. Not all requirements and procedures in the RES are totally clear, leading to speculation and assumption. In the focus group it was suggested that the vagueness of the RES-process might be one of the reasons that local governments have not yet started involving citizens in the process. The policy life cycle suggests that this vagueness is normal and temporary for a policy in its early stages.

However, this vagueness in combination with the strict timeline of the RES could pose some problems along the way. Furthermore, the strict timeline and national goals of the RES could drive regions to a more technical approach. In certain cases (see next point) this could lead to problems as it comes to social acceptance, as the negative experiences mentioned by Gert de Roo and in the focus group have shown.

Finally, money and knowledge could be a future problem in the RES, especially as it comes to a communicative approach which is both costly and as one respondent mentions requires knowledge that RES-regions are short on.

How could the functioning of the RES be optimised as it comes to social acceptance on the subject of renewable energy production on land?

To optimise the functioning of the RES as it comes to the topic of social acceptance a process scheme has been proposed at the end of section 5.2 (Figure 20), highlighting different trajectories in the RES process for different kinds of projects. In the current phase of the RES it is important to make a distinction between areas/projects with a high technical potential based on their level of complexity. First there are the fairly simple Type 1 projects that are currently already being implemented and that can be included in the RES rather straightforwardly. Because the goals, utility and necessity of these projects have already been established a technical rational approach will suffice.

Then there are the somewhat complex Type 2 projects. The goals, utility and necessity of these projects have not yet been established, but because the amount of relevant and affected stakeholders and of different interest is low, the complexity of these projects remains quite moderate and somewhat standard participation procedures, focusing on procedural and distributional fairness in the project phase of the RES should suffice. This category is located in between a technical and a communicative rational approach. Gert de Roo mentions that this category will mainly consist of solar energy projects due to the low level of trust in wind energy projects and also bottom-up initiatives by energy-cooperations would be found in this category.

Finally, there are the very complex Type 3 projects. In these projects many different actors with many different interests are involved. In these projects the goals, utility and necessity of the project is established together with affected actors, possibly leading to the decision to not carry out the project. To improve chances of carrying out these projects an integrated area-specific approach is needed in which the energy challenges are linked to other societal challenges through what Prof. Dr. Ig. Anke van Hal calls a 'merger of interests' perspective. This will take time and these projects

cannot already be recorded in the concept-RES as a careful and lengthy decision-making process with inclusion of the local population is needed for this.

In the end the political ambition at the meso and micro level and the strictness of the national government at the macro level will determine which of these processes will be necessary in the energy transition. It is however important to realise that if the latter category is being considered a communicative approach is important to avoid damaging trust like was done in the Energie-akkoord. This will take both time and resources that the RES-framework currently does not provide. This does not mean that this category should be ignored in the context of the RES. If the political ambition is there to also include (some) projects in the latter category regions should start the planning process for these categories now, simultaneously to the inclusion of the former two categories in the concept-RES. The complex projects might then later be included in a RES 2.0 or 3.0.

7. Reflection and recommendations

7.1 Reflection

The conclusions of this thesis give an insight in what the concept of social acceptance is and how it currently is, could and should be implemented in the context of the Regional Energy Strategy. These conclusions were based on data gathered through interviews with professionals working within RES-regions, a focus group with practical experts and an interview with Gert de Roo, a theoretical expert on planning theory. Several comments can be made about the conclusions of this thesis.

First of all, the context of the RES is being researched. This policy is in an early phase of the policy life cycle and therefore a lot is still unclear about the policy. Also, within the timeline of the RES, this research is in a very early phase, even before the actual official start of the RES-programme. Doing research in this phase of the process has some clear advantages over researching after the implementation of the programme. For example, the outcomes of this thesis could still be of relevance to the programme that is being researched. However, researching a policy this early in its development inherently means that the outcomes of the research are at least somewhat speculative, as the future development of the programme remains to be seen.

To gather information about the current functioning of the RES as it comes to social acceptance, six different respondents, working in different RES-regions were being interviewed. Although several issues have been identified that play a role in at least some of the regions that were being researched, it should be noted that the context of each RES region can differ considerably, as it comes to the size of the RES-region, the actors involved, and the level of involvement of these actors, the political composition and the available resources (like budget and expertise). This means that the context of each RES-region is unique. However, time constraints in this thesis research did not allow for close examination of all regions and findings in section 4.2 can therefore not be generalised. However, the issues highlighted in section 4.2 could still be relevant to all regions, as well as the framework presented in section 4.3.

The combination of different sources in this research proved to be useful in the context of this research. Several findings in the different sections of the results were confirmed or sometimes supplemented by findings in other sections of the results, contributing to the overall robustness of the results.

7.2 Implications of research

As mentioned in the previous sections, this research focuses on the role of social acceptance in the context of the RES. Although an increasing amount of research focuses on the way social acceptance might play a role in the energy transition, most of the research focuses on specific projects. This research however, examines how social acceptance might play a role in a whole policy programme.

Furthermore, the RES is a brand-new policy-programme. So far little to no research has been done into this programme. Therefore, this thesis examines a unique context and the results might be of use for the future development of this context. Especially the suggestions for a process scheme could be of use in the future planning process of the RES. However, the results are not only limited to the specific context of electricity production in the RES. One can imagine that the framework presented in section 4.3 can also be of use in other energy-related challenges and even serve as inspiration for large-scale projects with differing complexity contexts outside the planning domain.

Finally, this thesis is part of a trend in which the importance of social acceptance in climate related policies is stressed. Therefore, this thesis can both be of relevance to scientist interested in the interaction between social acceptance and planning programmes in which different levels of complexity play a role, as well as to planning practitioners that find themselves working in such a context.

7.3 Future research

Some interesting pathways for future research arise from this master thesis. First of all, this thesis focuses on a brand-new process. It will therefore be interesting to keep researching the context of the RES as it evolves, to see how the framework of the RES (especially in considering social acceptance) and the way that social acceptance is being considered by actors actually making the RES. Furthermore, it could be interesting for future research to see what the outcomes of the RES will be. This research is exploratory in nature and tries to examine the possible future problems and development of the RES, but interesting insights could be generated by an approach that gets to look back at the RES-process to consider the effectiveness of the way the RES tries to consider the issue of social acceptance.

Also, this research is considered specifically with the issue of social acceptance. However, there are many more considerations in the RES that play a role and might constrain an optimal approach to the issue of social acceptance. It could be interesting to also research the RES from another perspective, both now a priori and in the future a posteriori.

Furthermore, has examined the way in which social acceptance was considered in multiple RES-regions, to get a broad understanding of the issue. It might also be interesting to engage in a case study of one, or a few specific RES-regions to really grasp the dynamics within one RES-region.

Also, the RES is not the first policy that tries to implement increasing numbers of wind and solar energy on land. Although it is touched on slightly in this thesis, it might be interesting and useful to dive deeper into past wind-energy programmes to examine what lessons could be learned from them for the present context, as several respondents in RES-regions pointed out that past experiences were not being considered as much as they should be.

Finally, a lot of research has been done as it comes to social acceptance in wind energy projects. Although some research suggests that the same issues might be of relevance in the context of solar energy there might be differences. Recently, the amount of proposed large-scale solar energy projects has seen an increase, and therefore it might be useful to examine which issues play a role in these projects as it comes to social acceptance.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Value-Belief-Norm Theory

Appendix 2: Aspects of distributional fairness

Appendix 3: Public participation

Appendix 4: Breaking down the NIMBY-concept

Appendix 5: Interview Guide RES-regions

Appendix 6: Guide Focus Group

Appendix 7: Interview Guide Gert de Roo

Appendix 8: Input Focus Group

Appendix 9: List of codes

Appendix 1: Value-Belief-Norm Theory

What is meant by the term ‘non-activist behaviour in the public sphere’ is that people vote for parties supporting environmental policies, sign petitions that call for environmental policies or donate to organisations that are involved in the promotion of environmental policies. It distinguishes itself from the two other types of pro-environmental behaviour because it does not require active public involvement (like environmental activism) or change of private sphere behaviour or habits (like private-sphere environmentalism). Socio-political acceptance can thus at the least be seen as public-sphere behaviour that is intended to promote pro-environmental policies.

This environmental behaviour can, according to Stern (2000), at least partly be explained by looking at people’s values. He comes up with a value-belief-norm (VBN) theory of environmentalism (Figure 21). In this theory different values inform certain beliefs, which in turn lead to personal norms that influence behaviour. Values are abstract desirable goals that transcend specific situations and guide people in their evaluation of people and events and in their behaviour (de Groot & Thøgersen, 2013). Examples of values are freedom, equality and protecting the environment. Because values are so abstract, they can result in quite different behaviours: people who value the environment can oppose windmills because they decrease the environmental quality, or embrace windmills because they help to reduce CO2 emissions. Values can be grouped in empirically distinguishable types like altruistic (pro-social), biospheric (pro-environmental) and egoistic (pro-self) values (de Groot & Thøgersen, 2013).

These abstract values and their relative strength together constitute more focused beliefs about human-environment relations (New Ecological Paradigm (NEP)). When people are aware of adverse consequence for things they value (e.g. others; the environment; themselves) (AC) and are aware of their ability to reduce these (AR) these beliefs might result in a personal norm to take pro-

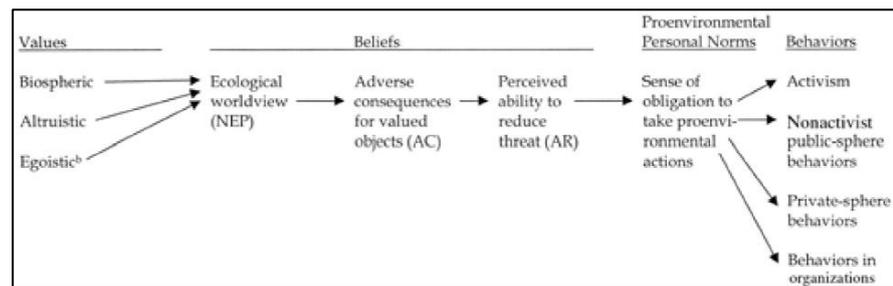


Figure 21: Schematic representation of VBN (Stern, 2000)

environmental actions (Stern, 2000). This norm then can result in pro-environmental behaviour, like the non-activist behaviour in the public sphere mentioned before.

Stern (2000) already mentions that VBN can only partly explain environmentalism in the form of socio-political acceptance. VBN accounts for around 1/3 of variance in pro-environmental behaviour (Stern, 2000) and altruistic and biospheric values tend to be positively related to pro-environmental behaviour, while egoistic values tend to be negatively related (de Groot & Thøgersen, 2013; Stern, 2000). Research suggests that VBN is quite successful in explaining socio-political acceptance but that, as effort and costs of behaviour rise, VBN is less successful in explaining behaviours (Steg & Nordlund, 2013). This suggests other issues might be at play at the level of community acceptance, as at this level the local negative effects of energy projects start to become pronounced.

Appendix 2: Aspects of distributional fairness

There are different aspects to distributional fairness (Figure 22). In order to target the specific aspect of distributive fairness that is considered problematic, it is important to break down the concept of distributional fairness. People perceive an outcome as fair based on a certain reference point. This reference point can either be intrapersonal, interpersonal or intergenerational (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013).

Such an intrapersonal reference point can either be an internal norm ('the realisation of a solar energy field reduces the visual quality of the landscape more than I am willing to accept') or someone's current situation ('I will be worse off with the new policy than I am now'). These concepts are in line with the concept of outcome favourability: the outcomes are judged to be fair based on the favourability of the outcome in comparison with an individual's norm or previous situation.

Perceived distributional fairness can also be influenced by interpersonal comparison. One way of looking at this is by comparison between an individual's own outcomes and those of others. When a person is worse off than other people affected by the project, this person might judge the outcome as unfair, even though the situation of all people involved might improve (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013). This could also be explained as an example of perceived fairness based on outcome favourability, since the perceived fairness is judged by the relative outcome favourability of an individual.

The second way of looking at this is by comparison of the outcomes of a policy within a group, without taking one individual's perspective. If no individual perspective is taken, so-called 'fairness principles become relevant'. Outcomes are considered fair when a relevant fairness principle is adhered to. There is a number of often used fairness principles of which the principle of equality is the simplest. Equality, in this context, implies that the absolute consequences of a policy are the same for every individual or group (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013). This fairness principle is often problematic in the context of siting decisions. Because energy projects have to be sited at a specific location, (some of) the consequences are also specifically related to this location and its immediate surroundings. Therefore, people living closer to the project site will experience different (levels) of consequences than people living further away.

Another fairness principle is that of equity. The principle of equity implies that the consequences of a policy are *relatively* the same for each group or individual (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013). Two kinds of equity are often distinguished: horizontal and vertical equity. The principle of horizontal equity implies that fair policies affect people relatively to their contribution to the problem that the policy is trying to deal with (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013). For instance, a road pricing policy (Dutch: 'rekeningrijden') might be considered fair according to this principle, because people pay according to the height of their car emissions. The principle of vertical equity on the other hand, implies that fair policies affect people relatively to their needs and abilities (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013). For instance, policies that affect low-income groups as much (or even more) than higher-income groups might be considered unfair.

Finally, perceived fairness can be influenced by intergenerational comparison. This concept implies that people judge the fairness of policies not only on the current policy outcomes, but also on the outcomes for future generations (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013). This means that a

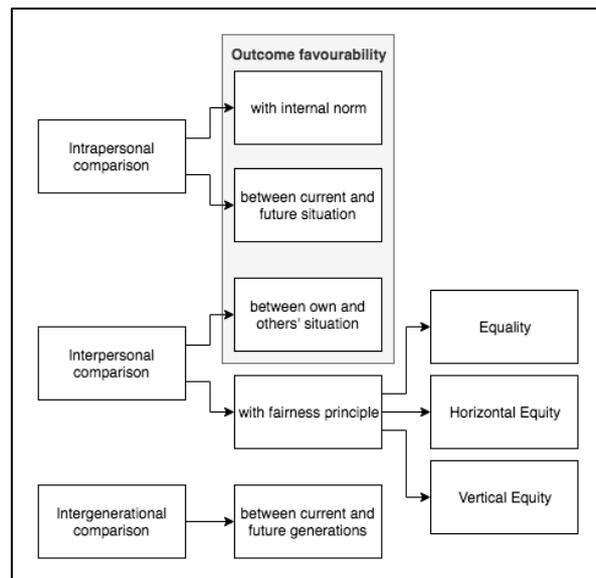


Figure 22: overview of comparisons used to evaluate policy outcomes (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013; Skitka, et al., 2003)

policy might be considered fairer because it limits the negative consequences of climate change for future generations. Windmills in the vicinity might for instance be more accepted as it is believed that future generations will be better off because of them.

Appendix 3: Public participation

There are several reasons for (local) governments to engage in practices of public participation (Coenen, et al., 2001; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000; Geurtz & van de Wijdeven, 2010). Geurtz & van de Wijdeven (2010) mention that, next to more intrinsic democratic reasons to engage in public participation practices, there are also instrumental reasons to do so. One of the instrumental reasons to do so, is to increase the public support for projects (Geurtz & van de Wijdeven, 2010). According to Klijn & Koppenjan (2000) interactive decision making is a way governments try to maximise support and to minimise resistance. Coenen, et al. (2001) also mention the ‘broadening of public support’ as one of the functional arguments for participation practices. Participation (or involvement) is also linked explicitly to influencing perceptions of procedural and distributional fairness and trust in authorities (Schuitema & Jakobsson Bergstad, 2013; Maguire & Lind, 2003; Smith & McDonough, 2001; Gross, 2007). Furthermore, participation can be an opportunity to find out about the aspects of distributional fairness that play a role for the residents that are in some way affected by certain developments.

However, public participation can occur in many forms. Arnstein (1969) famously constructed a ‘ladder of citizen participation’, with each rung of the ladder corresponding to the extent of power that citizens have in determining the end product (Figure 23). Lowest on this ladder are *manipulation* and *therapy*, that Arnstein terms ‘nonparticipation’. These practices are called nonparticipation because they are not aimed at empowering citizens and enabling their participation, but at educating or curing citizens. Somewhat higher on the ladder are ‘degrees of tokenism’, where some effort is made to enable citizen participation. This remains however mostly symbolical, without really empowering citizens. For example, citizens can hear (level 3, informing) or be heard (level 4, consultation) without in the end being able to decide. Level 5 (placation) is still considered tokenism because, although citizens do have some decision-making power, the citizens that do have a say are typically hand-picked and can be easily outvoted. From level 6 on up, citizens do receive actual decision-making power, with citizens engaging in partnerships with policy-makers on level 6, citizens achieving dominant decision-making power over a particular plan or program on level 7, and citizens obtaining full managerial power on level 8.

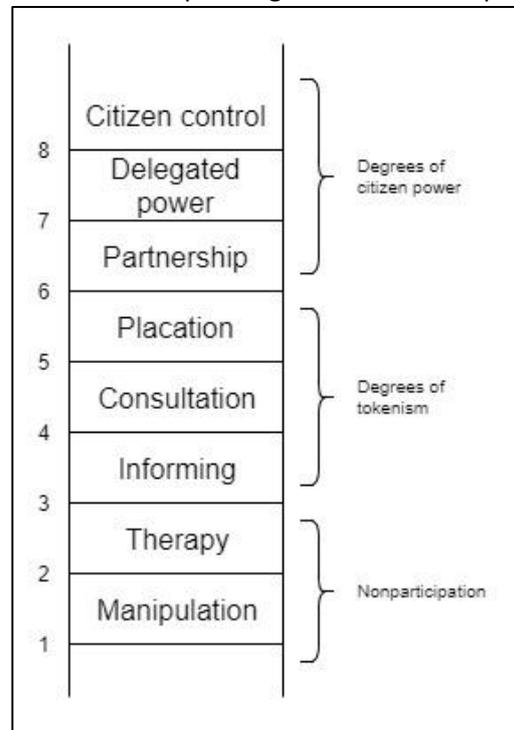


Figure 23: Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969)

The analogy of Arnstein is useful because it shows that there are different ‘levels’ of citizen participation, corresponding with different extents of citizen power. As Smith & McDonough (2001) mention, increasing power along the ladder means that citizens have more voice and participation in decisions; two aspects of procedural fairness. What can be taken away from this is that there are different forms of participation, that are only as useful for maximising support and minimising resistance as the extent to which procedural fairness principles are taken into account. Public participation is therefore not desirable in and of itself, but only valuable as long as the principal of procedural fairness is kept in mind, responding to what is considered and experienced as fair by citizens.

Appendix 4: Breaking down the NIMBY-concept

Wolsink (2000), mentions that opposition to wind energy projects should not be simply labelled as NIMBY, but the underlying motives should be closely examined. He distinguishes four different types of resistance to siting decisions:

Resistance Type A: Classic NIMBY standpoint. Positive attitude towards wind [or solar] power, combined with opposition to specific projects anywhere in the own neighbourhood

Resistance Type B: NIABY (Not In Any BackYard). Rejection and opposition to projects in the neighbourhood because of a rejection of the technology in general

Resistance Type C: Initial positive attitude towards wind power, changing to a negative attitude as a result of the discussion surrounding proposed construction of a wind farm, resulting from changing risk perceptions

Resistance Type D: Resistance created by specific problems with the particular project, while not necessarily against projects in the own neighbourhood

(Wolsink, 2000)

Wolsink (2000) mentions how all four of these types can and will play a role in wind power projects. He further mentions how type B behaviour will be rather uncommon, because general support for wind energy is rather high and how type A behaviour explains only a small part of the opposition behaviour. In type C behaviour it seems that procedures and trust play a role as the positive attitude changes as a result of the discussion surrounding a local project. Furthermore, in type D behaviour opposition arises from the specific project, suggesting that forms of financial compensation or participation might improve perceived distributional fairness and inclusive and responsive procedures might improve procedural fairness.

When dealing with the issue of acceptance for specific renewable energy projects in the RES it is crucial to not simply label all opposition as NIMBY, but try and understand the diversity of the opposition, by being aware of the different motives for resistance and the different fairness aspects playing a role for different individuals. This way the process surrounding the implementation of renewable energy projects can target the roots of the opposition specifically instead of applying a one-size-fits-all approach.

Appendix 5: Interview Guide RES-regions

Ik ben Martijn Graff en ik doe voor mijn masterthesis aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen onderzoek naar de Regionale Energiestrategie. Dit is gekoppeld aan een stage bij Witteveen+Bos Allereerst alvast heel erg bedankt voor het feit dat u tijd hebt kunnen maken voor dit gesprek. Voor we beginnen is er een aantal praktische dingen dat ik u wil voorleggen. Ik zou graag een audio-opname van dit interview willen maken om het achteraf te kunnen analyseren. Deze opnames zullen worden opgeslagen op een beveiligde locatie, zullen uitsluitend voor deze thesis gebruikt worden en zullen enkel toegankelijk zijn voor mij en op verzoek door mijn begeleider van de RUG. De data uit dit interview kunnen op verzoek volledig anoniem verwerkt worden. Het is mogelijk om op ieder moment te stoppen met het interview, om vragen over te slaan, of om op later datum uw deelname aan het onderzoek alsnog in te trekken. Het interview en data die daaruit voorkomen zullen dan verwijderd worden en niet meegenomen worden in het onderzoek. Als u geïnteresseerd bent kunt u op de hoogte worden gebracht van de resultaten van het onderzoek. Wilt u onder deze voorwaarden meewerken aan dit onderzoek?

Interviewthema's

1. *Introductie respondent*

- Werkzaamheden
- Ervaring met energieprojecten (persoonlijk; als regio)

2. *Introductie RES*

- Wat is een RES?
- Grootte opgave in specifieke regio (zie factsheet)
- Hoe wordt deze bepaald? (gemiddelde? Rato bevolking? Telt al gerealiseerde capaciteit mee?)
- Welke documenten als basis

3. *Voortgang RES*

- Waar zijn jullie nu mee bezig?
- Hoe gaat het tot nu toe?
- Hoe worden projecten reeds in de planning meegenomen? (zie factsheet)
- Problemen?
- Verhouding huidig beleid duurzaamheid / energietransitie

4. Taakverdeling RES

- Welke partijen worden betrokken?
- Wie doet wat? (werkgroep / politieke besluiten)
- Meningsverschillen?
- Contact met andere regio's (verdeling doelen; lessen)

5. Tijdsplanning RES

- Deadlines
- Welke activiteiten in welke fase

6. Borging RES

- Vrijblijvend
- Politieke context (provinciale Staten; ONTWERP klimaatakkoord)
- Iedereen op één lijn? (gemeenteraden vs. Werkgroep RES)
- Omgevingsvisie

7. Publieke acceptatie en de RES

- Voortgang
- Borging participatie
- Problemen
- Vooruitzicht
- Rolverdeling

8. Fact-based analyse en de RES

- Hoe komen jullie tot concrete zoekgebieden?
- Welke informatie is er nodig om keuzes te maken voor de RES?
- Wat wordt er allemaal in kaart gebracht? (huidige situatie bekend?)
- → link acceptatie
- Hoe worden verschillende relevante factoren afgewogen? (kosten, technische haalbaarheid, maatschappelijke potentie, landschappelijke potentie etc.)

(vervolgonderzoek ☐ opnieuw contacteren / doorverwijzen)

Appendix 6: Guide Focus Group

Ik ben Martijn Graff en ik doe voor mijn masterthesis aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen onderzoek naar de Regionale Energiestrategie. Dit is gekoppeld aan een stage bij Witteveen+Bos. Allereerst wil ik jullie alvast heel erg bedankt voor het feit dat jullie tijd hebben kunnen maken voor dit gesprek. Voor we beginnen is er een aantal praktische dingen dat ik jullie wil voorleggen. Ik zou graag een audio-opname van het gesprek in deze focus group willen maken om het achteraf te kunnen analyseren. Deze opname zal worden opgeslagen op een beveiligde locatie, zal uitsluitend voor deze thesis gebruikt worden en zal enkel toegankelijk zijn voor mij en op verzoek door mijn begeleider van de RUG. De data uit dit interview kunnen op verzoek volledig anoniem verwerkt worden. Het is mogelijk om op ieder moment te stoppen met het interview, om vragen over te slaan, of om op later datum uw deelname aan het onderzoek alsnog in te trekken. Het interview en data die daaruit voortkomen zullen dan verwijderd worden en niet meegenomen worden in het onderzoek. Als u geïnteresseerd bent kunt u op de hoogte worden gebracht van de resultaten van het onderzoek. Wilt u onder deze voorwaarden meewerken aan dit onderzoek?

Onderwerp: sociale acceptatie in de elektriciteitsopgave van de Regionale Energiestrategie

Doel meeting: inzicht in samenhang technische en communicatieve elementen RES; aanscherpen processchema sociale acceptatie in elektriciteitsopgave RES

Indeling meeting: korte introductie; groepsdiscussie over de RES

Toelichting RES (weet iedereen wat de RES doet?)

- 30 regio's
- 35 TWh hernieuwbaar op land; regio's doen bod (concept -> RES 1.0-> integreren omgevingsbeleid)

Toelichting schema:

- Voorkomen dat de RES in de hoek van suboptimaal beleid belandt
- **Hoe kunnen technische en communicatieve elementen samengaan?**
- -> trechter -> deelproducten uitgeschreven onder -> hoe trechter daar te integreren?

VRAGEN

Algemeen

1. Is het 'trechtermodel' [Appendix 8: Input Focus Group een wenselijk model voor het integreren van sociale acceptatie in het RES-proces? (verschillende invalshoeken?) Waarom wel / niet? Kan er iets beter? Wat?

2. (TIJD OM ONDERKANT SCHEMA TE BEKIJKEN [tijdlijn RES]) Welke mate van acceptatie is gewenst in het RES-proces? In hoeverre is dit een politieke keuze / moet dit een politieke keuze zijn?
 - a. Samen met bevolking beslissen? Horizon 2050?

3. Algemeen dilemma: wanneer welke mate van involvement? Hoe?
 - a. Hoe krijg je mensen vroeg in het proces geïnteresseerd?

4. Is een koppeling aan andere maatschappelijke kansen gewenst?
 - a. Waar in het RES-proces zou dit moeten?

Analyse:

5. Inventarisatiestappen compleet? Aanvullingen?

Concept-RES

6. Welke technische stappen zijn er nodig voor het komen tot een concept-RES? Welke mate van acceptatie vraagt dit? Hoe kan je dit organiseren? Is het wenselijk als de bevolking zicht uitsprekt over aantal MW's?

7. Hoe zorg je voor representatie?

RES 1.0

8. Welke technische stappen zijn er nodig voor het komen tot een concept-RES? Welke mate van acceptatie vraagt dit? Hoe kan je dat organiseren?

Overige aanbevelingen schema

Appendix 7: Interview Guide Gert de Roo

Ik ben Martijn Graff en ik doe voor mijn masterthesis aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen onderzoek naar de Regionale Energiestrategie. Dit is gekoppeld aan een stage bij Witteveen+Bos Allereerst alvast heel erg bedankt voor het feit dat u tijd hebt kunnen maken voor dit gesprek. Voor we beginnen is er een aantal praktische dingen dat ik u wil voorleggen. Ik zou graag een audio-opname van dit interview willen maken om het achteraf te kunnen analyseren. Deze opnames zal worden opgeslagen op een beveiligde locatie, zal uitsluitend voor deze thesis gebruikt worden en zal enkel toegankelijk zijn voor mij en op verzoek door mijn begeleider van de RUG. De data uit dit interview kunnen op verzoek volledig anoniem verwerkt worden. Het is mogelijk om op ieder moment te stoppen met het interview, om vragen over te slaan, of om op later datum uw deelname aan het onderzoek alsnog in te trekken. Het interview en data die daaruit voortkomen zullen dan verwijderd worden en niet meegenomen worden in het onderzoek. Als u geïnteresseerd bent kunt u op de hoogte worden gebracht van de resultaten van het onderzoek. Wilt u onder deze voorwaarden meewerken aan dit onderzoek?

Introductie

1. Kunt u kort iets vertellen over uw achtergrond?
2. Bent u bekend met de Regionale Energiestrategie?
 - a. (30 regio's; 35 TWh hernieuwbaar op land; ruimtelijke inpassing met draagvlak)

Verdieping

3. Is de regio een logisch schaalniveau voor het aanpakken van deze problematiek?
 - a. U heeft het wel eens over het feit dat planningsvraagstukken niet in 'splendid isolation' gezien kan worden, maar een multi-level perspective behoeven. Hoe ziet u dat in dit vraagstuk?
4. U gebruikt in uw colleges ook vaak het spectrum tussen technisch rationele vraagstukken en communicatief rationele vraagstukken. Hoe zou u het vraagstuk van de RES hierop positioneren?
 - a. Is de voorgestelde aanpak logisch gezien de positionering op dit spectrum?
 - b. *Spanning: The decentral governments take the responsibility that 12 months after the signing of the Climate Accord the bottom-up realised strategies will add up to the national goals for electricity [35 TWh renewable on land]*
 - i. Is deze combinatie [centraal vastgesteld doel en bottom-up realised strategy] suboptimaal?
 - ii. Welke problemen zijn er te voorzien?
 - iii. Welke beleidsuggesties zou u hebben?
 - iv. Welke strategie zou u een gemeente of regio die nu bezig is met de RES aanraden?
 - c. In hoeverre is een communicatief rationele aanpak van dit probleem wenselijk?
 - i. Kan de huidige tijdlijn van de RES een barriere vormen voor een communicatieve aanpak van dit vraagstuk?
5. Meerdere projectmanagers vertelden mij over de wens om de RES te koppelen aan andere maatschappelijke opgaven op lokaal of nationaal niveau. Dit lijkt mij een verschuiving naar een meer communicatieve aanpak. Is dit wat u betreft wenselijk?
 - a. Waar in het proces zou u deze koppeling maken?
6. Welk niveau van betrokkenheid van de burger acht u wenselijk voor dit vraagstuk?
 - a. Is er hierin verschil per procesfase?
 - b. Is het gebrek aan juridische borging hiervan problematisch?
7. U bent neem ik aan bekend met de uitgangspunten en het instrumentarium van de Omgevingswet. De RES moet uiteindelijk een bouwsteen gaan vormen voor Omgevingsvisies. Hoe ziet u de onderlinge connectie tussen deze twee processen?

- a. Kan de RES één op één overgenomen worden in de mileuparagraaf van omgevingsvisies of is dit weer een apart proces?

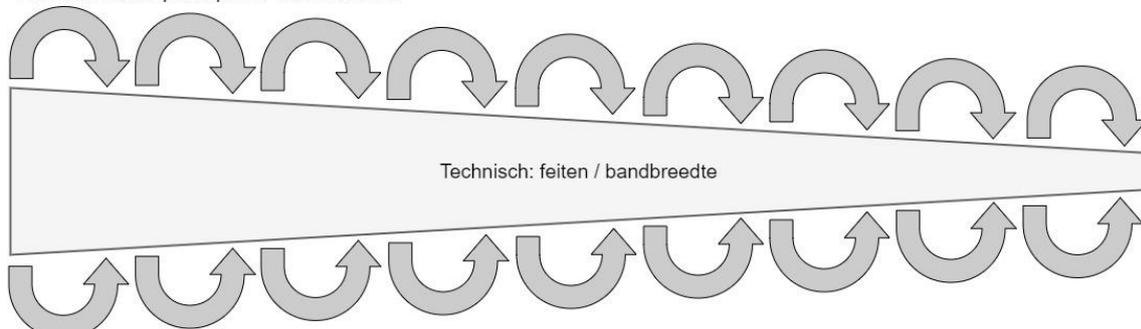
Slot

8. Heeft u nog iets toe te voegen?

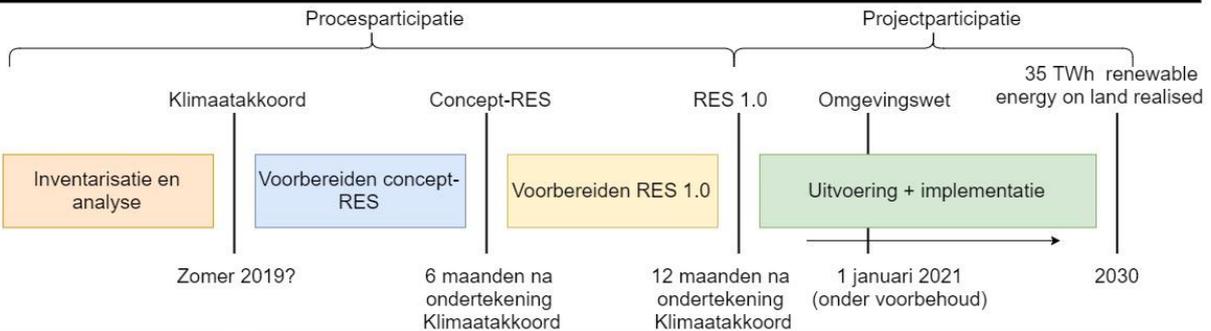
Processchema elekticiteitsopgave RES



Communicatief: participatie / communicatie



Planologisch



<p>Inventarisatie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technische potentie (TR) • Huidig energieverbruik (TR) • Huidig opgesteld en gepland vermogen (TR) • Stakeholderanalyse (CR) • Inventarisatie 'kansen' (CR) <p>Politieke keuze:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welke mate van betrokkenheid en acceptatie is wenselijk en wie is verantwoordelijk? (-> gezamenlijk denken, doen, besluiten of leren) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opstellen scenario's energiemix + consequenties (0 MW - max technische potentie) (TR) • Optioneel: scenario's verschillende energiemixen + consequenties uitwerken in serie ateliers; uitwerken voorkeursscenario (CR) • Vastleggen voorkeursscenario in concept-RES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optioneel: Concrete zoekgebieden uitwerken in serie ateliers (CR) • Uitwerken voorkeursscenario op gebiedsniveau; benodigde infrastructuur en consequenties (TR) • Optioneel: Koppeling maken met andere lokale maatschappelijke opgaven; uitwerken lokale strategie (CR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beoogde zoekgebieden ruimtelijk mogelijk maken via Omgevingswet • Projectparticipatie: streven naar 50% lokale participatie; betrekken energiecoöperaties + omwonenden (CR)
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Appendix 9: List of codes

Afkadering RES - binnen energie
Afkadering RES - buiten energie
Afwegingskader
beeldvorming
Belang Publieke acceptatie
Betrokkenheid gemeenteraad
Bevoegdheden RES
Borging acceptatie
Borging RES
Capaciteit - kennis
Capaciteit - mensen
Capaciteit - middelen
Communicative rationale
Community acceptance
Concrete plannen
Contact buurregio's
Deadlines
Definitie publieke acceptatie
Distributive fairness
eigenaarschap
Energiecoöperaties
Ervaringen verleden
Fysieke ruimte
Game-situation / social dilemma
Geen 35 TWh
Gerealiseerd vermogen
Grootte opgave
Informatieverzameling
laaghangend fruit
narrative?
NIMBY
Nog geen concreet plan voor acceptatie
Omgevingsvisie
ontwikkelmodel
Oplossingen algemeen
Organisatiestructuur
overprogrammeren
Persoonlijke achtergrond / ervaring
Planning
Pluspunten RES
Politieke afhankelijkheid
Politieke context
Procedural fairness
Sense of Place / place identity
Socio-political acceptance
Status RES
Taakverdeling acceptatie
Taakverdeling RES
technical rationale
Technische haalbaarheid
Trust
Vaagheid RES
Verdelingsvraagstuk
Voortgang
Vooruitblik RES

