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**EXPLORING DIFFERENCES IN THE USE
OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND THEIR
EFFECTS ON NEWS COVERAGE**

Master's thesis Comparative Politics

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Take the front page: Exploring differences in the use of civil disobedience and their effects on news coverage

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Abstract

Social movements face a dilemma when it comes to media coverage. The more severe a protest, the more attention it receives, but the higher the risk of negative coverage. Civil disobedience, an illegal and nonviolent form of protest, balances precariously on this line. Yet, little is known about its effectiveness in terms of media coverage. This theory-building study searches for factors that may contribute to effective media coverage, even when using radical forms of action. It focuses on four aspects of a protest that lie within control of social movements: the act, the claim, the organization and movement-media interaction. Two recent protests in the Netherlands are compared: the Greenpeace protest of December 14th, 2019, and the farmers' protest of December 18th, 2019. By interviewing activists and analyzing news articles about both protests, media coverage is connected to differences underlying the two events. Five hypotheses are formulated to describe factors that may influence media coverage of civil disobedience, and to encourage further research on the subject.

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1 Introduction

The central hall of Schiphol airport is calm on the morning of December 14th, 2019. Travelers are making their way to the check-in desks while others get a cup of coffee before their train to Amsterdam leaves. The fanfare that starts playing loudly at eleven o'clock comes as a surprise to most.¹ In moments, the hall is full of Greenpeace activists with signs and flags. Military police scrambles to prevent three individuals in climbing gear from scaling pillars in the central hall but is blocked by activists who surround each pillar. A small stage is built in the middle of the disarray, which is used by a leading figure to sing protest songs. At the sign of an activist with a megaphone, the protesters sit down and lock their arms and feet together. The resulting island of demonstrators is surrounded by an increasing number of police officers. These present the protesters with a choice: leave or be arrested. All but a few choose the latter and are dragged out of the hall one by one. After about six hours, the hall is quiet once again.

Four days later, farmers fill the roads of the Netherlands. The first tractors are spotted as early as five AM (Bertdinkelman, 2019). The police prevent some tractors from entering the highway, but most are able to pass through unhindered (Politie, 2019). At 7:45, traffic jams cover four hundred kilometers of national highways. Different locations throughout the country are occupied by tractors, among which media headquarters and border crossings.^{2 3 4} Farmers and construction workers are seen barbecuing in the middle of the highway. The protests continue until the evening, when the last road blockades are ended.

At first sight, the two protests are polar opposites. The first, a select group of progressive volunteers, is motivated by the post-materialist value of sustainability, while the second, a large movement of somewhat conservative farmers, aims to overturn environmental policies that threaten to harm their businesses. One resembles 'winners', the other 'losers' of globalization (Kriesi et al., 2006). One is ended by police intervention, the other is mostly let be.

There is one important similarity: both resort to civil disobedience, a nonviolent but illegal form of protest. According to one scholar, civil disobedience is the highest severity a protest can reach before resorting to violence (Dalton 1988, p. 65, as cited in Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 170). A curious strategy, since protest is meant to increase the perceived legitimacy of the group, while breaking the law risks achieving the exact opposite. As will be explained in further detail in the next chapter, any protest faces a dilemma between quantity and quality of media representation. The more severely it protests, the more pieces may be written about it, but the more negative these pieces may be. Civil disobedience balances this line in a particularly precarious way, given the illegal nature of the protest. How do movements solve this problem?

Social movements scholars offer some suggestions about the options social movements have to influence the news media in their favor. The act, claim, organization and direct media interaction of a social movement can all affect news coverage of a protest. Yet, there are no visible efforts to build a theory about the effectiveness of civil disobedience in terms of media coverage. Despite being distinct from other forms of protest in its illegal and nonviolent nature, research on the effectiveness of civil disobedience is almost nonexistent. The vast majority of academic literature on civil disobedience takes a political theory approach and questions the ethics of using

¹ The author was present as a spectator.

² To keep the list of references navigable, online news articles and press releases will be cited as footnotes and listed separately.

³ Source: [NOS](#), 2019, December 18

⁴ Source: [Boerderij.nl](#), 2019, December 18

it. This thesis aims to make a first step toward filling this gap in the literature. Two central questions will be addressed:

(1) How do social movements shape the use of civil disobedience?

(2) How do news media respond to differences in the use of civil disobedience?

The questions will be answered through an exploratory comparison of the protest events of the 14th and 18th of December. Using interviews and content analyses, the choices and circumstances under which civil disobedience was conducted will be related to media coverage. Interviews with seven activists will provide an in-depth understanding of the choices and characteristics of the two social movements that defined the form of the protests. A content analysis of 157 news articles, of which 92 about the farmers' protest and 65 about the Greenpeace protest, will relate media coverage to the differences found in the interviews.

The two cases, the Greenpeace protest of December 14th and the farmers protest of December 18th, appear almost completely different in terms of case-level characteristics. Comparing the two will inductively bring forth a wider range of possible factors that may affect media coverage as opposed to using two similar cases, which could give more detail and certainty about specific effects. The proximity of the two cases in space and time allows for a close comparison, while the opposing features within both cases support the exploratory nature of the study (Gerring, 2008).

Finding preliminary answers to these questions is relevant to scholars as well as social movements. Academically, this study provides new insight about the interaction between social movements and news media. It bridges the fields of social movements and political communication and builds upon literature about framing. Societally, this study may help social movements structure protests in a way that helps them convey their message more effectively. Activists do not mobilize without reason, and their concerns may worsen if their claim is misunderstood. Movements which feel their grievances are big enough to motivate the use of civil disobedience should certainly be heard.

The theoretical foundations of this study will be laid out in the next chapter. In the third chapter, a short historical and political background of both cases will be given. In the fourth chapter, the methodological choices on which this study is based are explained. The fifth chapter compares both cases based on the contents of seven interviews with activists. These findings are connected to an analysis of media coverage in the sixth chapter. In the seventh chapter, the hypotheses are presented and theoretical implications of the findings are discussed.

2 Theoretical framework

Civil disobedience, which can be seen as the most extreme form of nonviolent protest, is a compelling subject of research from the viewpoint of social movements. Even though connecting civil disobedience to media coverage in a theory-building study can give valuable insights into social movements in general, no such study exists as of yet. Civil disobedience is mostly researched as a concept of political theory, but little is known about its use and effects. For the largest part, civil disobedience is discussed in the more normative context of political theory.

To convey the necessity of research on the effectiveness of civil disobedience, existing social movements research will be outlined in this chapter. First, the concept of civil disobedience will be placed inside the context of social movements. Second, key questions of social movements literature will be summarized and linked to civil disobedience. Third, civil disobedience will be discussed with regard to its expected effects on framing and media coverage.

2.1 Definitions

The body of literature on social movements is massive but fragmented. Concepts such as protests, strike waves and rebellions are each studied in their own niche. The list of factors associated with these concepts is, of course, even longer, ranging from types of leadership to transnational networking (Tarrow & Tilly 1997, Della Porta & Diani, 2006). Evidently, social movements are complex phenomena. Contentious politics is the widest concept relevant to this study, representing a general category of politics. The term refers to any collective claim-making involving a government, be it in the form of social movements, civil wars or revolutions (Tarrow, 2013). Within contentious politics lie social movements, a central concept in political science literature. Social movements are defined by Diani (1992, p. 21) as ‘networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities’.

Protests can be seen as category of tools used by social movements to achieve change. When it mobilizes, every social movement faces the choice of how to shape its action. Academic literature describes this as the *action repertoire*, all possible actions a social movement can take (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 178). The development of such a repertoire can be seen as a conscious strategy on the one hand (Balsiger, 2010) or a structural development over time on the other (Tarrow, 1993). The common ground between all actions in the tactical repertoire functions as a definition of protest: ‘Sites of contestation in which bodies, symbols, identities, practices, and discourses are used to pursue or prevent changes in institutionalized power relations’ (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004).

Civil disobedience is one color in the pallet of strategies encompassed by the action repertoire. As the two cases already show, it can be applied in different ways, with the shared feature of being disallowed by a governmental body. The concise definition by Cohen (1966, p. 3) will suffice for this thesis: ‘An illegal public protest, non-violent in character.’ Altogether, the concepts form a hierarchy as seen in Figure 1.

Politics



Figure 1: Hierarchy of concepts

2.2 Why, how and how well

Social movements are broadly approached in three different ways, each of which can be used to study civil disobedience. A first, predominant group of studies looks at *why* social movements mobilize. The *why* has little relevance to civil disobedience in particular, since it aims to explain all mobilization regardless of the type of action a movement chooses. Political opportunities are an important set of variables in these studies, asking: which external factors bring forth social movements? Structural factors range from institutional arrangements to short-term windows of opportunity (Giugni, 2009; Meyer, 2004; Kostelka & Rovny, 2019; Goodwin et al., 1999; Lubeck, 1985).

Opposite from this structural perspective, but still explaining protest mobilization, is a strand of research that concerns itself with individuals' motivations to join a protest. This overlaps in part with psychology and economy (Harris, 2006; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013; Walsh, 1981; Klandermans, 1984). Protests are seen as a sum of their parts – large numbers of individuals with grievances to stand up against and resources to do so. To complete the picture of protest mobilization, frames were added to the mix (Noakes & Johnston, 2005). This line of research stresses the subjective nature of protests: mobilization hinges on the mutual understanding of a problem, antagonist and solution. These frames can be strategically used by lead figures to motivate others to join their cause (Benford & Snow, 2000).

A second group of studies tries to answer the question: which form do social movements take? This question of *how* translates more or less directly into studying the action repertoire (McCurdy, Feigenbaum & Frenzel, 2016; Crossley, 2002). Although a protest can be shaped in infinitely many ways, movements choose from a limited range of options through fixed dynamics (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). Tilly (2008) claims that social actors often repeat the same 'performances', but also innovate their repertoire in minor ways over time.

A study of civil disobedience in the *how* group would ask: why do movements resort to civil disobedience? Although this is a compelling question, studies in this group appear to regard civil disobedience as just another form of protest. Della Porta and Diani (2006, pp. 176-178), for example, place civil disobedience inside the larger *logic of bearing witness*, one of different branches of thought that define the type of action a social movement chooses. 'In actions of this kind, activists are willing to run personal risks to demonstrate their convictions and reinforce the moral message being conveyed by their protest', Della Porta and Diani (2006, p. 176) state. For Tarrow (1994, p. 99), civil disobedience is a form of 'disruptive contention', which holds a middle ground between violence and action accepted by elites. In a study by Wang and Piazza (2016, p. 1686), civil disobedience is categorized as one of many 'nonviolent disruptive tactics'.

The choice for any type of action is said to be a complex consideration of support among activists, influence on politics, media coverage and resources (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 178-181). Wang and Piazza (2016) argue that movements are more likely to use disruptive tactics such as civil disobedience when their claim has broad appeal and their target is a non-state actor. The outcome of such a consideration naturally plays a big part in the success of a protest (Taylor & Van Dyke, 2004). If the relevance of action repertoires lies in the effectiveness, focusing entirely on the effectiveness of protests can be at least as interesting.

A third group of studies does precisely this. It investigates the effect of protests: *how well* does a protest achieve its goal? Although this question has gained attention over the past two decades, it is still studied notably less often than the previous two groups (Amenta et al., 2010; Giugni, 1998). Main questions are whether social movements have an impact at all, which issues are most susceptible to social movement action, and what the effects of specific types of movements or strategies are.

With respect to the effectiveness of protests, civil disobedience has hardly been studied. This is odd, considering civil disobedience is viewed as the last threshold before violent tactics (Dalton, 1988, p. 65, as cited in Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 170). Such a severe form of action presents a risk for social movements, as media coverage may question the legitimacy of the action. This puzzle will be explained in more detail in the following sections. By focusing on the effectiveness of civil disobedience in terms of media coverage, this study is located in the *how well* category.

The only visible exception is a study by Dillard (2002) which focuses specifically on the effectiveness of civil disobedience. Dillard studied two instances of civil disobedience used to protest against pigeon shooting events. She finds that demonstrations of peacefulness, unity and willingness to suffer made the public vastly more sympathetic towards the animal rights activists. A compelling conclusion, which is unfortunately not used to evaluate social movement theory.

Political theorists have debated the compatibility of civil disobedience with concepts like rule of law and democracy for a long time (Habermas, 1985; Bedau, 1991; Celikates, 2016). However, the theoretical justification of civil disobedience is distinct from the *perception* of justice, which is relevant to the effectiveness of the strategy. Knowing more about the effects of civil disobedience may indirectly contribute to the theoretical discussion.

2.3 Media and framing

Zooming in on the effectiveness of civil disobedience, framing becomes an indispensable concept. As defined by Entman (1993), frames are discursive devices that use selection and salience to promote a certain 'problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation' (p. 52). From mobilizing activists to asserting a political claim, all of social movements' activities and their consequences can at least be partially described using framing (Snow et al., 2014). Literature on framing sees the construction of meaning as a key effect of social movements (Snow & Benford, 1992; Snow et al., 2014; Hallahan, 1999). Benford (1997, p. 410) writes: 'Whatever else social movement actors do, they seek to affect interpretations of reality among various audiences.' The framing approach takes the viewpoint of the social movement as a strategic actor, which makes it attractive to study its effects. As Snow et al. (2014, p. 33) note, a majority of social movements studies on framing uses frames as the independent variable. Civil disobedience presents a challenge to social movements in terms of framing. How can a movement use an illegal strategy without damaging its credibility in the face of the public?

Media coverage is essential in this regard, as it condenses and communicates the content of a protest to the public. ‘The mass media constitute a crucial site for the construction of reality’, Boykoff (2006, p. 203) writes. After all, most people do not see a protest in real life but read or hear about it in the news instead. Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, p. 116) note that movements need media for three purposes: mobilization, validation and scope enlargement, the latter meaning attracting new players to change the power dynamics of a conflict. Studying media coverage also makes it possible to compare the impact of social movements with different institutional goals. A movement that barely fails to trigger a regime change may have a more lasting impact on collective meaning than a movement that succeeds to change a minor law. Because media are ascribed a major role in framing processes, it is unsurprising that studies of social movement framing and media coverage often coincide (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993; Peng, 2008; Baylor, 1996; Cottle, 2008). Baylor (1996), for example, shows that media framing can be counterproductive to a movement’s cause. By studying the way the media shape collective meaning, this study positions itself in the branch of social science that has emerged since the ‘cultural turn’. This wave considers politics as more than individual actions or material struggles, but as a contestation of ideas and identities (Nash, 2001). The next question is: what makes for successful media representation?

Social movements face a dilemma between quantity and quality of media coverage (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 180; Boykoff, 2006; Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993, p. 121). In terms of quantity, the more severe or disruptive the protest, the more media coverage it can expect to get (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O’Neill, 2001; Boyle & Armstrong, 2009; Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Tarrow, 2011, pp. 133-134). In terms of quality, disruption invites media to frame the movement as freakish, disruptive or even violent (Boykoff, 2006; Taylor & Gunby, 2016; Baylor, 1996, p. 251). Getting media attention is not the same as getting positive media attention, which is much more challenging. According to some, protests in general are at a disadvantage in news media (Boyle, McLeod & Armstrong, 2012, p. 128). In short: the more radical a movement’s action, the more coverage it can expect, but the higher the risk of negative coverage becomes.

Because civil disobedience can be considered the most radical form of nonviolent protest, social movements that use it face a bigger challenge generating media coverage of high quality as well as quantity. Movements need to adapt their actions to appeal to the media and get the best out of both worlds (Rohlinger, 2002). How social movements can achieve this is the central question of this study. In other words:

(1) How do social movements shape the use of civil disobedience?

(2) How do news media respond to differences in the use of civil disobedience?

2.4 Act, claim, organization and media interaction

It is tempting to see protest effectiveness as the final step of a causal chain starting with the *why* and *how*: the origins of a movement determine its action repertoire, which in turn determines its effectiveness. However, existing research offers a wider range of ways movements can influence the effectiveness of their protests in terms of media coverage. These factors can be roughly divided into four categories: the act of protest, the political claim motivating the protest, the underlying organization and movement’s interaction with news media.

Boyle, McLeod and Armstrong (2012; Boyle & Armstrong, 2009) argue that the *act* (or ‘tactic’) is the most important determinant of protest media coverage, more so than the claim (or

'goal'). Media are said to evaluate a protest according to the threat it presents to the status quo: the higher the threat, the more critical the coverage. One phenomenon is particularly detrimental to a movement's cause: a 'protest paradigm' where journalists focus on the events of the protest and neglect activists' motivations (McLeod, 2007; Shahin et al., 2016). This concept is mostly used to critique news media, rarely presenting ways social movements can try to overcome it. Boyle, McLeod and Armstrong (2012, pp. 137-138) suggest that interfering with other citizens' lives strengthens the protest paradigm. Rochon (1988) notes that the message of a protest should be embedded in the act: '[This overcomes] the tendency of the media to show images without reporting ideas. If the message is embedded in the activity, then a report on the activity makes people think about the issue as well.' (p. 120) Unique forms of action may be more effective than often repeated protests, which are more easily ignored by the public (Boykoff, p. 203; Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 189). The way protesters represent themselves is also said to matter. Tilly and Tarrow (2015, p. 153; Tilly, 2008, p. 72) list four dimensions of self-representation: worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment. For example, a small group of quarreling activists that go home after half a day's protesting is bound to make a weak impression.

Although the *claim* that motivates a protest is distinct from the act, the two often coincide: a radical claim comes with radical action (Boyle et al., 2004). Protests that ask for a greater deviation from the status quo appear more likely to invite coverage that focuses on the protest events instead of the goals (pp. 56-58). Since the motivations and arguments of activists are summarized by the claim, framing processes may be best visible here. In particular, the frame alignment processes invented by Snow et al. (1986) could help explain the effectiveness of a movement's message. They describe how bridging, amplifying, extending and transforming frames helps movements mobilize. By relating different issues to each other through discourse, groups with different interests can be convinced to participate in the same protest (Gerhards & Rucht, 1992). Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993, p. 123) connect framing to media coverage in several hypotheses, one of which directly concerns the claim: 'The narrower the movement's demands, the more likely it is to receive coverage that presents it sympathetically to a broader public.'

Regarding the *organization*: social movements' internal configurations vary across many dimensions and develop continuously (Rao, Morrill & Zald, 2000; Kriesi, 1996, pp. 154-155; Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 140). Accordingly, there is no one-size-fits-all type of organization. A large, professionalized movement with plenty of resources and strategic planning appears to have fewer difficulties reaching the media (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993, p. 121; Andrews & Caren, 2010). Furthermore, dividing tasks between activists with the sole purpose of gaining attention and spokespersons who tell the story in more detail is suggested to improve the quality of coverage from the viewpoint of the movement (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993 p. 122). Leadership of social movements could also play a central role in devising a frame and coordinating action, but little is known about this subject with relation to media coverage (Ganz & McKenna, 2019; Poell et al., 2016). Wang and Piazza (2016, p. 1677) expect professional movements to avoid using disruptive tactics, as they have access to more formal tools such as lawsuits and lobbying. Formalized social movements with professional leaders are expected to be more durable and more capable of forming coalitions, but again without explicit relation to the media (Staggenborg, 1988). While media attention for environmental movements in the Netherlands is found to increase membership, movement growth does not seem to come with more media coverage (Vliegenthart, Oegema & Klandermans, 2005).

Movements' interactions with media seem capable of influencing news coverage on their own, although this effect is only visible when the news is not yet saturated by other pieces about an event (Ramos, Ron & Thoms, 2007; Andrews & Caren, 2010; Rohlinger, 2002). Lester and

Hutchins's (2009) study of environmental activists indicates that movements are able to tactically 'insert' their information into news pieces, mostly using online tools. Determining the influence of direct movement-media interaction is challenging, because direct interaction such as press statements are not completely distinct from less direct indirect interaction such as tweets. The largest effects of movements on media coverage are attributed to indirect factors such as the choice of action and media routines (Cammaerts, 2012; Cottle, 2008; Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Corrigall-Brown (2016) finds that different media tactics suit different movements.

The online presence of social movements overlaps the categories of organization and media interaction. Social media and other online tools can both be used to coordinate a movement and to spread its message, as could be seen in the Arab Spring (Hara & Huang, 2011; Wolfsfeld, Segev & Sheaffer, 2013). Online networks may reduce the need for leadership and enable new forms of action (Poell et al., 2016; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Vegh, 2003).

The four categories – act, claim, organization and movement-media interaction – lean strongly toward the agency of social movements: things within their power to change. Structural forces outside the control of movements remain crucial, and framing processes are not free of social and political power (Carragee & Roefs, 2004). Despite the importance of structural factors, this study will keep its emphasis on agency by taking the viewpoint of social movements to establish counterfactual reasoning. Other research designs, especially quantitative studies with a larger number of cases, are more suitable to gain insight into structure.

The dependent variables of the studies listed above vary too strongly to form clear expectations about factors that facilitate effective use of civil disobedience with regard to media coverage. For this reason, this study takes a theory-building approach and forms hypothesis in the conclusion instead of a theory-testing approach which starts with hypotheses.

3 Background

Before moving on to the empirical section of this study, both cases and their corresponding social movements will be described in more detail. For each of the two cases, a brief historical background will be given, previous protests will be recounted and political developments of the issue will be outlined.

3.1 Greenpeace

Greenpeace is one of the world's largest transnational environmental networks. Its Dutch subdivision, which is headquartered in Amsterdam, houses about 2000 volunteers and coordinates a larger network of donors.⁵ Originating in the late 1960s as a movement against nuclear tests, Greenpeace is now active in a wide range of environmental issues. Although the movement is best known for its direct action, such as its campaigns against whaling and the disposal of the Brent Spar oil rig, Greenpeace's actions have become more moderate over the years (Susanto, 2007).

Following the definition of social movements cited in the previous chapter, Greenpeace is a borderline case of social movements because of its formal structure (Diani, 1992, p. 21; Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 21). However, it can also be seen as a formal organization which hosts informal interactions between individuals that engage in collective action. Other authors on social movements also regard Greenpeace as a social movement (McCarthy, McAdam & Zald, 1996; Giugni, 1998).

Before the airport protest, Greenpeace Netherlands has mounted several actions against Schiphol and air traffic in general. In 2018, they launched a non-confrontational protest against airport expansions involving red 'stop signs' in six cities, as well as a manifesto calling for stricter regulations.⁶ ⁷ Ahead of the airport protest, the movement organized a digital protest in which 10,000 people sent an SMS to Schiphol to ask for a climate plan.⁸ Shortly before the protest of December 14th, Schiphol promised to become more durable (Schiphol, 2019).⁹ This 'charm offensive', as Greenpeace calls it, seems to have had little impact, but this is largely uncertain.

3.2 The 'protestival'

The December 14th protest was organized by Greenpeace in cooperation with environmental movement Extinction Rebellion. About 300 people participated in the protest to demand a climate plan from Schiphol.¹⁰ Their suggestions for the contents of such a plan: fewer flights, canceling a new airport near Lelystad, replacing short-distance flights with trains and increasing fares.¹¹ The protest was planned to take the form of a festival, or 'protestival', with tents and music throughout the central hall. The police prevented this from happening by surrounding the activists soon after their arrival and forcing them together onto a small portion of the hall's floor, where they held up

⁵ Source: [Greenpeace](#), 2018, June 23

⁶ Source: [Greenpeace](#), 2018, June 23

⁷ Source: [Greenpeace](#), 2018, May 5

⁸ Source: [Parool](#), 2019, November 17

⁹ Source: [NOS](#), 2019, December 6

¹⁰ Source: [Heineke](#), 2019, December 14

¹¹ Source: [Duursma](#), 2019, December 15

signs and banners and sang protest songs.¹² The deputy mayor of Haarlemmermeer, the municipality in which Schiphol is located, had forbidden Greenpeace to occupy the hall, supposedly for safety reasons¹³. Greenpeace still disputes this decision.¹⁴ Over the course of a few hours, all activists who did not leave voluntarily were carried outside by the police and transported to a remote location by bus. A group of 25 activists was arrested¹⁵.

Outside the central hall, a non-confrontational gathering was held with a music stage, food stands and a performance by the 'red rebels brigade' of Extinction Rebellion. This part of the protest received little attention compared to the occupants inside. Early in the morning, climbers also covered a billboard tower in front of the central hall with the text 'Schiphol flies past all ecological boundaries', which was quickly removed by the airport.¹⁶

Schiphol responded with a plan for lowering their emissions before the start of the protest, and the company's manager stated that the airline industry should not be exempted from climate policies (Schiphol, 2019).¹⁷ Greenpeace was not satisfied, pointing toward Schiphol's persistent plans for increasing the frequency of flights.¹⁸ Air traffic is currently largely suspended due to the corona crisis, but long-term plans remain aimed at growth.¹⁹

3.3 The farmers' movements

Farmers in the Netherlands have been formally organized since the Second World War and have used protests to defend their interests for at least as long (Strijker & Terluin, 2015). They are presently organized under the Land- en Tuinbouw Organisatie Nederland (Dutch Agriculture and Horticulture Organization, LTO) and its range of regional and professional subdivisions (LTO, 2020). Despite a dense network of interest groups, Dutch farmers have regularly used confrontational action in the past, including blockades (Strijker & Terluin, 2015, p. 69).

The protests of 2019 were preceded by a series of events perceived as threatening by farmers. In May 2019, a pigsty in Boxtel was occupied by animal rights activists, a level of disruption unheard of among farmers until then.²⁰ Farmers created chat groups to keep an eye out for each other in case the animal rights activists returned, among which a countrywide Telegram group which became the Farmers Defence Force (FDF). FDF is currently an official foundation with one national and twelve provincial boards.

Shortly after the pigsty occupation, the farmers faced a second setback when the Council of State, the highest body in the Dutch judicial system, declared an existing policy on nitrogen emissions invalid (Raad van State, 2019). Farmers, which relied on the policy to expand their companies, were affected considerably by this ruling. One progressive member of parliament suggested halving the total amount of livestock to limit nitrogen emissions, a statement which acted as a catalyst for the farmers' dissatisfaction.

Using their networks of chat groups, massive amounts of farmers took their tractors onto the highway and drove to The Hague, where they staged a protest to voice their concerns about

¹² The author was present as a spectator.

¹³ Source: [Duursma](#), 2019, December 15

¹⁴ Source: [Zloch](#), 2020, January 24

¹⁵ Source: [AT5](#), 2019, December 15

¹⁶ Source: [NOS](#), 2019, December 14

¹⁷ Source: [NOS](#), 2019, December 6

¹⁸ Source: [Zloch](#), 2020, January 16

¹⁹ Source: [Duursma](#), 2020, May 15

²⁰ Source: [Boef](#), 2019, October 31

nitrogen policy and the treatment of farmers in general.²¹ This protest on October 1st was followed by a series of protest events, one focused on The Hague again, one at different provincial government buildings, one week-long demonstration in the province of North Brabant and a smaller protest in Amsterdam.

Policy-wise, the actions seem to have had an effect. Several provinces dropped their planned nitrogen restrictions and reopened negotiations shortly after the provincial protests.²² Judging by their persisting protests, the farmers expected more.

3.4 December 18th

News about a protest in the week before Christmas started surfacing early December. Supposedly, the FDF wanted to block distribution centers to demand higher prices, a plan which was disallowed by court and ridiculed on TV (CBL v. FDF, 2019, December 17; Lubach, 2019). FDF distanced itself from the demonstration shortly before the protest following the court ruling.²³

A day before the protest, an agreement on nitrogen was said to be reached between the minister of agriculture and a group of thirteen farmers' organizations.²⁴ FDF denied the existence of an agreement.²⁵ A small group of farmers visited the parliamentary building in The Hague with tractors on the same evening, without any significant confrontations.

As described in the introduction, the protest of December 18th involved highway blockades and manifestations at government buildings and companies throughout the Netherlands, especially in rural areas. A movement of Dutch construction workers invited the farmers to join forces during the day, but seemingly without success.²⁶ Negotiations between the national government and farmers' organizations continued after these events, albeit with criticism by the FDF and one more protest.^{27 28} It remains unclear if and when a final agreement will be found.

²¹ Source: [NOS](#), 2019, October 1

²² Source: [Hofs](#), 2019, October 14

²³ Source: [Van den Oever](#), 2019, December 17

²⁴ Source: [ANP](#), 2019, December 17

²⁵ Source: [Winterman](#), 2019, December 17

²⁶ Source: [Akinici](#), 2019, December 18

²⁷ Source: [Hofs](#), 2020, February 5

²⁸ Source: [Boerderij.nl](#), 2020, February 19

4 Case selection and methods

The methodological choices that shape this study will be discussed in this chapter, starting with case selection and continuing with the methods of the interviews and framing analyses.

4.1 Case selection

It is clear at this point that the two cases, the Greenpeace protest of December 14th and the farmers' protest of December 18th, 2019, are similar in some ways and different in many others. The two cases correspond in terms of space and time: both take place in the Netherlands and the two events are only four days removed. This means any systemic factors, such as the law, the political system and the media, are the same for both cases, but it does not mean both were equally influenced by these factors. For example, ideological preferences of national media may have benefitted Greenpeace and hindered the farmers or vice-versa. Nevertheless, the two cases can be compared more easily than events in different countries and time periods.

On virtually all other fronts, the two cases diverge. They could be described as opposites in terms of participants, goals, organization and police response. The one essential similarity: both used civil disobedience. This makes the two cases useful for finding a range of different choices and outcomes in terms of media coverage. In Gerring's (2008) words, this diverse-case setup is useful for a hypothesis-generating study.

Some practical considerations also contributed to selecting these two cases. First, the author was a spectator at the Greenpeace protest of December 14th, which provides a relatively independent account of the events of the day. Second, both cases are recent, which makes media coverage easily available through online searches. Third, both cases take place in the Netherlands, where media outlets are legible and familiar to the author.

4.2 Interviews

To answer the first research question, seven members of the two social movements were interviewed. Interviews were used to make sure aspects of the social movements' actions can be traced back to choices and other factors from before the protest. Using media sources instead of direct interviews would induce a tautology, as frames inside news articles would be compared to facts derived from the very same news articles. The interviews were transcribed and quotes were translated to English individually when used.

The interviewees were approached with no strong selection criteria beforehand, aside from organizing or participating in the protest. This best resembles Bryman's (2016, p. 471) category of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research. The goal was to reach theoretical saturation of different elements that affected the protest, rather than using a representative sample of activists for survey-like methods (p. 421). To gain insight into the widest possible range of considerations, people from the 'top' and 'bottom' of both organizations were consulted. For the 'top', this amounted to official spokespersons. They were able to present the official account of events from the organization's point of view, and also had knowledge about the interaction between the organization and news media. For the 'bottom', activists were approached. Theoretical saturation was reached after three interviews with members of each of the two movements. A fourth environmental activist had already been approached at that time, who was

Topic	Possible questions
Act	<i>Which choices led up to this specific protest?</i> <i>When was the form of the protest decided?</i> <i>Why was an unlawful form of protest chosen?</i> <i>Were the consequences of using civil disobedience evaluated?</i> <i>How would you describe the events of the protest?</i> <i>What did you do on the day of the protest?</i> <i>How did using civil disobedience change the events of the protest?</i> <i>How was the atmosphere among activists?</i>
Claim	<i>What was the primary goal of the protest?</i> <i>Why did you take part in the protest?</i> <i>Which emotions were in play surrounding the protest?</i>
Organization	<i>How did the organization mobilize activists?</i> <i>How were plans communicated to participants?</i> <i>Who participated in the decision-making process?</i> <i>What was your role in the preparations?</i>
Media interaction	<i>Was media coverage considered beforehand?</i> <i>To which degree was media coverage a goal in itself?</i> <i>Did you speak to journalists about the protest?</i> <i>How do you evaluate media coverage of the protest?</i> <i>Do you feel that media coverage accurately represented the protest?</i>

Table 1: Interview topics and questions

able to provide some new details and thoughtful considerations, but no insights that significantly changed the outcome of this study. The number of interviewees is uneven for this reason.

As a consequence of using unstructured interviews, differences between question formulations and conversation settings pose no threat to the interpretability of the interview contents. The interviews were conducted in an open, conversational way to give the interviewees a sense of assurance and allow them to freely express their thoughts. Questions were adapted to the flow of the conversation, as long as several key topics were covered for both protest organizations. It was important that a coherent course of events became clear for both protests, as well as gaining detailed insight into the act, claim, organization and media interaction. The four topics and examples of corresponding interview questions are summarized in Table 1. Interviewees were also given the opportunity to talk about topics they personally valued. Some themes were coded in the transcripts, but as a guide for future reference rather than as a basis for analysis.

4.3 Selecting news articles

Several steps were taken to prepare the framing analysis. First, an overview of all news coverage of the two protest events has been made. For Greenpeace, a list of online news compiled by spokesperson Bram Karst (personal communication, 16 April 2020) was used as a start and completed by searching the LexisNexis database of news articles for 'Greenpeace' between November 29th and December 25th, 2019. For the farmers, LexisNexis was used for the entire list, searching for 'Boeren' (farmers) and 'protest' between November 29th and December 31st, 2019.

Because the news pieces in the list by Karst also appeared in the LexisNexis search, the list is not expected to affect the final selection of news articles. Both searches were limited to pieces written in Dutch. The search period for the farmers' protest is slightly longer because the list by Karst made clear that the Greenpeace protest had not received any specific attention after Christmas, while this was not certain for the farmers' protest. No relevant articles about the farmers' protest written after December 25th were found.

The searches results showed 467 articles about Greenpeace and 687 articles about the Farmers' protest. All titles and excerpts in the search results were scanned for articles that specifically mentioned the two protests. Mostly in the case of Greenpeace, other actions during the same period of time also appeared in the search results. These were skipped, as well as duplicates of the same news story. During the coding process, any other copies or variations of the same press release were also excluded. Because many news pieces are the result of copying releases by the Dutch press agency *ANP*, these pieces were regarded as the original, while identical publications in other media were marked as duplicates. Other duplicates concerned articles published in different regional editions of *AD Regio*, which owns several regional papers across the country. The reason for excluding these duplicates is the goal of the content analysis, which is not to simulate the reach of frames across the population but to capture the variation in journalists' responses to news events.

Opinion pieces were excluded as they intentionally pick out specific facts to make a normative argument, while the subject of interest is which facts media highlight with the intention of informing the public. One could argue that all media content is normative to some extent, which may be the case, but a distinction between intentionally and subconsciously opinionated pieces can nevertheless be made based on the context in which they were published. Opinionated pieces such as letters, columns or essays were filtered out when marked as such. News media that explicitly take sides as a whole, such as the left-wing *Krapuul* and the right-wing *Geenstijl* were excluded for the same reason. The resulting overview listed a total of 157 news pieces, 92 about the farmers' protest of December 18th and 65 about the Greenpeace protest of December 14th (see Appendix 5).

4.4 Defining frames

Framing analysis represents a range of research strategies rather than one single method, with a common core of *selection* and *salience* - which information is brought to the foreground (Entman, 1993; Hallahan, 1999; Cornelissen & Werner, 2014). To design a framing analysis that fits the goals of this study, two dimensions need to be considered: how generic frames are, and how discursive the approach to find them should be.

The most generic frames encompass multiple social movements and somewhat resemble values. The 'master frame' of environmental justice, for example, could host the frames of different social movements with different problem attributions ranging from whaling to plastic pollution (Snow & Benford, 1992, pp. 138-140). At the opposite, least generic end of this dimension are frames that are highly context-specific. Entman (2010, p. 402), for example, mentions how democrats in the 2008 presidential race find 'a counter-frame that focuses on [Sarah Palin's] less appealing traits'. Actors align themselves to pre-existing frames on one end of

Variable	Unit
Dominant frame	Frame description
Portrayal of activists	Description of image
Refers to goal of the protest	Yes/No
Refers to unlawfulness ¹	Yes/No
Refers to hindrance or safety	Yes/No
Refers to police intervention	Yes/No
Cites activists	Yes/No
Cites law enforcement ²	Yes/No
Cites issue authority ³	Yes/No
Other people cited	Description of person cited
Optional quotes	-
Name of media outlet	-
Title	-
Type	National/regional/local
Date	-
URL	-
Length	Number of words

¹: Any decision taken by the judiciary or law enforcement about the legality of the protest as a whole

²: Any official concerned with the legality of the protest

³: For Greenpeace: Schiphol; for farmers: agricultural officials

Table 2: Variables measured for each news article in the analysis

this dimension and actively create new frames on the other. This study positions itself toward the specific end. Doing so allows for a more inductive ‘discovery’ of frames, as opposed to fitting discourse inside existing molds. Boykoff (2006) uses such a method, finding frames such as the ‘Freak Frame’ and the ‘Disruption Frame’ used to describe the Global Justice Movement.

However, Boykoff focuses largely on the vocabulary used to describe protests, not the information which is referred to. He relates tendencies to describe activists negatively to the media, while this study aims to relate media coverage to social movement action. If journalists happen to write all their pieces exclusively about farmers’ protest songs, what matters most to this study is that they emphasize it, not which words they use to do so. Journalists frame what an event *is*, rather than what to think of it. This distinction defines the second dimension, which ranges from discourse-oriented to emphasis-oriented coding. Steinberg (1998) defends discourse-based framing analysis, which is excellent at finding how the use of language shapes collective meaning. On the other side, emphasis-oriented studies look at what is being said to interpret or even count instances (Swart, 1995; Zoch et al., 2008).

This study favors the emphasis side. It looks at *which* information media refer to, as opposed to *how* this information is presented. This allows for stronger counterfactuals, as the actions of a social movement determine which information is available to the press. Comparing implicit meaning between texts that refer to the same pieces of information would move the study closer to discourse analysis, which is also interesting but more complicated to relate to the choices made by a social movement. The vocabulary used to describe events is mostly up to journalists, while the events they relate to are determined by what social movements do.

The resulting specific and emphasis-oriented method is similar to Peng’s (2008) study of news coverage of anti-war protests. Peng uses news stories as units of analysis, coding (among

Frame	Norm	Examples of keywords
Being heard	Successful protest	Make a point, participants, unheard
Civilization	Civility, good taste	Shocking, tasteless, offensive
Conflict resolution	Peaceful resolution	Intervene, arrest, clear out, drag away, fine
Escalation	De-escalation	Anger, dissatisfaction, growing resistance, failing talks, crisis
Fairness	Equal treatment	Unfair, different treatment, too harsh, too soft, comparison
Issue-based	Activists' interests	Farmers: Margins, nitrogen, losses, prices Greenpeace: CO2, climate change, pollution
Legal	Legality	Forbidden, decision, court ruling
Order	Absence of hindrance, safety	Blocking, traffic jam, hindrance, first aid access, damage
Politics	Consensus	Issue, interests, talks, report, outcome, party, lobby
Religion	Sharing religion	Prayer, God, bible

Table 3: Frames

others) themes, positions in favor or against the protest group, and which categories of actors are quoted. His study is aimed at newspaper bias, but its design can be applied to measure reactions to a protest performance as well. Peng uses Entman's (1993, p. 52) definition of framing: 'to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.'

It has already been asserted that the effectiveness of a protest will be examined in terms of media coverage. Doing so allows for a comparison of effectiveness between protests with different institutional goals. What, then, is effective media coverage? Existing measures range from simply counting citations of activists or targets to inductively finding different frames used to describe a protest (Boyle et al., 2004; Boyle, McLeod and Armstrong, 2012; Shahin et al., 2016; Boykoff, 2006; Peng, 2012). Examples of dichotomous measures are mentioning violence, citing activists and referring to their goals. A description of frames provides more detailed findings, while dichotomous variables make for easier comparisons. Both will therefore be used in this study. The variables for the dominant frame and portrayal of activists will describe the way in which a protest is covered in detail. The seven variables that count citations and mentions are used to nuance or reinforce the findings of the framing analysis. All measures of the content analysis are displayed in Table 2.

4.5 Content analysis

The units of analysis are single news articles. Every article is assigned a dominant frame, which outweighs any other frames that may be used in a piece. By exploratively looking at ten news pieces, five for each event, a preliminary list of frames was made. This list was expanded and adapted during the main coding exercise. If a new frame was found or previously used frames

Portrayal	Description
Chaotic	Internal disagreement
Defending interests	Stands up for the interests of the group
Friendly	Focus on atmosphere, songs, happiness
Idealist	Individuals against a large organization or problem
Pious	Solving problems through prayer
Stubborn	Does not obey authorities
Troublemaker	Angry, aims to hinder others

Table 4: Portrayal of activists

were adapted, articles that had already been coded were scanned and recoded if necessary. The final list of frames, translated in English, is shown in Table 3. The keywords in Table 3 were used to find frames, but mostly as suggestions, because the dominant frame is expressed by arguments and ordering of subjects in a piece. Articles about farmers and Greenpeace were alternated to prevent learning or habituation from biasing the comparison.

In addition to frames, several other variables were compiled. The source, date, title, length in words and URL were copied into the data set. The portrayal of activists was tracked in a separate variable, similarly to the way frames were found. It can be expected that these portrayals overlap largely with certain frames, as both are based on the same textual elements. An overview of different portrayals found in the texts is displayed in Table 4.

As additional measures of the effectiveness of news pieces, dichotomous measures for mentioning the goal of the protest, unlawfulness, hindrance or safety and police intervention were created. If any of these were mentioned at least once in a news piece, the corresponding variable would be coded as 'Yes' for the news article in question. Citations of activists, law enforcement officials, 'issue authorities' and others were coded in a similar way. 'Issue authority' concerns anybody responding to the arguments made by the social movements regarding the issue at stake. A Schiphol spokesperson fits this criterium for Greenpeace, as does a government official in the field of agriculture for the farmers. If 'others' were cited, the cited person in question was noted. Paraphrases were not counted as citations.

5 Behind the protests

In this chapter, the contents of the interviews will be discussed to give an overview of the choices and circumstances that shaped the two protests. The chapter is laid out according to the four groups of factors that are expected to affect media representation of civil disobedience: the act, claim, organization and media interaction. The chapter ends with a preliminary comparison of the two protests.

For the Greenpeace protest, interviews were conducted with spokesperson Bram Karst, Greenpeace and Extinction Rebellion activist Cor Mastwijk, Greenpeace activist Lisanne Boersma and Extinction Rebellion activist Jesse Spoelstra. For the farmers' protest, interviews were conducted with board member and spokesperson Sieta van Keimpema, board member and spokesperson Jeroen van Maanen²⁹ and activist Floor de Jong, who led a local group of farmers from the Krimpenerwaard. An overview of these interviewees together with the dates of the interviews can be found in Table 5.

5.1 Act

The farmers did not originally intend to use civil disobedience. The initial plan, conceived by the FDF board, envisaged farmers assembling at three locations across the Netherlands. From there, they would pass by several locations relevant to their interests with a long trail of tractors and finish with speeches on three stages. This was a new idea for the farmers, who were used to driving all the way to The Hague or staging smaller, local protests. 'For many farmers, The Hague is terribly far away', Van Keimpema explains. At the same time, this decentralized plan allowed the farmers to focus attention on heavy industry which was said to emit nitrogen at the expense of the agriculture's possibility to do so. Even Schiphol was considered, but ultimately not included into the plans because of the likelihood of police intervention.

Although distribution centers would likely be passed along the route, the FDF board maintains that blockades at food distribution centers were never a part of the plan. Some traffic congestion may have been unavoidable, but not as a goal in itself. Van Keimpema: 'We have always said that our actions would be within legal boundaries.' For individual activists, the plans were never made entirely clear. 'FDF was quite secretive', De Jong expresses. Van Keimpema: 'We wanted to share our plans with the regional leaders at a very late moment to prevent them from leaking out.'

Regardless of the original plans, the retail industry agitated strongly against the prospect of distribution center blockades and filed a lawsuit. Two days before the protest, the judge prohibited FDF from blocking distribution centers on December 18th and the following month (CBL v. FDF, 2019, December 17). The FDF board interpreted this decision to restrict all communication with activists and journalists. Van Maanen: 'If any hindrance of the supermarket supply chain could be connected back to us, we would have faced a fine of up to five million euros.'

As decided by the judge, the FDF instructed its activists to keep away from all supermarkets and distribution centers.³⁰ The activists were told not to use FDF symbols during the protest, which was widely understood as an encouragement to continue the protest without the FDF's leadership. De Jong: 'We often receive messages about a protest being canceled or superfluous

²⁹ Van Maanen left the board shortly after the interview for reasons unrelated to this study.

³⁰ Source: [Van den Oever](#), 2019, December 17

Name	Role in social movement	Date of interview
Lisanne Boersma	Activist, Greenpeace	May 12 th , 2020
Floor de Jong	Activist and regional coordinator, farmers' movement	May 25 th , 2020
Bram Karst	Spokesperson, Greenpeace	April 16 th , 2020
Sieta van Keimpema	Spokesperson and board member, Farmers Defence Force	April 15 th , 2020
Jeroen van Maanen	Spokesperson and board member, Farmers Defence Force	May 11 th , 2020
Cor Mastwijk	Activist, Greenpeace and Extinction Rebellion	April 17 th , 2020
Jesse Spoelstra	Activist, Extinction Rebellion	May 19 th , 2020

Table 5: Interviews

shortly before it starts. Once the flywheel is turning, one message is not enough to bring everything to a halt.'

After its final communique, FDF retreated completely from the protest. 'There was total radio silence', says De Jong. Because the FDF's plans had remained unclear, De Jong's protest group from the Krimpenerwaard had already come up with their own ideas. They planned to visit the town square of Gouda, which hosts traditional cheese trade, and the heavy industry of the Rotterdam region. De Jong: 'We quite liked our own plans, so the cancellation of the FDF events was no problem for us. We were never fond of the idea of going to distribution centers.' It is besides the point that FDF did not plan to block distribution centers. Unclear top-down communication had caused individual activists to choose their own path.

The resulting protest of December 18th was fragmented. Different regional protest groups chose a range of protest sites corresponding with personal priorities. 'In the province of South Holland, there are nature reserves with nitrogen excesses, but relatively few livestock farms', De Jong points out. Holding the heavy industry accountable for their share of nitrogen emissions was seen as a logical consequence. Another group of activists confronted the mainstream media in Hilversum to ask for airtime, which was no part of the FDF's plans according to Van Keimpema. Many used the highway as a route between protest sites, while some blocked the highway as a key part of their protest.

The Greenpeace protest was preceded by several brainstorming sessions and a popularity contest of three plans upon which all Greenpeace donors could vote. Greenpeace selected three favorites out of around 1600 submissions. As key criteria, the protest had to be open for everybody to join, nonviolent and related to air traffic. The 'Protestival' won a plurality with approximately 6900 out of 16.865 votes.³¹

Greenpeace initially envisioned a festival-like encampment inside Schiphol Plaza lasting the whole weekend. Activists had brought along supplies to stay inside the hall for the night, but with little chance of using them. The mayor of Schiphol municipality Haarlemmermeer forbade the protest on November 29th, slightly more than two weeks before the protest.³² Although Greenpeace still opposes this decision and says to have preferred a legal protest, the movement steered toward a confrontation with law enforcement. The program outside the hall was

³¹ Source: [Greenpeace](#), 2019, October 10

³² Source: [Sajet](#), 2019, November 29

expanded in case the main action was blocked by the police, but the plans inside the hall remained as they were. Karst: 'We were within our rights to protest there, and we knew we were heading for a confrontation.'

5.2 Claim

'We had different protest locations in mind because we have a broad story', Van Keimpema points out. The farmers' story is certainly broad – Keimpema mentions three goals of the December 18th protest and Van Maanen names a fourth. First, the farmers wanted to reopen negotiations with the minister of agriculture in an attempt to improve nitrogen arrangements. Second, they urged retailers to pay more for their produce. Third, they asked the heavy industry to decrease nitrogen emissions. Fourth, they pursued a better representation of farmers in news media. All in all, the general goal of the December 18th protest can be described as 'agricultural justice'. 'Of all protests, the subject of December 18th was the least clear', Van Maanen says. 'Some of the issues are quite complex. Sometimes, we have trouble understanding the nitrogen case ourselves.' According to Van Maanen, FDF communicated its goals to the farmers as clearly as possible. 'Every farmer on TV repeated our message in their own words', Van Maanen says.

De Jong notes a shift in the public debate between the protests in October 2019 and the December 18th protest. 'When we drove into The Hague on October 1st, school classes were outside waving at us. We felt like the liberators of Baghdad. In December, it had become much more politicized. The left wing had started to disapprove of our way of protesting. People used to give us thumbs up, but in December a lady gave us the middle finger.'

Although air traffic is also a complex issue, it is perhaps easier to translate into a singular story. Greenpeace managed to do this particularly well by formulating one central claim in the form of a climate plan. As sub-demands, they named several policies which they would like to see in such a plan, among which higher fares and abolishing short-distance flights. Additionally, they coined the term 'great polluter' as a description of Schiphol. Karst: 'We purposefully used this term very often, both in advance and on the day of the protest. Our analyses show that it was frequently adopted by others.'

In both cases, emotion was present during the protest, but not excessively. In case of the farmers, anger was related to a general perception of unfair treatment and to the judge's decision to separate FDF from the protest. The Greenpeace activists experienced the mayor's decision and corresponding police intervention as frustrating. None of the interviewees mentions an influence of strong emotions on the course of the protests, but surveys among a larger number of activists would be more suitable to answer this question. Boersma: 'Although the police was quite intimidating, I was never afraid. It was only after had been moved into the bus that I started shaking – apparently the whole event affected me a lot, but I did not notice it at that time.'

The farmers' protest could be seen as more personal than the Greenpeace protest, as the farmers are representing their own interests as opposed to a perceived common interest of Greenpeace. 'It seemed like farmers were presented as the root of a different problem every week', De Jong expresses. 'We were fed up with it.' However, this possible difference does not hold in the interviews. Mastwijk, Boersma and Spoelstra all motivated their participation in the Greenpeace protest with personal values and experiences. For Mastwijk, these are concrete: 'For several years, air traffic above my home has caused me much trouble. I felt angry and frustrated but was unable to do something about it by myself.' Becoming an activist for XR and Greenpeace gave Mastwijk a sense of control. Spoelstra has more abstract considerations: 'I have been

struggling with the climate problem throughout my education in Geography: to which degree can we solve climate change democratically? I was moved by the way XR approached activism by focusing on non-violence and equality.’ Once again, a wider study of activists’ motivations could provide more information about this matter.

5.3 Organization

FDF published a code of conduct on its website two days before the protest with rules such as ‘no blockades’, ‘no violence’ and ‘no alcohol’.³³ ‘We are very aware that things will go sideways if we tell the farmers to start breaking things’, Van Keimpema says. These rules lost their force as soon as FDF distanced itself from the protest, at which point there was no longer a central organization in charge. On December 18th, the board members were confined to their homes. ‘The police regularly came by our houses to see if we were still there’, Van Keimpema asserts.

The farmers communicated through pre-existing networks. Van Maanen: ‘There is an incredible amount of WhatsApp groups, some of them existing since the first animal rights activists’ actions. Using those groups, people got together, saying: “If the board is no longer allowed to do anything, we will do it ourselves”.’

De Jong used these networks to mobilize a group of farmers from his region. ‘I start with a “hard core” of about twenty tractors – we always count the size of a protest in tractors – and work my way up from there by sending original WhatsApp messages. On December 18th, I led about a hundred tractors. It took me a few days to reach them all.’ The same networks are used to communicate during the protest.³⁴ On December 18th, De Jong was responsible for relaying police instructions to his group.

The farmers’ ad-hoc style of protest organization created more room for surprises, which may have benefitted as well as impaired the protest. In one instance, farmers from De Jong’s group helped the police get a mobile water cannon back on the road, which was praised by right-wing entertainment platform *Dumpert* (2019). In another, one activist tied a doll up to a crane by the neck, imitating a noose. ‘The doll had not been announced, but it made a big difference in how we were portrayed’, states De Jong.

All of Greenpeace’s and Extinction Rebellion’s activists received at least one day of training before the protest. During such a day, there is room to talk about the goals of the protest and the concept of civil disobedience. Boersma: ‘We were given a presentation about why they were organizing the protest, and about Schiphol being a big polluter who is not being held responsible.’ Activists divided themselves into groups based on their levels of commitment. Some would walk away voluntarily when confronted by the police, while others would let themselves be dragged away. Mastwijk, a more experienced activist, participated as one of the ‘arrestables’ of Extinction Rebellion. ‘I glued myself to the ground and other group members locked themselves around a pillar. We were the last ones to be removed from the hall.’ While most activists were removed without legal consequences, Mastwijk was arrested.

During the training sessions, Greenpeace used role-playing games to practice a confrontation. Nonviolence was the most important rule. ‘Such a situation can be quite overwhelming’, says Karst, ‘and it’s important that the activists stay calm and respectful. The trainings allowed us to see which people we were involved with.’³⁵ Activists were also provided

³³ Source: [Bestuur FDF](#), 2019, December 16

³⁴ Source: [Nagtzaam](#), 2019, December 20

³⁵ Translated proverb, ‘wat voor vlees we in de kuip hebben’

with legal assistance if necessary. Each of them wrote a lawyer's phone number on their body in case they were arrested. For the same reason, Greenpeace and Extinction Rebellion kept track of personal information such as addresses and medical requirements.

Between the training and December 14th, participants communicated through text messaging apps such as Signal and Mattermost. Greenpeace staff did not read in on the subgroups' chats, and in principle it would have been possible to deviate from the central plan using these chat groups. Boersma: 'I had also signed a declaration stating I agreed with the goals of the protest and promised to be respectful. Greenpeace did allow us to express ourselves in our own ways during the protest, as long as we adhered to their values. If we broke any of the rules, perhaps Greenpeace could have taken us out of the group.'

5.4 Media interaction

Both movements indicate that media coverage has been considered when planning the protest. Greenpeace has closer ties with the press than FDF, although both organizations have tried to gain publicity. Before the protest, Greenpeace brought several activists in touch with newspapers for personal interviews.^{36 37} Karst: 'We wanted to show that there were real people behind the protest and make these people relatable.' Greenpeace also invited journalists to Schiphol Plaza for the protest. 'We told them to come at half past ten so they could get a good spot.'

During the protest, Karst and two other representatives continuously communicated with journalists. Karst kept track of media coverage in real-time: 'At one point, a rumor circulated that [ecological activist convicted for political murder] Volkert van der G. was present at the protest. It turned out to be a lookalike, with whom we immediately recorded a small introduction video to stop the rumor.'

Karst summarized and evaluated all media coverage surrounding the December 14th protest. Although an evaluation in hindsight has no effect on this particular protest, previous evaluations may have helped guide Greenpeace's media strategy. Karst: 'We wanted to avoid hindrance and violence at all cost, because we knew the media respond strongly to these things.'

During the training sessions, Greenpeace and Extinction Rebellion activists were instructed how to speak to journalists. 'The smartest thing to do is to point journalists to a spokesperson', Mastwijk says. Boersma confirms this and adds: 'We were free to talk to journalists about our personal motivations to join the protest. Greenpeace also told us that it is alright to say "I don't know" if journalists start quizzing us.'

FDF had more difficulty reaching the media. 'We did supply all the media with our own press releases, but we have also noticed that they tend to tell their own story', Van Keimpema explains. The court ruling as they interpreted it prevented the FDF board members from speaking to journalists on December 18th, which made it impossible to explain the events of the day from their point of view. Van Keimpema: 'Journalists continued to describe the protest as organized by FDF. We were never asked about our original plans.'

Although relations between mainstream media and farmers are often seen as distrustful, the interviewees are also positive. Van Maanen: 'We have visited the [public broadcasting station] NOS another time to have a friendly conversation. Journalists seemed open to our criticism of wrongful portrayal of farmers and told us to contact them if we noticed such a thing in the future.' Nevertheless, all three interviewees refer to instances where they think media coverage is

³⁶ Source: [Hermanides](#), 2019, December 14

³⁷ Source: [Duursma](#), 2019, December 13

unfavorable to the farmers. Unlike Greenpeace, FDF did not analyze media coverage systematically. 'We do try to read as much as possible', Van Maanen says, 'but there is no official moment of evaluation.'

5.5 In comparison

Some noticeable differences regarding the act, claim, organization and media interaction come forth from the comparisons in this chapter. Civil disobedience was not completely intentional for both movements, resulting from the mayor's decision in Greenpeace's case and the judge's ruling in FDF's case. If not for these legal events, Greenpeace's presence at Schiphol would have been tolerated by law enforcement and the farmers' protest could have been led by FDF in a more orderly fashion. Nevertheless, Greenpeace chose to use civil disobedience more consciously. It had more time, resources and knowledge than FDF to prepare its activists for a police confrontation. The farmers, no longer associated with FDF, haphazardly formed their own plans. Greenpeace sought to minimize hindrance, while some farmers used hindrance as the core of their protest.

The issues of air traffic and agricultural justice are both complicated, but the latter arguably has more different facets. The farmers were incapable of translating their issues into one coherent claim, although this is partially explained by the inability of the FDF board to communicate during the protest. Greenpeace, meanwhile, wanted only one thing: a climate plan for Schiphol.

Greenpeace's more centralized organization and preparation allowed for more control over the behavior of activists. Although both movements gave their activists guidance on appropriate behavior, Greenpeace prepared its activists more thoroughly with discussions and training. This likely decreased the risk of individuals grabbing attention with extremities.

Greenpeace made a more active effort to influence media coverage. They invited journalists to the event, hosted interviews beforehand and instructed activists how to react to journalists. The FDF board mostly left this to its activists and was unable to speak to journalists in person on December 18th.

6 Media coverage

This chapter is based on a content analysis of 157 unique news articles, of which 92 about the farmers' protest of December 18th and 65 about the Greenpeace protest of December 14th. Some quantitative descriptions of the data will be given before going over each of the frames in more detail. The chapter ends by relating differences in media coverages between the two protests to the differences found in the interviews.

6.1 Quantitative descriptions

For the Greenpeace protest, 16 news articles were written in the days leading up to the protest, 32 were written on December 14th and 18 were written afterwards. For the farmers' protest, 30 news articles were written before the protest, 37 on December 18th and 25 in the following days (See Appendix 1). An overview of these dates can be found in Appendix 1 and a complete list of all news articles in Appendix 5. It should be noted that the amount of news articles is no indication of the attention a news event receives or the amount of people it reaches. Since duplicates were excluded, some pieces are read by substantially more people than others.

The average length of a news article about either protest is 455 words. Pieces about Greenpeace have a shorter average of 386 words compared to an average of 505 words about the farmers, but standard deviations are too large to draw any meaningful conclusions about these averages. A total of 93 pieces by countrywide news sources, 44 by regional sources, 17 by local sources and 3 by news forums were used. There are no remarkable differences between the type of source regarding Greenpeace's and the farmers' protests. It should be noted that news pieces were often republished by different types of sources. For example, a news piece originally written for the regional *Tubantia* may also have been published in national paper *AD*.

6.2 Frame frequencies

Table 6 gives an overview of the prevalence of each frame and table 7 presents the frequency of different portrayals of activists. A rough evaluation of the effectiveness of a frame in conveying the movements' views can be found in the first column of Table 6. These evaluations should be seen as an expression of general patterns, rather than an absolute measure of the effectiveness of each piece. Each frame will be described in more detail in this section to explain these evaluations.

First of all, the 'Issue-based' frame is relatively uncommon, occurring five times (5.40%) for the farmers and six times (9.20%) for Greenpeace. Pieces using this frame take the perspective of the activist, with titles such as 'Construction workers and farmers go to battle together',³⁸ 'Farmers from Twente in doubt about blockades'³⁹ and 'Angry farmers fill the Gouda market square: 'If you go on a trip with friends, you support each other''.⁴⁰ An interview with two Greenpeace activists initiated by Greenpeace is an example of a piece with the 'Issue-based' frame taking Greenpeace's side.⁴¹ It is unsurprising that journalists rarely take the movement's viewpoint, as readers might experience these pieces as biased in favor of the protest.

³⁸ Source: [BNR Webredactie](#), 2019, December 17

³⁹ Source: [Te Bogt](#), 2019, December 6

⁴⁰ Source: [Tielemans](#), 2019, December 19

⁴¹ Source: [Duursma](#), 2019, December 13

	Effectiveness	Farmers	Greenpeace
Issue-based	++	5 5.40%	6 9.20%
Being heard	+	4 4.30%	1 1.50%
Civilization	-	1 1.10%	1 1.50%
Conflict resolution	±	3 3.30%	33 50.80%
Escalation	-	11 12.00%	1 1.50%
Fairness	depends	3 3.30%	4 6.20%
Legal	±	8 8.70%	17 26.20%
Order	--	45 48.90%	2 3.10%
Politics	+	11 12.00%	0 0.00%
Religion	±	1 1.10%	0 0.00%
Total		92 100.00%	66 100.00%

++: Very effective; +: Effective; ±: Effective nor ineffective; -: Ineffective; --: Very ineffective (from the movement's viewpoint)

Table 6: Dominant frames in news pieces on the protest events of December 14th and 18th, 2019

	Farmers	Greenpeace
Chaotic	10 10.90%	0 0.00%
Defending interests	36 39.10%	0 0.00%
Friendly	3 3.30%	1 1.50%
Idealist	1 1.10%	17 26.20%
Pious	1 1.10%	0 0.00%
Stubborn	2 2.20%	44 67.70%
Troublemaker	39 42.40%	3 4.60%
Total	92 100.00%	65 100.00%

Table 7: Dominant portrayal of activists in news pieces on the protest events of December 14th and 18th, 2019

Nevertheless, they are the best-case scenario for both social movements, citing activists relatively often and mentioning the movements' (perceived) goals in every piece. A quote from *Buddhistisch Dagblad* (Buddhist Daily): 'A 24-hour protest is planned at Schiphol Plaza. Just like Schiphol's pollution and disturbance, it continues day and night.'⁴² In line with the limited use of the 'Issue-based' frame, issue authorities are rarely cited. For the farmers these would be government officials related to agriculture or nitrogen legislation, and for Greenpeace these would be Schiphol employees. Issue authorities are cited six times in total, not enough to discern a clear pattern of news articles that do quote them.

The 'Politics' frame, used 11 times (12.00%) to report on the farmers and never used to describe Greenpeace, mostly concerns background pieces on policy and negotiations related to agriculture. These pieces search for a political consensus and take farmers seriously as stakeholders, reducing the protest to an introduction of underlying problems. Farmers might welcome political analyses such as these, as they highlight agricultural interests among others. In each of the 11 pieces using the 'Politics' frame, farmers were portrayed as people defending their interests.

The 'Escalation' frame can be seen as a more hectic version of the 'Politics' frame. It also discusses the issues behind the protest, but stresses that the situation is worsening and talks are failing. A piece in *BN De Stem* is a prime example: 'On October 1st, with two thousand tractors on the Malieveld [in The Hague], the world of the farmers' protests was still coherent. Now, chaos is starting to take over: in the streets, in politics and at the negotiating table.'⁴³ A sense of unpredictability characterizes these pieces. In three out of eleven instances, farmers are portrayed as troublemakers.

The 'Legal' frame was used mostly to describe Greenpeace (17 pieces or 26.20%, compared to 8 pieces or 8.70%). It discusses a legal matter where different groups use the law to defend their point of view. A large share of these news articles was written in advance of the December 14 protest, when the mayor forbade Greenpeace to protest inside the central hall at Schiphol. Greenpeace was quick to respond with its own view, showing no intention of changing its plans and providing counterarguments. Multiple news articles appear to be based on Greenpeace's press release about the mayor's decision instead of the decision itself.⁴⁴ This produces pieces where Greenpeace is portrayed as stubborn: 'Greenpeace proceeds with protest at Schiphol despite ban'.⁴⁵ Most of these pieces mention the goal of the protest (88.00%) or cite activists (76.00%). The image of a group going against the grain was frequently repeated throughout December. The authors of the 17 pieces that use the 'Legal' frame do not seem to draw conclusions about who is right. Moreover, they never question the legitimacy of the law. Statements such as 'the mayor's decision should be upheld' are not used, nor is reasoning such as 'the importance of this protest outweighs the law'. In other words, news pieces with the 'Legal' frame spread the word about an event without taking sides.

The same cannot be said for news articles with the 'Order' frame, which was used 45 times (48.90%) to describe the farmers' protest and twice (3.10%) for Greenpeace. In 33 out of all 47 pieces that utilize this frame, activists are put away as troublemakers who deliberately set out to hinder others. This is detrimental to the message of the activists. More than one third of these pieces do not mention the activists' goals (See Appendix 3). This contributes to the overall

⁴² Source: [Boeddhistisch Dagblad](#), 2019, December 14

⁴³ Source: [Van der Storm](#), 2019, December 19

⁴⁴ Source: [Greenpeace](#), 2019, November 29

⁴⁵ Source: [Stil](#), 2019, November 29

difference in the number of times the activists' goals were mentioned: 70.70% of news pieces about the farmers and 89.20% of news pieces about Greenpeace (See Appendix 4). Instead, spokespersons of retail or infrastructure organizations are often cited, who strongly disapprove of the farmers' supposed plans. The way the farmers' protest is described can be compared to weathermen discussing a storm. As an example: 'The only thing we are concerned about is minimizing the damages for [grocery store] Nettorama.'⁴⁶ Another: 'According to [travellers' association] ANWB, the hindrance started early in the morning in the North and East and spread like an oil spill to the rest of the country.'⁴⁷ Farmers become a source of danger, preventing potential emergency response from reaching its destination and forming a threat to road safety.⁴⁸ ⁴⁹ It goes without saying that this perspective does the farmers no good.

In contrast, the confrontation between Greenpeace and the military police at Schiphol is described through a 'Conflict resolution' frame (50.80% of news pieces about Greenpeace). This enables a relatively dry account of the day's events, with titles such as 'Climate protest Schiphol finished, 26 arrests'.⁵⁰ Implicitly, the conflict that motivates the existence of the news article can be solved in two ways: the protest is either allowed to continue in peace or ended by the military police. Most pieces – 26 out of 36 – do not mention hindrance caused by activists, while almost all – 35 out of 36 – write about police intervention. Greenpeace makes a visible attempt to keep its footing in the news, stressing the peacefulness of the protest. For example, a spokesperson says to *RTL Nieuws*: 'We call upon our right to peaceful protest. Moreover, it is not our intention to hinder travellers.'⁵¹ Spokespersons stress the urgency of acting against the 'big polluter', which makes its way into news pieces and even a title in a piece by *AD*.⁵² Although only half of all news pieces that use the 'Conflict resolution' frame cite an activist, Greenpeace representatives are often paraphrased and arguments from previous press releases are repeated. Some pieces also embed tweets by Greenpeace. In one case, this is the only instance in the news piece where the goal of the protest is made clear.⁵³

The 'Fairness' frame is used in hindsight to evaluate the police's intervention or lack thereof. It is used only three times regarding the farmers and four times regarding Greenpeace. In Greenpeace's case, journalists critically question the intervention, in favor of the activists. Greenpeace uncovered a picture of a concert in the same hall as the protest, which was not stopped by the police despite the same apparent levels of hindrance. *NH Nieuws* based a news article on this comparison.⁵⁴ A quoted representative smartly combines the critique with peacefulness and climate: 'We are being treated unfairly. [...] The only thing the peaceful visitors of the Protestival did, was demand a climate plan from Schiphol.' Conversely, the 'Fairness' frame does not benefit the farmers. In a piece titled 'Why did the police intervene so little?', a professor of legal studies compares Greenpeace and the farmers: 'The Greenpeace activists on Schiphol on Saturday were not negotiated with – they were displaced.'⁵⁵

Finally, some frames were used incidentally, such as 'Civilization' (twice), 'Religion' (once) or 'Being heard' (5 times). 'Civilization' concerns aspects of the protest that a journalist sees as

⁴⁶ Source: [Van den Broek](#), 2019, December 16

⁴⁷ Source: [Kind](#), 2019, December 18a

⁴⁸ For example see: [Willems](#), 2019, December 19

⁴⁹ For example see: [Kind](#), 2019, December 18b

⁵⁰ Source: [NOS](#), 2019 December 14

⁵¹ Source: [RTL Nieuws](#), 2019, December 14

⁵² Source: [AD](#), 2019, December 14

⁵³ Source: [AT5](#), 2019, December 15

⁵⁴ Source: [Sajet](#), 2019, December 18

⁵⁵ Source: [Jak](#), 2019, December 19

uncivil or tasteless, such as hanging a doll from a noose or bringing children to Schiphol to watch the police drag their father away.⁵⁶ ⁵⁷ 'Religion' describes a single instance of farmers praying instead of protesting from the perspective of a religious newspaper.⁵⁸ 'Being heard' asks the question: 'How could this protest be brought to a successful end?'⁵⁹ No clear patterns can be distinguished as to why these perspectives were chosen.

All in all, Greenpeace seems to have been more successful at conveying its message than the farmers. Before the protest, Greenpeace's plans were evaluated in legal terms while the farmers were seen as a threat to public order. During the protests, Greenpeace's claim was seen as equal to the police's actions, while farmers were described as the root of a public order problem. After the events, the police intervention at Schiphol was criticized, as was the absence of strong police intervention against the farmers' protest. Of course, plenty of news articles do not follow these general patterns. Both sides vary strongly, with articles such as 'Protest is mostly fun/sociable [gezellig]'⁶⁰ about the farmers and 'Chaos expected at Schiphol: Greenpeace occupies airport with 'Protestival''.⁶¹

6.3 Connecting the dots

The findings based on the interviews in the previous section offer explanations for the discrepancies in media representation presented above. Before continuing, one important note must be made: the protest of December 18th was severely affected by the court's decision to forbid FDF from blocking distribution centers and the board's interpretation of this decision. If the board of FDF was permitted to proceed with its original plans, the day's events and corresponding media coverage might have been more similar to Greenpeace's coverage, or different in other ways. The board could not only have guided the activists, but also communicated with the press to establish their viewpoints more strongly if given the chance. Nevertheless, the unintentional differences between the two protests caused by the court's ruling allow for interesting insights in what caused the differences in media representation between the two protests.

Regarding the act: the prospect of hindrance seems to have strongly influenced framing choices by journalists. In almost half of all times hindrance or safety issues were mentioned, the 'Order' frame was used, and all 47 pieces that used the 'Order' frame also referred to hindrance or safety issues. Actual, physical hindrance was not necessary to induce the 'Order' frame and portray activists as troublemakers – the *prospect* of hindrance gave plenty of opportunity to do so. For example, when the expected traffic jams did not occur and a distribution center was left alone, a relieved news piece about the farmers stayed withing the 'Order' frame.⁶² In other words: once a frame is chosen, it appears to stick. If journalists write an announcement piece about traffic jams, they also seem likely to evaluate the event in terms of traffic jams in later news. The only way FDF could have avoided the 'Order' frame and corresponding image of troublemakers would be never to suggest the possibility of hindrance in the first place. Greenpeace achieved this by countering the mayor's decision with their own narrative from the moment it became known and frequently repeating its promise of a peaceful and orderly protest. Emphasizing peacefulness and

⁵⁶ Source: [Van den Belt](#), 2019, December 19

⁵⁷ Source: [Rueter](#), 2019, December 15

⁵⁸ For example see: [Reformatorisch Dagblad](#), 2019, December 18

⁵⁹ For example see: [Akinji](#), 2019, December 18

⁶⁰ Source: [Poort](#), 2019, December 19

⁶¹ Source: [Hart van Nederland](#), 2019, December 14

⁶² Source: [De Kleuver](#), 2019, December 18

non-hindrance may also have delegitimized the police intervention against Greenpeace, which in turn prompts journalists to take up the more neutral 'Conflict resolution' frame instead of the 'Order' frame.

Furthermore, the protest at Schiphol embedded Greenpeace's goal in the act of protest, while the different forms of protest of the farmers were sometimes difficult to relate to their interests. How is a highway blockade connected to nitrogen? What are the farmers doing on a media terrain in Hilversum? What do they hope to achieve on the Gouda market square? To make a clear connection, journalists would have to speak to activists, which occurred in little over half of all news articles about the farmers' protest. Journalists might also face more difficulties trying to incorporate quotes into their news articles when the activists' claims are further removed from the physical events. In Greenpeace's case, the goal of the protest was more self-evident. Being confined to the hall at Schiphol may also have helped journalists reach representatives, who were apt at integrating Greenpeace's views into their responses.

Regarding the claim: the issue at stake for the farmers may be more complex than Greenpeace's issue. Especially in short news pieces, journalists may not be able to provide enough background information to convey the farmers' interests clearly. The farmers could have done more to make their claims comprehensible. Greenpeace did this by formulating a goal in the single (Dutch) word 'climate plan'. This acted as a simple core to which journalists could attach other pieces of information about Greenpeace's demands – or not. A few words were also enough to summarize the climate activists' goal.^{63 64} Meanwhile, a journalist describes confusion about the farmers' interests.⁶⁵ In *BN De Stem*, he writes: 'The starting question – what are the farmers really protesting against? – is increasingly difficult to answer. This is no longer a rational protest, but an eruption of years of suppressed anger.'⁶⁶ It is possible that issue complexity motivated journalists to take up the 'Politics' frame, in which they focus on the political background of the agricultural issue.

Regarding the organization: Improvised actions may bring about incidents that are negatively viewed by the public. Greenpeace made a strong effort to coordinate activists by using roleplaying games, discussions and setting boundaries of unacceptable behavior. By mentally preparing activists for a confrontation, they made the confrontation as a whole more predictable and reduced the chance of disrespect, hindrance or violence. Although uncertain, a lack of top-down coordination may have made incidents during the farmers' protest more likely. A doll hanging by a noose in Gouda dominated two headlines, drawing attention away from a hundred more tractors occupying the market square without 'uncivil' acts.^{67 68} A barbecue session in the middle of the highway also generated two headlines and encouraged these news pieces to focus on traffic hindrance.^{69 70} Incidents such as these are simple visible manifestations of the protest, which make them attractive ways for journalists to introduce a subject. A local paper decided to focus on friendlier occurrences, like farmers taking a lunch break, but these events do not seem

⁶³ For example see: [Heineke](#), 2019, December 14

⁶⁴ For example see: [Van der Kooy](#), 2019, December 15

⁶⁵ Source: [Van der Storm](#), 2019, December 20

⁶⁶ Source: [Van der Storm](#), 2019, December 19

⁶⁷ Source: [AD](#), 2019, December 18

⁶⁸ Source: [Van den Belt](#), 2019, December 19

⁶⁹ Source: [Baard](#), 2019, December 19

⁷⁰ Source: [Schelfaut](#), 2019, December 18.

to gain as much traction as negative ones.^{71 72 73} On one occasion, farmers helped the police drag a water cannon back onto the road, but this was not covered in the news. The low degree of coordination among farmers is the most straightforward explanation for their portrayal as chaotic, which occurred ten times. Such a portrayal emphasizes confusion or disagreement between activists.

Greenpeace's plans were published more than two months before December 14th.⁷⁴ Up to a certain extent, the public was involved in designing the Greenpeace protest with brainstorming and a poll. Meanwhile, a lack of clarity about FDF's program motivated farmers to form their own plans, either before or on December 18th. This lack of a clear and public plan may have encouraged speculation about traffic jams and retail blockades, adding to a sense of threat. "Netherlands locked up on Wednesday" is an example.⁷⁵ This front-page piece in *Reformatie Dagblad* opened with: 'What exactly is going to happen on Wednesday? The agonizing uncertainty creates anxiety.' Predictions of hindrance by retail and traffic authorities were not countered by FDF. In the personal interviews, the FDF board maintains that they had no illegal intentions. This statement alone would have been newsworthy on the day of the protest and may have helped subdue the 'Order' frame.

Regarding movement-media interaction: Greenpeace was in a better position to reach out to individual journalists. While Greenpeace representatives were readily available at Schiphol, FDF board members were self-confined to their homes without communication. This may have created a difference in the share of pieces that cite activists (67.70% of articles about Greenpeace compared to 54.30% of news articles about the farmers). In addition, Greenpeace's quotes managed to capture their views and arguments more effectively. By repeating the arguments endlessly in person, on social media and in press releases, Greenpeace gave journalists ample opportunity to cover its side of the story. Differences between quotes in different news pieces may have been reduced by talking about the claim beforehand and by instructing activists to point journalists toward spokespersons. Furthermore, Greenpeace nudged two newspapers into hosting interviews in order to improve the image of their activists beforehand.^{76 77} It is not clear whether this had any effect on later news coverage. An interview with FDF board member Van Keimpema was also published, but two days after the farmers' protest.⁷⁸

Other factors did not seem to matter significantly. Emotions and the general atmosphere of the protests played a small role in news articles. Some referred to climate activists singing songs or farmers taking a break, but almost exclusively as a side note.^{79 80} For example, in a piece about farmers in The Hague: 'Tractors that stood on the tram rails for a short period of time were sent away. Besides that, the atmosphere was pleasant, farmers handed out coffee to police officers on duty.'⁸¹ The same can be said of symbols carried and expressed by activists. Signs, flags and other descriptions of appearance were scarcely referred to. This was not measured systematically, however.

⁷¹ Source: [Poort](#), 2019, December 19

⁷² Source: [Van den Poel](#), 2019, December 19

⁷³ Source: [Van den Poel](#), 2019, December 20

⁷⁴ Source: [Greenpeace](#), 2019, October 10

⁷⁵ Source: [Verdouw](#), 2019, December 17

⁷⁶ Source: [Hermanides](#), 2019, December 14

⁷⁷ Source: [Duursma](#), 2019, December 13

⁷⁸ Source: [Schoorl](#), 2019, December 21

⁷⁹ For example see: [Ritzen & Van Laarhoven](#), 2019, December 14

⁸⁰ For example see: [AD](#), 2019, December 18

⁸¹ Source: [Dollen](#), 2019, December 18

While mainstream news media are sometimes said to put farmers at a disadvantage, the content analysis gives no clear indication of such a bias. Some news pieces do seem disproportionately negative about either protest, but in general most articles seemed to approach the protests open-mindedly⁸² ⁸³. Nevertheless, this does not eliminate the possibility of a news bias.

Lastly, agricultural activist De Jong noticed that the public had become more antagonistic toward farmers between the first protests and December 18th. It is possible that this indirectly changed the atmosphere of the protest, the activists' behavior or reactions by news media, but these underlying effects cannot be discerned from the content analysis.

⁸² For example see: [Pen](#), 2019, December 18

⁸³ For example see: [Eldering](#), 2019, December 16

7 Conclusion

There are many ways to write about a protest. For social movements, coverage in itself is not enough. Movements depend on media to spread their world view and repeat their arguments. Especially when using civil disobedience, which can be considered the most extreme form of nonviolent protest, social movements risk coverage that is counterproductive to their goals. They face a dilemma between quantity and quality of coverage: the more severe their protest, the more media attention they may get, but the more negative this coverage may also be (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 180; Boykoff, 2006; Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993, p. 121).

How can social movements that resort to civil disobedience solve this dilemma? Although media coverage of protests has been extensively studied, the same cannot be said for coverage of civil disobedience. This study is a first theory-building effort to find factors that make for effective use of civil disobedience in terms of media coverage. It compares two recent cases of civil disobedience in the Netherlands: the Greenpeace protest of December 14th, 2019, and the farmers' protest of December 18th, 2019. Using seven interviews with members of the two movements and a content analysis of 157 news pieces written about the two events, a connection was made between factors that shaped the protests and corresponding media coverage. Two central questions were introduced:

(1) How do social movements shape the use of civil disobedience?

(2) How do news media respond to differences in the use of civil disobedience?

The first question needs to be nuanced: the use of civil disobedience is not entirely up to social movements. In both cases, external decisions made an otherwise legal protest illegal. The reactions to these legal decisions did diverge significantly: Greenpeace consciously went ahead with its plan, while Farmers Defence Force (FDF) distanced itself from the protest. Combined with weak top-down coordination of activists and little communication about the protest plans, this caused farmers to draw up their own plans. This resulted in a fragmented protest with different targets throughout the Netherlands. Greenpeace, in contrast, prepared its activists for a confrontation with law enforcement using trainings and discussions before the protest. It should be noted that the FDF board members were significantly constrained by the court's decision, which prevented them from guiding activists and speaking to journalists on the day of the protest.

The air traffic issue contested by Greenpeace is arguably less complex than the agricultural issue, which may have made it easier for the environmental activists to translate their claim into an act. Nevertheless, Greenpeace made a stronger attempt to communicate its message by summarizing it in the phrase 'climate plan', coining the term 'big polluter' to describe Schiphol and taking more initiative to contact the press. Greenpeace representatives monitored media coverage throughout the protest and actively approached journalists to provide statements.

News media reacted to the two protests in considerably different ways. While the farmers' protest was largely evaluated in terms of public order, representing the farmers as troublemakers, Greenpeace's protest was approached with a 'conflict resolution' frame which saw the activists' and police's claims as equal. This can be partially traced back to the prospect of hindrance, which started with speculation about the farmers' plans. This speculation may in turn have been encouraged by FDF's secrecy about their plans. Greenpeace presented its own narrative from the beginning, in which the possibility of hindrance was denied. The goal of the

airport protest was not only more self-evident than the farmers' protest, but also simpler and more directly communicated. This encouraged journalists to incorporate the protest's goal in their pieces. Some media coverage of the farmers' protest was spent on small incidents by individual activists, drawing attention away from the underlying message.

7.1 Hypotheses

Contrary to what some scholars suggest, civil disobedience does not necessarily lead to negative coverage (Boyle & Armstrong, 2009; Boykoff, 2006). There are ways out of the dilemma between the quantity and quality of the coverage of protests. These findings can be translated into suggestions for general causal effects. Because this is an explorative study and no concrete expectations could be formed based on existing research, possible causal effects are formulated as hypotheses. It is up to future studies to try to falsify these hypotheses.

Regarding the act of protest: the prospect of hindrance appears to encourage journalists to focus on possible disturbances of public order. This focus continues even if actual hindrance is kept to a minimum and draws attention away from the claim. The first hypothesis summarizes this expectation:

H1: The less likely the prospect of hindrance is in the act of civil disobedience, the more effective the protest is in terms of media coverage.

Boyle, McLeod and Armstrong's (2012, p. 137) expectation that interfering with other citizens' lives moves the media's shift toward the protest event rather than the issue at hand seems to hold in case of civil disobedience. The promise of civil disobedience is enough to capture journalists' attention, while hinting at hindrance seems to tip them over the edge. Once adopted, the protest paradigm is challenging to overcome: media continued to evaluate the farmers' protest in terms of public order during and after the event (Shahin et al., 2016). A balance between quantity and quality of media coverage is lost – activists receive plenty of attention, but not for their claim. The resulting coverage that quotes infrastructure and retail officials delegitimizes the farmers (McLeod, 2007, p. 186). The apparent tendency to use the same frame across multiple pieces can be attributed to Galtung and Ruge's (1965, p. 67) 'continuity' news value (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001, p. 263). If a previously covered topic is more likely to become news again, perhaps a previously used frame is more likely to be used again. By stressing its intentions of peacefulness and non-interference, Greenpeace was able to stay within the media-defined boundaries.

One aspect of the act may be less important for civil disobedience than for less confrontational forms of action. Symbols used by activists, such as signs, songs and stickers, received little attention in news pieces (Tilly and Tarrow, 2015, p. 153; Tilly, 2008, p. 72). It is possible that these symbols pale in comparison to the intensity of civil disobedience, which makes them effective only in 'normal' protests. This comparison cannot be made based on the two cases in this study, so a corresponding hypothesis will not be formulated.

Regarding the claim: journalists may be more inclined to mention the motivations of activists if the claim is reduced to a bite-sized message that is short enough to be incorporated into a title, introduction or single quote. This seems to rely in part on the issue itself and in part on activists' effort to simplify their claim. The second hypothesis describes this idea:

H2: The simpler the claim underlying an act of civil disobedience, the more effective the protest is in terms of media coverage.

This is an almost exact duplicate of Gamson and Wolfsfeld's (1993, p. 123) hypothesis that 'the narrower the movement's demands, the more likely it is to receive coverage that presents it sympathetically to a broader public'. It goes hand in hand with Rochon's (1988, p. 120) suggestion that the claim should be embedded in the act. A simple claim is easier for activists to compress into a protest, and vice-versa, for spectators to deduce from the act. It removes the need for explanation and background information and invites journalists to include a reference to the claim in news stories, even when the attention is drawn to hindrance or police intervention. While frame bridging and extension can help mobilize a broad group of activists, it seems possible to 'overextend' a frame (Snow et al., 1986; Gerhards & Rucht, 1992; Snow et al., 2014). The farmers were massively mobilized by a common sense of injustice, but the variety of underlying issues made it difficult to form a coherent claim. Only pieces about the political background of the farmers' movement were able to adequately capture their grievances.

Regarding the organization: stronger top-down coordination of activists seems to reduce the likelihood of incidents caused by individuals, which later become headlines. This coordination includes the communication of plans, guidelines for behavior and instructions about interacting with press and law enforcement. The third hypothesis expresses this notion:

H3: The stronger the top-down coordination of activists in an act of civil disobedience, the more effective the protest is in terms of media coverage.

In cases of civil disobedience, it may not be about *demonstrations* of unity, as Tilly (2008, p. 121) suggests, but rather about actually doing the same thing. Activists who deviate from the plan – if there is any – are more likely to attract journalists' attention, grabbing headlines with isolated incidents. Barbecuing on the highway and hanging a doll from a noose are two examples from the farmers' movement. Such incidents can be prevented by carefully coordinating activists, which in turn benefits from professionalization (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 145-147). Helping activists interact with bystanders, journalists and law enforcement depends on specialized knowledge which is built up over time. Although professionalized social movements are said to be less likely to use disruptive tactics, they may be best equipped to do so (Wang & Piazza, 2016).

Regarding movement-media interaction: being able to interact directly with news media and actively making use of this possibility seems to improve a movement's presence in the news. Access and initiative can be summarized as frequency: having the possibility to interact with the press and using it. This leads to the fourth hypothesis:

H4: The more frequently a social movement interacts with news media concerning an act of civil disobedience, the more effective the protest is in terms of media coverage.

Every instance of direct interaction allows the social movement to defend the use of civil disobedience and promote its claim at the same time. Journalists may feel compelled to include these statements in their pieces, as excluding them deliberately makes a journalist seem biased. This expectation is in line with other scholars who identify a direct influence of social movements on the content of news articles (Ramos, Ron & Thoms, 2007; Andrews & Caren, 2010). Statements in person seem to be beneficial as well as online press releases and tweets (Lester and Hutchin, 2009). Still, the physical events of a protest seem to generate most news pieces (Cammaerts,

2012). As suggested by Vliegenthart, Oegema and Klandermans (2005; p. 367) it is possible that Greenpeace has an advantage reaching the media by being relatively well-established in the political community.

It can be expected that the four hypotheses are interrelated in many ways. For example, if the claim is embedded in the act, journalists may have less difficulty connecting the two in their writings (Rochon 1988, p. 120). Stronger coordination of activists could allow a movement to unite activists under a simpler claim. If spokespersons take the initiative to communicate the unlikelihood of hindrance to news media, this seems to prevent speculation about hindrance. In other words: the act, claim, coordination and media interaction all need to work toward the same goal. This leads to the fifth hypothesis:

H5: The less the contents of the act, claim, organization and media interaction surrounding the act of civil disobedience diverge, the more effective the protest is in terms of media coverage.

This hypothesis can be interpreted as stating the obvious: if a movement uses civil disobedience to act against apples, the claim concerns oranges, activists are mobilized based on pears and journalists are only told about pineapples, nobody would expect effective media coverage. Nevertheless, the fifth hypothesis could lead to some interesting avenues for future research that combine the four categories of the act, claim, organization and media interaction. For example, it would follow that a hierarchical organization that controls every aspect of a protest is best suited to use civil disobedience. This is somewhat of a paradox, as protests are commonly seen as acts against hierarchy and authority (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 142-143). Perhaps the most successful social movements least resemble social movements in this respect (Rucht, 1996, p. 187).

7.2 Discussion

Given the illegal, confrontational and disruptive nature of civil disobedience, frustratingly little empirical research has been conducted on the topic. While it is evident that stronger action leads to more media coverage, what makes for positive coverage (from the viewpoint of the social movement) is much less clear. The hypotheses above should encourage further research to answer this question. This can be challenging, because measuring effective coverage is less straightforward than measuring all coverage. This likely explains why many studies count all coverage alike (Oliver & Maney, 2000; Andrews & Caren, 2010; Corrigan-Brown, 2016; Vliegenthart, Oegema & Klandermans, 2005; Almeida & Lichbach, 2003).

An argument against studying civil disobedience could be made based on its definition. What qualifies as civil disobedience is not inherent to the protest but depends on the legal judgment of authorities. Technically, any protest could be civil disobedience given the right legal circumstances. This also impairs the comparability of civil disobedience studies, as a legal protest in one country may be illegal in the next. Alternatively, studies on the effectiveness of protests in terms of media coverage could select cases based on the level of disruption or confrontationality. Such studies do not seem to exist either. Whether using disruptiveness, confrontationality or civil disobedience, the relevance of studying these cases to increase knowledge about the effectiveness of protests in terms of media coverage remains.

Aside from the five hypotheses, future research on media coverage of civil disobedience should expand the scope to more structural variables such as political opportunity and systemic forces. This may nuance the findings of this study by determining how the effects of social movements' choices compare to factors outside movements. Legal matters, political developments and public opinion are examples of factors that may affect media coverage of protests, but which fall outside the scope of this study. Differences between different types of media outlets – public or commercial, local or national – are also interesting in this regard. Furthermore, images are powerful framing devices and should be analyzed along with texts (Corrigan-Brown, 2016; Halfmann & Young, 2010; Arpan et al., 2006).

This study both advances and complicates the ethical discussion on civil disobedience (Habermas, 1985; Bedau, 1991; Celikates, 2016). A step forward could be offered by the idea that the prospect of hindrance may be counterproductive for a social movement. Breaking the law and interfering with other citizens' lives in the process does not seem to further a movement's cause – regardless of ethicality. A complication: civil disobedience is not always a conscious choice. What starts as a legal protest can be declared illegal by authorities. Can a movement with legal intentions be blamed for illegal actions?

Framing is well suited to capture the effectiveness of media coverage. It is flexible and detailed enough to create an in-depth account of coverage of a protest, while also sufficiently abstract to allow comparison with other cases. More generic measures such as master frames or the protest paradigm would capture less information, as most news pieces that focus on physical events still devote attention to a movement's claim (Snow & Benford, 1992; McLeod, 2007). Counts of citations and mentions are useful in support of the framing results, but do not say enough about the perspective of a news piece by themselves. The information they provide can be too coarse, such as the 'administrative sources' counted by Shahin et al. (2016), which can be experts as well as police.

Some limitations of this study need to be noted. First, the author could only observe Greenpeace's protest in person, which may have affected the interview questions and the amount of detail in which an account of the farmers' protest could be given. A conscious effort was made to prevent personal political preferences from playing part in the research process. Second, this study treats the two protests as isolated instances, while both operate in an ongoing debate. Especially the farmers' earlier protests may have played a role in how the media responded to the events of December 18th. Third, social movements were mainly regarded as unitary and strategic actors. Personality of decisionmakers, procedures and organizational culture may have affected the course of movements as a whole. A fourth limitation lies in the concept of effective media coverage. Above all, media coverage is a tool for social movements rather than a goal in itself – media mediate between activists and the public. The effectiveness of a protest should be measured in terms of public opinion and political decisions rather than media coverage. As Koopman (2004, p. 374) notes, negative media attention can have positive effects, and the reverse is also plausible. The step from news pieces to public opinion could not be made in this study. Social movements' dependency on media coverage should be critically evaluated (Cottle, 2008).

The protest arena is an important alternative to formal representative arenas. It is crucial that societal groups know how to navigate it so that their protests become a coherent voice in the public debate. When social movements resort to civil disobedience, the press may be the toughest judge.

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Appendix 1: Publication dates of unique news articles

	Farmers	Greenpeace	Total
29.11.2019	0	6	6
04.12.2019	0	1	1
05.12.2019	2	0	2
06.12.2019	4	0	4
07.12.2019	0	1	1
10.12.2019	1	0	1
11.12.2019	1	0	1
12.12.2019	1	1	2
13.12.2019	0	6	6
14.12.2019	1	32	33
15.12.2019	0	11	11
16.12.2019	4	3	7
17.12.2019	16	1	17
18.12.2019	37	1	38
19.12.2019	19	1	20
20.12.2019	3	1	4
21.12.2019	2	0	2
24.12.2019	1	0	1
Total	92	65	157

Appendix 2: Portrayal of activists per frame

	Agrarian	Being heard	Civilization	Conflict resolution	Ecological	Escalation	Fairness	Legal	Order	Politics	Religion	Total
Chaotic	1 20.00%	1 20.00%	1 50.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	3 25.00%	0 0.00%	2 8.00%	2 4.30%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	10 6.40%
Defending interests	4 80.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 2.80%	0 0.00%	5 41.70%	0 0.00%	5 20.00%	10 21.30%	11 100.00%	0 0.00%	36 22.90%
Friendly	0 0.00%	2 40.00%	0 0.00%	1 2.80%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 2.10%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	4 2.50%
Idealist	0 0.00%	2 40.00%	1 50.00%	5 13.90%	6 100.00%	1 8.30%	3 42.90%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	18 11.50%
Pious	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 100.00%	1 0.60%
Stubborn	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	26 72.20%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 14.30%	18 72.00%	1 2.10%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	46 29.30%
Troublemaker	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	3 8.30%	0 0.00%	3 25.00%	3 42.90%	0 0.00%	33 70.20%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	42 26.80%
Total	5 100.00%	5 100.00%	2 100.00%	36 100.00%	6 100.00%	12 100.00%	7 100.00%	25 100.00%	47 100.00%	11 100.00%	1 100.00%	157 100.00%

Appendix 3: Other variables, compared to the total frequency of a frame

	Agrarian	Being heard	Civilization	Conflict resolution	Ecological	Escalation	Fairness	Legal	Order	Politics	Religion	Total
Mentions perceived goal of activists	5	4	1	29	6	12	4	22	29	10	1	123
	100.00%	80.00%	50.00%	80.60%	100.00%	100.00%	57.10%	88.00%	61.70%	90.90%	100.00%	78.30%
Mentions legal decision with regard to protest	1	0	0	28	4	6	5	25	18	2	0	89
	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%	77.80%	66.70%	50.00%	71.40%	100.00%	38.30%	18.20%	0.00%	56.70%
Mentions hindrance or safety	2	2	0	10	0	10	6	17	47	6	0	100
	40.00%	40.00%	0.00%	27.80%	0.00%	83.30%	85.70%	68.00%	100.00%	54.50%	0.00%	63.70%
Mentions police intervention	0	1	1	35	1	1	7	8	16	1	0	71
	0.00%	20.00%	50.00%	97.20%	16.70%	8.30%	100.00%	32.00%	34.00%	9.10%	0.00%	45.20%
Cites activist	3	5	2	19	6	9	3	19	22	5	1	94
	60.00%	100.00%	100.00%	52.80%	100.00%	75.00%	42.90%	76.00%	46.80%	45.50%	100.00%	59.90%
Cites law enforcement	0	0	1	9	0	0	4	8	12	1	0	35
	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%	57.10%	32.00%	25.50%	9.10%	0.00%	22.30%
Cites authority related to protest issue	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	5
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.80%	0.00%	16.70%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.20%	0.00%	3.20%
Cites others	1	2	0	3	1	2	2	3	17	3	0	34
	20.00%	40.00%	0.00%	8.30%	16.70%	16.70%	28.60%	12.00%	36.20%	27.30%	0.00%	21.70%
Total	5	5	2	36	6	12	7	25	47	11	1	157
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Appendix 4: Frequency of other variables in news articles about each protest

	Farmers	Greenpeace	Total
Mentions perceived goal of activists	65 70.70%	58 89.20%	123 78.30%
Mentions legal decision with regard to protest	36 39.10%	53 81.50%	89 56.70%
Mentions hindrance or safety	77 83.70%	23 35.40%	100 63.70%
Mentions police intervention	24 26.10%	47 72.30%	71 45.20%
Cites activist	50 54.30%	44 67.70%	94 59.90%
Cites law enforcement	19 20.70%	16 24.60%	35 22.30%
Cites authority related to protest issue	4 4.30%	1 1.50%	5 3.20%
Cites others	30 32.60%	4 6.20%	34 21.70%
Total	92 100.00%	65 100.00%	157 100.00%

Appendix 5: Overview of news articles included in the content analysis

Source	Date	Title	Dominant frame
Unique news articles about the farmers' protest of December 18th, 2019			
Trouw	05/12/2019	De boeren dreigen de voedselvoorziening rond Kerstmis lam te leggen	Escalation
Trouw	05/12/2019	Boeren willen nieuwe acties: platleggen voedselvoorziening rond kerstrr	Order
De Stentor	06/12/2019	Twijfels bij Twentse actieboeren over supermarktblokkade	Agrarian
NRC	06/12/2019	Boeren en bouwers dreigen met harde acties rond Kerst	Escalation
Reformatorisch Dagblad	06/12/2019	Boze boeren dreigen voedselvoorziening rond kerstdagen lam te leggen	Escalation
De Stentor	06/12/2019	'Bij eerder protest was er sympathie voor de boeren...'	Order
PZC	10/12/2019	Stikstofmaatregelen blijven uit, nieuwe grootschalige actie boeren op 18 december	Politics
AD	11/12/2019	Landwinkel alternatief bij boerenblokkade?	Order
AD	12/12/2019	Twentse boeren bereiden acties in regio voor; wat en waar is 'verrassing'	Escalation
Telegraaf	14/12/2019	Boer: 'We kunnen overal opduiken'	Escalation
PZC	16/12/2019	Landbouw heeft meer vragen dan antwoorden	Politics
ANP	16/12/2019	MEDIAWATCH: Woensdag boerenacties bij tientallen distributiecentra	Legal
BN De Stem	16/12/2019	Woensdag boerenacties bij ruim veertig distributiecentra: onder andere in Breda, Etten-Leur en Roosendaal	Legal
Leeuwarder Courant	16/12/2019	Farmers Defence Force: geen blokkades van supermarkten	Legal
BNR Nieuwsradio	17/12/2019	Bouwers en boeren samen ten strijde	Agrarian
Eindhovens Dagblad	17/12/2019	FDF blaast alle acties af, bouwers gaan wel door en roepen boeren op zich aan te sluiten	Escalation
Metro	17/12/2019	Boeren demonstreren morgen bij tientallen distributiecentra	Escalation
De Gelderlander	17/12/2019	Politie paraat bij nieuwe acties	Conflict resolution
AD	17/12/2019	Boeren voeren woensdag actie bij distributiecentra in Beilen (Jumbo) en Gieten (Coop)	Order
AD	17/12/2019	Organisatie verwacht duizend boeren en bouwers in Apeldoorn tijdens protestdag: verkeersinfarct in aantocht	Order
AD	17/12/2019	Vier vragen over het boerenprotest in het Groene Hart: distributiecentra bereiden zich tóch voor	Order
BN De Stem	17/12/2019	Nettorama is voorbereid: 'Hoe? Dat zeggen we niet'	Order
De Gelderlander	17/12/2019	Opluchting bij Boni en Picnic: Boeren mogen distributiecentra niet blokkeren	Order
Reformatorisch Dagblad	17/12/2019	„Nederland woensdag op slot"	Order
Tubantia	17/12/2019	Zeker vijfhonderd trekkers uit Overijssel doen mee aan nieuw boerenprotest, als het door gaat	Order
Dagblad van het Noorden	17/12/2019	De angel lijkt uit het boerenprotest	Politics
Dagblad van het Noorden	17/12/2019	Met zalvende woorden probeert politiek het protest te bezweren	Politics
BN De Stem	17/12/2019	Brabantse boeren willen toch protesteren, maar dan niet als Farmers Defence Force	Legal
De Gelderlander	17/12/2019	Boeren razendsnel in beroep tegen 'verbod acties' bij distributiecentra van supermarkten	Legal
De Stentor	17/12/2019	FDF-voorman roept boeren op om af te zien van acties distributiecentra en supermarkten	Legal

Appendix 5: Overview of news articles included in the content analysis

Volkskrant	18/12/2019	Duitse boeren demonstreren mee: andere problemen, zelfde sentiment	Agrarian
Volkskrant	18/12/2019	'Dit boerenprotest is chaotisch en ongericht: het is ieder voor zich'	Escalation
Trouw	18/12/2019	Actievoerders in Tilburg beleven een teleurstellende dag: 'Waardeloos, ik heb er geen ander woord voor'	Being heard
ANP	18/12/2019	Protestboeren bereiken Mediapark (2)	Conflict resolution
Brabants Dagblad	18/12/2019	Boeren sparen supermarkten, maar halen bij Jumbo wel koffie met een koek	Conflict resolution
AD	18/12/2019	A1 en A35 weer vrijgegeven na urenlange blokkades door boze boeren	Order
AD	18/12/2019	Boeren sluiten protestdag af met frietje langs de A1 bij Bathmen	Order
AD	18/12/2019	Bouwers en boeren onderweg naar Shell Pernis	Order
AD	18/12/2019	Deel van protestbouwers komt vandaag naar Den Haag: 'Toeterend in stoet door stad rijden'	Order
AD	18/12/2019	Geen acties in de ochtend bij Jumbo in Woerden, wel drukte op N228	Order
AD	18/12/2019	Geen boeren- en bouwersprotest bij Lidl in Waddinxveen	Order
ANP	18/12/2019	Automobilisten merken veel van protestacties	Order
ANP	18/12/2019	Kleinschalig protest in Den Haag	Order
ANP	18/12/2019	Middelburg verwacht 100 trekkers in centrum (2)	Order
ANP	18/12/2019	Protestactie boeren bij Tata Steel voorbij (3)	Order
De Gelderlander	18/12/2019	Boeren weggestuurd bij distributiecentrum AH in Geldermalsen; trekkers vertrokken uit Nijmegen	Order
De Gelderlander	18/12/2019	Files in Utrecht blijven uit, geen protest bij distributiecentrum Nijkerk	Order
De Limburger	18/12/2019	Chaos verwacht in ochtendspits	Order
De Stentor	18/12/2019	ANWB verwacht extreem drukke ochtendspits door actie bouwers en boeren	Order
FD	18/12/2019	Demonstrerende boeren zorgen in het hele land voor files	Order
NRC	18/12/2019	Protest boeren en bouwers: lange files, korte blokkades ; Boeren en bouwers; Acties door het hele land: korte blokkades, lange files	Order
Parool	18/12/2019	Boerenprotesten: files, spookrijden en barbecue op de snelweg	Order
Parool	18/12/2019	Boze boeren zijn op drift	Order
Parool	18/12/2019	Ochtendspits vooralsnog rustig ondanks boerenprotest	Order
PZC	18/12/2019	Boeren lappen regels aan hun laars, 'slechts' honderd bekeuringen	Order
Trouw	18/12/2019	Politie deelt boetes uit, boeren blokkeren grenzen, Mediapark en snelwegen	Order
Tubantia	18/12/2019	Distributiecentrum Plus in Haaksbergen weer rustig na kort bezoekje van protesterende boeren	Order
Tubantia	18/12/2019	Boeren verrassen senatoren	Order
Tubantia	18/12/2019	LIVE Wilde actie Gelderse boeren: Achterhoekers willen provinciehuis platleggen, trekkers vanuit Wamel de A15 op	Order
ADR	18/12/2019	Stikstofakkoord of niet: de boeren voerden gewoon actie en die in stilte voorbereide protesten doen pijn	Politics
Dagblad van het Noorden	18/12/2019	Akkoord over stikstof; (boeren)protest blijft	Politics
De Gelderlander	18/12/2019	Dit zijn de belangrijkste stikstofafspraken tussen boeren en kabinet	Politics
De Stentor	18/12/2019	Boeren sluiten stikstofakkoord; acties onzeker	Politics

Appendix 5: Overview of news articles included in the content analysis

Noordhollands Dagblad	18/12/2019	Actiebereidheid onder boeren nog onverminderd groot	Politics
Reformatorisch Dagblad	18/12/2019	Gebedsgroep start actie "Bid voor onze boeren"	Religious
Metro	18/12/2019	Bouwers roepen boeren op tot protestacties	Legal
PZC	18/12/2019	Boerenactie gaat door onder andere vlag	Legal
AD	19/12/2019	Boze boeren vullen Goudse Markt: 'Als je met een groep vrienden op pad gaat, ben je er ook voor elkaar'	Agrarian
AD	19/12/2019	Burgemeester van Gouda over pop aan galg: 'Weg ermee'	Civilization
AD	19/12/2019	Het gaat niet meer om stikstof of minder vee: boeren strijden nu tegen instituties	Escalation
NRC	19/12/2019	Boeren radicaliseren en zetten bijval op het spel; Acties	Escalation
Parool	19/12/2019	Waarom trad de politie amper op?	Fairness
RTV Drenthe	19/12/2019	Burgemeesters lieten boeren hun gang gaan: 'Maar we moeten ze wel beboeten'	Fairness
De Gooi- en Eemlander	19/12/2019	Protest is vooral 'een gezellige boel'	Being heard
De Gooi- en Eemlander	19/12/2019	Worsten en gebakken ei bij protest	Being heard
AD	19/12/2019	'Onsmakelijke actie' met pop in Gouda onderzocht, protest zonder grote problemen verlopen	Order
AD	19/12/2019	Veel lof voor optreden Bruls tijdens boerenprotest in Nijmegen: 'Duidelijke taal van de burgemeester'	Order
ADR	19/12/2019	Boeren nu op afstand van Binnenhof gehouden	Order
Brabants Dagblad	19/12/2019	Chaos regeert op de trekker	Order
De Gelderlander	19/12/2019	Bruls blikt terug op boerenactie in Nijmegen: 'Het helpt als je rustig blijft en duidelijke taal spreekt'	Order
De Gooi- en Eemlander	19/12/2019	Protestactie Boze boeren blokkeren Mediapark	Order
De Limburger	19/12/2019	Opmaat of een laatste stuiptrekking	Order
Eindhovens Dagblad	19/12/2019	Toeterende tractoren in colonne naar Bavaria	Order
Tubantia	19/12/2019	Barbecueën op potdichte snelweg	Order
De Gelderlander	19/12/2019	Wie lost de boeren crisis op?	Politics
Metro	19/12/2019	'Boeren pakken het slim aan'	Politics
Telegraaf	20/12/2019	'Boeren politiek wisselgeld'	Agrarian
BN De Stem	20/12/2019	Met de chaos groeit ook het onbegrip rond het boerenprotest	Escalation
De Gooi- en Eemlander	20/12/2019	Tankstation door boeren gebruikt als 'buurthuis'	Order
Tubantia	21/12/2019	Waarom werden Twentse blokkeerboeren niet bekeurd, maar collega's op andere plekken wel?	Fairness
Volkskrant	21/12/2019	Melk in de mestput	Being heard
ADR	24/12/2019	Boeren moesten na overleg met politie spookrijden op A12	Order
Unique news articles about the Greenpeace protest of December 14th, 2019			
Fok.nl	29/11/2019	Greenpeace zet demonstratie op Schiphol Plaza door	Legal
AT5	29/11/2019	Greenpeace zet 'protestfestival' op Schiphol Plaza door ondanks bezwaren gemeente	Legal
Haarlems Dagblad	29/11/2019	Greenpeace op ramkoers met gemeente over festival Schiphol	Legal
Rodi.nl	29/11/2019	Belemmeren Protestival op Schiphol onaanvaardbaar voor Greenpeace	Legal

Appendix 5: Overview of news articles included in the content analysis

AD	29/11/2019	Greenpeace zet protest Schiphol Plaza door ondanks verbod	Legal
NH Nieuws	29/11/2019	Burgemeester verbiedt demonstratie op Schiphol Plaza, Greenpeace zet toch door	Legal
Haarlemmermeer Nieuws	04/12/2019	Forza! Haarlemmermeer vreest chaos op luchthaven Schiphol door demonstratiefestival Greenpeace	Order
Leidsch Dagblad	07/12/2019	Arrestaties Schiphol niet uitgesloten	Conflict resolution
ANP	12/12/2019	'Protestival' Greenpeace op plein Schiphol (2)	Legal
Volkskrant	13/12/2019	Greenpeace negeert verbod en voert dit weekend actie op Schiphol	Escalation
Boeddhistisch Dagblad	13/12/2019	Greenpeace: Grote klimaatactie op Schiphol dit weekeinde	Ecological
NRC	13/12/2019	'Actievoeren is een andere wereld, het is mijn tweede familie'	Ecological
Parool	13/12/2019	Greenpeace gaat toch actievoeren in Schiphol Plaza	Legal
Telegraaf	13/12/2019	'Protestival' Greenpeace	Legal
NH Nieuws	13/12/2019	Honderden activisten klaar voor 24-uurs bezetting Schiphol	Legal
RTL Nieuws	14/12/2019	Boosheid om 'hardhandige' aanhouding actievoerders Schiphol	Fairness
Fok.nl	14/12/2019	Schiphol plaza is ontruimd	Conflict resolution
AT5	14/12/2019	Schiphol Plaza ontruimd, tientallen klimaatactivisten weggesleept	Conflict resolution
AT5	14/12/2019	GroenLinks-raadslid Imane Nadif 'bestuurlijk verplaatst' bij klimaatprotest Schiphol	Conflict resolution
AD	14/12/2019	Voorzitter Vereniging tegen Vliegtuigoverlast opgepakt bij klimaatprotest Schiphol: 'Ze kenden geen pardon'	Conflict resolution
AD	14/12/2019	Protestival: Honderden activisten Greenpeace op 'grote vervuiler' Schiphol	Conflict resolution
AD	14/12/2019	26 activisten Greenpeace opgepakt bij klimaatprotest Schiphol	Conflict resolution
AD	14/12/2019	Marechaussee ontruimt Schiphol: activisten Greenpeace afgevoerd	Conflict resolution
ANP	14/12/2019	26 mensen opgepakt bij demonstratie Schiphol (6)	Conflict resolution
ANP	14/12/2019	Ruim 20 aanhoudingen bij demonstratie Schiphol (3)	Conflict resolution
ANP	14/12/2019	Activisten op Schiphol Plaza weigeren weg te gaan	Conflict resolution
Metro	14/12/2019	ACTIVISTEN OP SCHIPHOL WEGGEHAALD DOOR MARECHAUSSEE	Conflict resolution
NOS Jeugdjournaal	14/12/2019	Honderden activisten demonstreren op Schiphol	Conflict resolution
NOS.nl	14/12/2019	Klimaatprotest Schiphol Plaza voorbij, 26 arrestaties	Conflict resolution
NRC	14/12/2019	Protest op Schiphol	Conflict resolution
NRC	14/12/2019	Marechaussee arresteert 26 klimaatactivisten op Schiphol	Conflict resolution
Nu.nl	14/12/2019	26 arrestaties bij Greenpeace-protest Schiphol, demonstratie afgelopen	Conflict resolution
Parool	14/12/2019	Actievoerders Schiphol: 'We komen terug, op de landingsbaan of buiten'	Conflict resolution
Parool	14/12/2019	Marechaussee ontruimt Schiphol: activisten Greenpeace afgevoerd	Conflict resolution
RTL Nieuws	14/12/2019	Honderden klimaatactivisten op Schiphol Plaza, ME ingezet	Conflict resolution
Volkskrant	14/12/2019	Marechaussee verwijderd actievoerders Greenpeace uit Schiphol Plaza, 26 demonstranten gearresteerd	Conflict resolution
NH Nieuws	14/12/2019	Tientallen actievoerders Schiphol Plaza weggehaald, protest voorbij	Conflict resolution
Trouw	14/12/2019	Greenpeace gelooft niet in de 'mooie woorden' van Schiphol en komt vandaag in actie	Ecological

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Trouw	14/12/2019	Luchthaven moet 'dappere keuzes' maken	Ecological
Trouw	14/12/2019	'Het betoog van schiphol gaat alleen maar over geld'	Ecological
Volkskrant	14/12/2019	Demonstreren in 'het hart van een van de grootste vervuilers van Nederland'	Ecological
Hart van Nederland	14/12/2019	Chaos verwacht op Schiphol: Greenpeace bezet luchthaven met 'protestival'	Order
Leidsch Dagblad	14/12/2019	Klimaatactie Greenpeace op Schiphol	Legal
ANP	14/12/2019	Honderden actievoerders Greenpeace op Schiphol (2)	Legal
ANP	14/12/2019	Klimaatactie Greenpeace op Schiphol	Legal
ANP	14/12/2019	Spandoek Greenpeace op zuil bij Schiphol (2)	Legal
Noordhollands Dagblad	14/12/2019	Klimaatactie Greenpeace op Schiphol	Legal
Gids.tv	15/12/2019	Kinderen zien hoe papa gearresteerd wordt tijdens demonstratie Schiphol: "We doen het voor hen"	Civilization
AD	15/12/2019	Voorzitter Vereniging tegen Vliegtuigoverlast opgepakt bij klimaatprotest Schiphol: 'Ze kenden geen pardon'	Being heard
Fok.nl	15/12/2019	Alle klimaatactivisten vrij, Greenpeace gaat verder met #Protestival	Conflict resolution
AT5	15/12/2019	Alle opgepakte klimaatactivisten vrijgelaten	Conflict resolution
ANP	15/12/2019	Rustige tweede actiedag Greenpeace	Conflict resolution
ANP	15/12/2019	Actievoerders Greenpeace weer vrij	Conflict resolution
Blikopnieuws	15/12/2019	Greenpeace voert opnieuw actie op Schiphol	Conflict resolution
NOS.nl	15/12/2019	Arrestanten klimaatprotest Schiphol Plaza vrijgelaten	Conflict resolution
NU Junior	15/12/2019	Klimaatactivisten weggehaald van Schiphol	Conflict resolution
Nu.nl	15/12/2019	Alle opgepakte klimaatactivisten van protest op Schiphol weer vrij	Conflict resolution
NH Nieuws	15/12/2019	Greenpeace sluit weekend lang actievoeren op Schiphol af	Conflict resolution
Noordhollands Dagblad	16/12/2019	Activisten op Schiphol: 'We komen terug'	Conflict resolution
NRC	16/12/2019	'Dit ging om veiligheid, niet om overlast'	Legal
Telegraaf	16/12/2019	Klimaatprotest met luier om	Legal
Noordhollands Dagblad	17/12/2019	'We zaten niemand in de weg'	Conflict resolution
NH Nieuws	18/12/2019	Greenpeace boos over Douane Kerstshow op Schiphol Plaza: "Meten met twee maten"	Fairness
De Gooi- en Eemlander	19/12/2019	Kamervragen over concert Schiphol Plaza. Haarlemmermeer wil dit soort activiteiten niet meer [video]	Fairness
Zaanstad Nieuws	20/12/2019	PvdD nieuwsgierig naar rol gemeente bij bestuurlijke verplaatsing	Fairness