

Natura 2000 in the Netherlands:

An Analysis of Framing and Standing in Dutch Newspapers between 1998 and 2009

Master Thesis Report



Strategic Communication Group (COM)

August 2016



WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY
WAGENINGEN UR

Title: Natura 2000 in the Netherlands: An Analysis of Framing and Standing in Dutch Newspapers between 1998 and 2009

Master thesis Report - CPT-81333 MSc Thesis Strategic Communication

Student: Joost Heeremans

Registration number: 850508315020

Contact: joostheeremans@hotmail.com

Supervisor: dr. ir. Severine van Bommel, WUR, Strategic Communication Group

External supervisor: dr. ir. Raoul Beunen, Open University, Faculty of Management, Science & Technology.

Examiner: Prof. dr. Peter Feindt

Department of Wageningen University Social Sciences,

Strategic Communication Group,

Wageningen University and Research Center.

The Netherlands.

August 17th 2016

To my parents and my girlfriend

Abstract

Media is an important bridge between politicians and the public, but also an arena to fight for the public opinion. This dual role makes media, and in this case newspapers, interesting to look at when researching how a particular image has come about. The implementation of the EU nature conservation policy Natura 2000 in the Netherlands has been a slow process in which Natura 2000 was more and more perceived as a policy that limits economic activities. This research shows how Natura 2000 is framed in Dutch newspapers (both local and national), how different actors gained standing and how these two developed over time. Natura 2000 was more and more framed as a problem, especially in local newspapers, while it was far less framed as a solution. In both local and national newspapers "Natura 2000 as a problem" was the dominant frame and overall there was no frame parity, although in the national newspapers "Natura 2000 as a problem" was less dominant than in the local newspapers. In local newspapers politicians and agriculture got 70% of the standing, while in national newspapers this was only 46%. Nature organisations were getting more relative standing in national newspaper, just as entrepreneurs, recreation and scientists. Local newspapers rely more on the same (types of) sources than national newspapers, while national newspapers showed a more equal division of standing among the different actors.

Keywords: Natura 2000, framing, frame parity, standing, nature conservation, implementation, local newspapers, The Netherlands

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors for their patience and help with my thesis. First, I would like to thank Severine for her input and comments on the theoretical part, her suggestions and feedback have been very essential for this part of the thesis. Second, I would like to thank Raoul for inspiring me for the topic of Natura 2000 and for always taking the time to help me along the process. It has been a difficult process for me, and I am convinced that without his support and supervision this thesis would not have been finished.

I also owe many thanks to my parents, who always kept faith in me and supported me in many ways. My girlfriend Evelien Cornelissen has had an very important influence on my thesis, she is always the first one to read my work and to critically comment on it. Her comments have been as important for me as her support, she always kept believing in me.

I thank Irene Verduijn for helping me with the framing analysis in the initial search. It was important to have another person look at the research material and to see how she would have determined the frames. Her input was of great value to me.

I would like to thank the people of the Strategic Communication Group at Wageningen University, for providing me with a working space, free coffee during meetings with my supervisors and helping me with arranging the colloquium.

Finally I would like to thank my friends and family who did not get the attention they deserve when I was busy with my thesis. Your understanding and patience means a lot to me.

Table of Contents

- 1. Problem Statement 1
- 2. Theoretical framework 4
 - 2.1. Standing..... 4
 - 2.2 Framing..... 4
 - 2.3 Frame parity 6
- 3. Methods 7
 - 3.1 Research Design 7
 - 3.2 Data Collection 8
 - 3.3 Data analysis – initial and extensive search 9
- 4. Results 10
 - 4.1 Media attention..... 10
 - 4.2 Standing..... 13
 - 4.3 Framing..... 16
 - 4.3.1 The development of sub-frames over time..... 24
 - 4.3.2 Framing and Standing..... 25
 - 4.4 Frame parity 26
- 5. Conclusions..... 29
 - 5.1 Discussion 29
 - 5.2 Scientific reflection..... 32
- 6. References 33
- 7. Appendices 36

1. Problem Statement

The media are an important bridge between politics and citizens. Media disseminate information among the civil society, give context to political decisions and help in that way the public to monitor their politicians. In a democracy this is important since it gives the public the possibility to check whether the politicians that they elected keep up their oaths, and to help them make informed choices in future elections (Sabir & Rasul 2011). This makes media not only an important asset for the public, but also for politicians and interest groups who try to influence the public opinion. Conversely the media are also influenced by the public opinion. *“Each system interacts with the other: media discourse is part of the process by which individuals construct meaning, and public opinion is part of the process by which journalists and other cultural entrepreneurs develop and crystallize meaning in public discourse.”* (Gamson and Modigliani 1989).

Media are not only an arena for politicians and interest groups that try to influence public opinion, media are also a representation of public opinion. Since they *‘constantly make available suggested meaning and are the most accessible in a media-saturated society (...) their content can be used as the most important indicator of the general issue culture’* (Gamson and Modigliani 1989). Journalists play an important role in this, since they are *‘purveyors of meaning in their own right’* but also *‘gatekeepers who grant access or withhold it from other speakers’* (Ferree et al. 2002). There is a lot of research on the role of media (McQuail 2010; Sabir & Ransul 2011; Entman 2004). This research is not focussing on this role or how the media should act in a democracy. But it does look at the media as an important bridge between politics and public, for public to monitor the politicians (Sabir & Ransul 2011) while politicians *‘use media frames as surrogates for public opinion’* (Entman 2004).

Since media are both an arena to fight for public opinion, as well as a representation of public opinion, it is very interesting to look at the media when researching a certain subject. Researches that look at the media often do so to discover how a crisis situation has developed (e.g. Feindt & Kleinschmit 2011) or how a government or administration has tried to get public support for their policy in the media (Entman 2004). This research takes a different approach, by looking at Natura 2000, a case that has been in the media for a long period (over ten years) and of which we know that the perception has changed over time (Beunen et al. 2013; Franx & Bouwmeester 2010). Besides that, Natura 2000 is a case with a strong local component, in implementation, but also in media attention. By researching *what* is being written about Natura 2000 in news articles over time and *who* is able to voice his or her opinion in these articles, we can discover how this changed perception has come about. While we can compare local/regional newspapers with national newspapers to see how they differ.

Local newspapers are an important source for local matters and make it possible for the local public to monitor their local governments, just as national newspapers do for national matters. However, local newspapers are under pressure of declining circulations (Tijdelijke Commissie Innovatie en Toekomst Pers. 2009) which puts pressure on their role in providing the regional public with regional news. This pressure is even higher than on a national level, because local newspapers operate on smaller markets with less advertising income and with less other media sources to play their essential (local) role for democracy (ibid). In England, in reaction on this same decline in circulations, local newspapers tend to rely more and more on information from sources, while less time and money is invested in actual research (O’Neill & O’Connor, 2008). In research on this situation in the Netherlands it seems that local newspapers have a strong similarity with the messages provided by industry (Boumans & Vliegthart 2014).

Natura 2000 has been introduced by the European Union to create a network across Europe in which biodiversity is conserved. This network is based on the premises that ecology and socio-economic

demands can be in harmony in these areas. The Bird Directives (EEC 1979) and the Habitat Directives (EEC 1992) form the legal basis for this network. Following these directives the member states of the European Union are responsible for selecting the sites that need protection and including the European legislation for biodiversity conservation into their national legislation.

When the Habitats Directives were adopted in 1992, the European Union was under Dutch Presidency and the final text of these directives was significantly influenced by the Netherlands. This led to a view in which the Habitats Directives were perceived as 'Dutch Directives' by officials from the Netherlands, but also from abroad (Wurzel 2008). While the Netherlands were a forerunner in the formulation of Natura 2000, they became a laggard in the implementation (van der Zouwen & van den Top 2002). The first proposal for the list of sites under the Habitat Directives had to be finished in June 1995, but the majority of the member states, including the Netherlands, failed to do so. It would take another ten years for most member states to provide a more or less adequate list, although some countries had still not provided a list with enough sites in 2007 (European Environmental Bureau 2015).

The potential consequences of the Natura 2000 legislation for spatial planning (but also for other sectors) in the Netherlands became clear when the construction of an industrial zone in Limburg was delayed because of the presence of the European Hamster (*Cricetus cricetus*) on that location. 'Vereniging Das en Boom' (Society for the Protection of Endangered Species) successfully appealed to European legislation and for many actors it became clear that Natura 2000 could have far reaching consequences on spatial planning in general, but also for (local) governments, agriculture and other economic activities (Van der Zouwen & Van den Top 2002). The European hamster became a symbol for nature legislation hampering economic activities as the case was widely covered in the media. The presence of certain species could have serious consequences for economic activities because the legal requirements caused a lot of uncertainty, expensive delays and costly lawsuits. The media gave space for these feelings of unhappiness about this new situation, as they reported about these cases, often without making a difference between the European legislation and the Dutch implementation (Beunen et al. 2013).

The media report about and gives context to Natura 2000, but it also gives a stage for actors to express their views on Natura 2000 to the public, and for some actors this can be an important strategy. For local newspapers in those areas the designation of a Natura 2000 site can be an important topic and actors that want to express their views on this topic will probably be able to do so. This is an interesting point, because actors that are able to get their opinions directly quoted in news articles are able to directly influence the content of these news articles. When these actors gain the status of a regular media source about Natura 2000 this is called having *standing* (Ferree et al. 2002). Standing means having a voice in the media, which enables you to directly influence media content and even become a regular media source on a certain issue. It is different from just getting any kind of coverage in the media, without being able to voice an own interpretation. For example, the problems farmers face with Natura 2000 are widely reported in the media, but do others talk about the farmers, or are the farmers able to get their own interpretations quoted in news articles?

When only one actor is able to get his interpretations quoted, this might lead to a situation in which one view on Natura 2000 becomes dominant in the media. Natura 2000 is a controversial issue, with actors supporting this policy and actors opposing to it. When the media would only give standing to one actor they might present the public only one frame of the issue, which would be a misrepresentation of the actual debate around Natura 2000. A frame is a mental construct about a certain issue in which a problem is defined, a cause is diagnosed, a moral judgement is being made and a remedy is being suggested (Entman 1993). When these four elements of a frame on an issue tend to show a lot of similarity and appear every time a news article reports about a certain issue, we can call this frame dominance (Entman 2004). In an ideal state of free press we have two or more

interpretations receiving something like equal play in the media, a state of frame parity. Often topics tend towards frame dominance, or are in frame contestation.

In literature on Natura 2000 (Beunen et al. 2013; Franx & Bouwmeester 2010; Arnouts & Kistenkas 2011) it was found that the “all is locked” mantra around Natura 2000 was becoming dominant, counterarguments were not expressed or were not picked up by the media and it seemed as if the public was only presented one side of the story. The view of Natura 2000 putting a lock on economic activities was also heard during information evenings and public hearings. These meetings, organised to inform the public about the designation of a Natura 2000 site and the formulation of the management plans, were used by representatives of (local) economic sectors, to voice anxiety and frustration against Natura 2000 (Beunen et al. 2013). But it also resonated in national politics, when the Dutch prime minister Balkenende sent a letter to the president of the European Union Barroso in which he stated that ‘Natura 2000 threatens to put an end to the combination of nature conservation and economic activity, a combination to which in part we owe our natural diversity’. The responsible state secretary of the subsequent cabinet, Henk Bleker, even said that the Netherlands were gold-plating the European rules, by going beyond the EU obligations for Natura 2000 (Bleker 2011a,b).

This view on Natura 2000 as a policy that limits economic activities has become dominant over time, but this has been a process. The frames of Natura 2000 are not static and their share in the media can change over the years. Beunen et al (2013) already found the performativity of a negative articulation of the Natura 2000 story, which almost can be seen as a self-fulfilling prophecy. This connects well with how the media work and the role they play in society. In one way they are giving the public the information they need to form an informed opinion, but they are at the same time a representation of the public opinion (Gamson and Modigliani 1989). A negative image can in that way have a self-reinforcing effect. Research on Natura 2000 and the implementation in Dutch nature policy has already looked at different aspects of the progress. Whether it was due to a too top-down approach (Bryan 2012; Keulartz 2009), a too strict implementation schedule (Engelen et al.2008; Sumares and Fidélis 2011), or too ambitious goals (van der Zouwen & van den Top 2002), in general the whole process has not been perceived as a success. Analysing both the local and national newspapers on this topic and especially the focus on the development of the frames and standing gives a new and relevant insight on this subject and can help our understanding of how the negative image of Natura 2000 emerged and developed between 1997 and 2009. This leads to the following research question that guides this research:

How has the framing of Natura 2000 and the standing in news articles about Natura 2000 developed over time?

This research aims to show the development of the framing of Natura 2000 and the standing that different actors get in the news articles. The implementation of Natura 2000 in the Netherlands has been a difficult process, and actors on the economic side as well as on the ecological side only seem to move further away from each other. They even acknowledge that they position themselves quite extreme which makes negotiations between the two sides even tougher (Arnouts & Kistenkas 2011). By looking at the news articles, at who is able to give his or her opinion in news articles and how Natura 2000 is framed, and doing both over a longer period of time, we can discover how this situation has emerged and developed. The inclusion of both local and national newspapers makes it possible to compare the two on standing and framing. This helps to understand the development of the debate, because the local consequences of Natura 2000 are very different than the national consequences and this will (at least for a part) be reflected in the local and national media. Understanding the differences in standing and framing between local and national newspapers is also interesting for other policy decision that have a strong local impact, like for example the location of asylum centres.

Research on framing and standing is a well-researched field, especially framing is a very popular theory in communication and media studies. But a lot of researches in this field focuses on a government or administration that tries to get public support for their policy, like American presidents on war or foreign policies (Entman 2004) or take the communication around a crisis situation like the BSE-crisis (Feindt & Kleinschmit 2011). This research differs from most researches on framing by looking at a large time-span, which covers several successive national and local administrations, and it differs in subject, an EU nature conservation policy that needs to be implemented by national governments. How both local and national newspapers report about a supranational policy like Natura 2000 that has strong local consequences will be interesting to research, also in the light of the current wave of Euroscepticism in countries in the European Union.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Standing

As journalists act as gatekeepers and determine till some extent who has a voice in the media, it is interesting to see who is able to enter the media arena on a certain issue, or who has the *standing*. Standing refers to *'gaining the status of a regular media source whose interpretations are directly quoted'* (Ferree et al. 2002). It is important to make a distinction between having standing and receiving coverage in the media. Having standing means that you can give your own interpretations and meaning to certain events in the media, that you are an actor with a voice. Getting coverage in the media is less active, you are merely an object being discussed by others instead of being able to express your own views.

Persons who have standing around an issue are able to directly influence the content of news articles about that issue. Especially when they become regular media sources on a specific topic, these persons or actors are able to give their own context to certain events, to *frame* the issue.

2.2 Framing

Framing is a way of getting a certain message out there by carefully selecting what to express and what not to express about a certain event. It is about giving meaning to something by giving context about the causes, why we should care about it, what we should do about it and who is to blame. This context is a perceived reality which the expresser or user of 'this frame' (consciously or not) presents to his public. The public, when picking up such a frame, can share the view of the expresser about the causes, why it is important, who is to blame and what we should do about it. As Entman (1993) puts it: *"Frames, then, **define problems**- determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; **diagnose causes** – identify the forces creating the problem; **make moral judgments** – evaluate causal agents and their effects; and **suggest remedies** – offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects. A single sentence may perform more than one of these four framing function, although many sentences in a text may perform none of them. And a frame in any particular text may not necessarily include all four functions.*

"A frame is an emphasis in salience of different aspects of a topic (...) framing is concerned with the presentation of issues"(Vreese, C. H. de 2005). When actors are able to get standing in news articles about controversial issues, their framing of the issues suggests what is at stake. *"Frames are parts of political arguments, journalistic norms, and social movements' discourse. They are alternative ways of defining issues, endogenous to the political and social world."*(*ibid*). So whenever an issue becomes controversial, and often (newsworthy) political issues are controversial (Denham & Bryan 2010), they can give rise to alternative framing of that issue. Actors who gain standing are not the only ones who

are able to frame an issue, journalists are also purveyors of meaning in their own right (Ferree et al 2002).

Framing can be observed in various forums, a forum includes an arena (in which actors engage in public speak acts) a gallery (the audience observing the arena) and a backstage (where (potential) speakers work out their ideas and their strategies). The public sphere are all forums together, in which general mass media provide a master forum because the actors in other forums are either using these media as a way to communicate their message or are part of the gallery, observing the media (Ferree et al 2002). Other forums can be religious forums, social movements forums or scientific forums, but these forums are sideshows of the master forum of mass media.

So framing can be observed in different forums on a lot of issues or topics. However, this makes identifying frames on a certain topic difficult, because the frames that are used are often very case specific. There is an inductive approach, in which the frames emerge from the material during the analysis and a deductive approach, in which the frames are defined prior to the analysis (Vreese, C. H. de 2005). This research takes an inductive approach, even though literature (Beunen et al. 2013; Franx & Bouwmeester 2010; Arnouts & Kistenkas 2011) have already provided me with ideas of what I can expect from the debate around Natura 2000, the frames are still identified and categorized as they are found in the news articles.

Framing theory can be used as a way of studying media effects, as mass media are the major site of political contest (Ferree et al 2002), the frames used in this forum are important indicators for what the (political) contest is about. Given the importance of media in reporting about and giving a stage for political contest, it is no surprise that studying media effects has a long history.

McQuail (2010) recognizes four phases in studying media effects. The first phase was influenced by the new media like film and radio that were believed to have considerable power to shape opinion. This considerable power of new media should also be seen in the light of the First World War and the propaganda around it and the formation of the Soviet-Union, in which this power seemed to be immense. The second phase which was roughly between the late 1930's and the late 1960's, was about testing the assumed immense power of media. It was found that media alone did not have the immense effect it was thought to have, and individual factors seemed to be more important. The third phase was challenging 'the media impotence' of the second phase and returned to the concept of powerful mass media. The focus in this phase was more on long term effects of media and to collective effects on climates of opinion, and it was recognized that the way media select, process and shape content can have a strong influence on how it is received and interpreted. The fourth phase that started in the late 1970's, is the phase in which social constructivism becomes the important view on media effects. The media offer the audience ready-made meaning, providing information, the appropriate way of interpreting it, forming value judgements and reacting to it. The audience then decides whether to adopt the presented view or not.

The media is not the only source that offers the public this information and interpretations, other forums, but also personal experiences influence someone's opinion on a matter. This leads to a view on media effects in which the effects are much more 'negotiated'. The media offer a view of reality and the individuals in the audience construct their own view of reality in interaction with the symbolic constructions offered by the media. Alternative sources that can be used by individuals to form an opinion can also be different media sources that present a different ready-made meaning to certain effects.

You can make a distinction between media frames and individual frames, the first being the way media present an issue, the latter being a way in which the individual interprets the information (Scheufele 1999). This research will use news articles about Natura 2000 and will look at how the issue is framed in the media, and does not look at the individual interpretations. This is of course,

only part of the story, but since I am interested in how Natura 2000 is framed in the media and how this has developed over time, which actors got standing and how the different media presented the different frames and different actors, this is the part of the story that is relevant. This research looks at what the public gets presented by the media, and not how the public processes what they get presented.

I believe that this research fits in the best with Entman's theory on framing. Maybe most important, it has four characterizations of a frame that make it very applicable on news articles, while not needing the audience's interpretation. Defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments and suggesting remedies are four elements that give the relevant information about a certain matter. These four characterizations can differ strongly between frames, and it is important to keep them in mind. For example, statements that support Natura 2000 probably have defined the problem as a loss of biodiversity, and see Natura 2000 as the (or a) remedy. While statements that are negative about Natura 2000 might see Natura 2000 as the problem, or maybe the cause of lost income, but not as the remedy. When we look at the news articles about Natura 2000 through this perspective of Entman, we will be able to see the different sides of the story and we will be able to compare them. If we have to compare statements that present Natura 2000 as a good policy against biodiversity loss with statements that blame Natura 2000 for financial losses, without looking at these four characteristics it will be easy to get lost. These statements are both about Natura 2000, but we can only see their connection clearly if we know which role they play, which of the four elements they are about. Besides that, Entman's theory on framing connects well with his theory on frame parity, which will also be used in this research to determine how the media are reporting about this issue, are different views equally present in news articles, or is one view more dominant?

2.3 Frame parity

Since we are searching for different frames and their relative importance in different news articles, but also in different papers, local as well as national newspapers, we might expect a lot of different views on the matter and therefore different frames. *Frame parity* is an ideal state in free press in which two (or more) interpretation receive something like equal play (Entman 2004). The other side of the spectrum is *frame dominance* in which one frame is dominant in the debate. In between the two is *frame contestation* in which a single frame is not completely dominant in the debate, but alternative frames are getting less attention than the dominant frame. There is not a set of percentages or relative shares that prescribes when a situation is frame parity, frame contestation or frame dominance. In fact, there are a lot of subjects in which there are not a lot of different perspectives that need to be presented in an equal way, or subjects without much different opinions or without any controversy. For example climate change, there are critics who question our influence on climate change, but do their frames need to get the same amount of attention in the media as the frames that do recognize our influence on climate change? People will be informed in an equal way, but is that equal division of both frames an honest representation of how the opinions are divided among climate scientists? I believe the theory of frame parity is very case specific, and I use it more as an ideal state and to be able to label the different relative shares of the different frames over time. It is not a operationalised set of percentages, tailor-made for this, or any specific subject. This might be a reason why frame parity theory, in contrast to framing theory, is not very common in scientific literature.

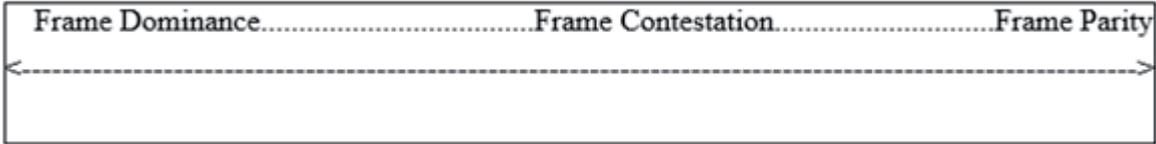


figure 1.1 Continuum between a single frame dominance and frame parity in which two or more frames are equally present and important. (Entman 2004)

Frame parity requires a counter-frame that is an alternative view of the other frame and that has the same importance and resonance in the debate as the one it contests. The counter-frame has its own definition of the problem, its own diagnosis of the causes, its own moral judgments and its own suggested remedies. The idea is that with frame parity the people reading a news article that has both, opposing views presented in an equal way, can make their own interpretation freely by weighing the different characterizations of the different frames according to their own ideas. This state of frame parity is not something you find very often (Entman 2004), more usual is a debate about a subject in which the frames tend towards frame dominance, or between frame dominance and frame contestation. By showing which frames are important, and by looking into these frames and comparing them among each other it will be possible to determine whether different, competing frames, get equal play in the newspapers, or whether the public is being informed in a more one-sided way. And this can be determined over time, was one frame always dominant, or was there a form of frame parity at some point during the debate?

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design

This research on framing and standing in news articles about Natura 2000 is designed as a case study. To use the theories of standing, framing and frame parity in news articles, I need a case or subject with a name that could serve as a search term to find the relevant news articles. In other words, the subject should not have several different names changing over time and the name should not have different meanings; both would result in blurred search results full of irrelevant news articles or relevant news articles that are not found because it was not always called the same way.

Natura 2000 is a case which name is a perfect search term, the name 'Natura 2000' appears in the media in the 1990's and stays there till 2016 and during that period the name of this policy has not changed. Besides these practical considerations, more importantly, Natura 2000 is a very interesting case to look at. As suggested in literature (Beunen et al. 2013), around Natura 2000 an 'all is locked-mantra' arose which has had its effect on the implementation. So looking at the framing and standing over the years, and how this has developed might give us interesting insights on how the framing of Natura 2000 in the media has changed. We know that something changed over the years, and we want to find out how this actually happened. By including the frame parity theory as something like an 'ideal state' and looking how this has developed over the years will give us new insights in how media report about a matter. The inclusion of local as well as national newspapers, gives the possibility to compare the two which might increase our understanding of the case. As the plans of Natura 2000 became more concrete the matter became more interesting for local media, as it became clear which areas needed protection and what this could mean for economic activities around these areas. What this increased relevancy meant for the framing of Natura 2000, the standing in the news articles and the frame parity will be interesting to look at.

In case studies results can be very case specific and are often hard to compare to other (case) studies. The fact that framing analyses on a subject are often also very case specific, with frames emerging from the material (inductive approach) adds to this problem. However, although Natura 2000 is a case, the focus on local and national newspapers, standing, framing and frame parity and how media report about this nature policy can still offer interesting insights. This might increase our understanding of how a negative view on a subject develops in media and how local and national

newspapers differ in this, an insight that goes beyond the subject of Natura 2000 which might be adding to our understanding on the framing of whole different cases.

3.2 Data Collection

First, the news articles about Natura 2000 were collected. This was done with the use of LexisNexis that makes it possible to search through news articles from Dutch newspapers. The search terms were “Natura 2000” and “Natura2000”. To make sure that the news articles I found were really about Natura 2000 and not just news articles that mentioned it without really going into it, I added to the search term HLEAD (Natura). This made sure that the news articles I found mentioned “Natura” in the document headline or in the leading paragraph. This is an effective tool, especially in news articles because the main elements of a newsworthy story are usually mentioned in the leading paragraph or in the headlines. So news articles that questioned Natura 2000, or the consequences for local economics for example were collected, while news articles that mentioned Natura 2000 in a small remark on the end of an article were filtered out.

Another addition to the search terms was the exclusion of two magazines, namely Boerderij and Boerderij Vandaag. These two (actually one, but they show up as two different papers in the results) are classified as newspapers in LexisNexis, probably because they are published five days a week. But they were much more like a farmers magazine than a newspaper, regular news with no strong connection to agriculture is not being reported about in these magazines. So Natura 2000, which does have an effect on agriculture which is very relevant for people working in that field, receives a disproportionate large share of attention, since news that is not related to agriculture is not being reported about. Further, the print run is low, below 4.500 during the week and below 9.000 in weekends. Initial searches resulted in over a third of the total of articles coming from Boerderij or Boerderij Vandaag. I think that inclusion of these two magazines would give an incorrect reflection of the debate about Natura 2000.

The timespan of the research is from the first news article that mentions Natura 2000 in a Dutch newspaper in the heading or leading paragraph, which was on April 15th 1998, till December 31st 2009. LexisNexis has a tool that enables you to exclude news articles that show a high or moderate similarity with other articles. This is a good tool to use in this research, because it makes sure that I did not get a similar news article that was published in different (often local editions of national) newspapers multiple times in the results. Exclusion of news articles with moderate similarity worked the best for this research, since news articles with moderate similarity were still almost exact copies of each other, often with a small difference in one sentence. For the focus of this research these differences were unimportant because they were not different in the frames they used.

3.3 Data analysis – initial and extensive search

After the data collection I divided my research in two parts, an initial search and an extensive search. The initial search was meant to help shape the extensive search, like the selection of the local newspapers. The first 191 news articles in chronologically order from 1998 formed the initial search. The five local newspapers that had the most news articles about Natura 2000 in this initial search were analysed in the extensive search. These are Noordhollands Dagblad (North Holland), Leeuwarder Courant (Friesland), Dagblad Tubantia (Eastern part of the Netherlands), Provinciale Zeelandse Courant (Zeeland) and De Gelderlander (Gelderland). Algemeen Dagblad (had seven different local editions) and De Stentor (eight different local editions) had none of their local editions publishing enough news articles about Natura 2000, but were also problematic because of these high amounts of local editions. Including them would have caused problems how to analyse them, because the local editions often contained the same articles. These were then filtered out of the LexisNexis results because of their high similarity, so I could not treat them as one paper. But when treating them as seven or eight different newspapers, I would miss news articles that were published as exact copies in the different local edition. Business magazines were also left out of the extensive analysis, their content is too specifically aimed at a certain public (e.g. poultry farmers) to be part of this analysis.



figure 1.2 Local newspapers and their regional coverage (red is covered)

The extensive search contained 326 news articles that were analysed on content, this made, together with the 191 news articles from the initial search, a total of 517 news articles of the 666 news articles that were published between 1998 and 31st of December 2009 (78% of total).

To determine standing, the persons that got to give their opinion in news articles were being categorised in different groups. These groups are agriculture (either a farmer or an agricultural organisation), politicians (local, provincial, national, European or responsible minister/ministry), nature organisations (either local or national), entrepreneurs (either one or an organisation (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, but also reed growers)), scientists (either a biologist or other), recreational entrepreneurs (either one or an organisation for entrepreneurs in the recreational sector) and other/miscellaneous.

News articles about Natura 2000 were carefully read to find the different frames they contained, the statements that were found were categorized in a sub-frame, based on how they framed Natura 2000. These sub-frame categories were created as they are found in the news articles. The sub-frames were categorised into frames at the end of the analysis. After the initial search, a selection of news articles that were analysed on the frames by me were analysed by another researcher. I found one with a bachelor in Forest- and Nature conservation and a Master in Communication and with experience in framing analyses. I provided her with the proposal and the methods, and let her analyse a random selection. Afterwards we compared and discussed some small differences in sub-frames. Overall we came to very similar results.

The development of sub-frames was being determined by dividing the results in two parts (one before October 2007 and one after) and by comparing the relative shares of the sub-frames in both periods. Whenever a relative share of a sub-frame differed with more than 10% of what we could expect (based on the relative share of all the sub-frames taken together in both periods) this

indicated an increase or decrease in use. These two periods were chosen because I needed to divide all the news articles in a way that would make both the shares as equal as possible, without being in a peak of attention. Before October 2007 42% of all the articles were published, and after October 2007 58% (these percentages were corrected in the calculations so the expected relative share of the sub-frames was 42% before 2007, and 58% after). A peak of attention was avoided because new sub-frames might have emerged in these peaks of attention and their development would have been missed if the division was made in the period they emerged.

4.Results

In this chapter I will present my findings from the media analysis on news articles about Natura 2000. First I will go into the media attention over time, second I will show the standing and how this has developed over time, third I will show how the issue is framed over time and fourth I will go into the frame parity.

4.1 Media attention

Between January 1st 1998 and December 31st 2009 I found 666 articles about Natura 2000. From these 666 articles, 562 (84,4%) were from local/regional newspapers, 93 (14%) were from national newspapers, 9 (1,4%) were from business magazines and 2 were from an opinion magazine (0.3%). Within these 666 articles, 1200 statements were found that were categorized into sub-frames.

Natura 2000 has been in de media for a long period, but there are some clear peaks in media attention over the years. If we look at the differences between the years (figure 1.3) there is a clear rise in media attention visible over the year, especially in 2007 (total of 152 news articles), 2008 (177) and 2009 (282). While in the first years there is a lot less attention in the newspapers for Natura 2000.

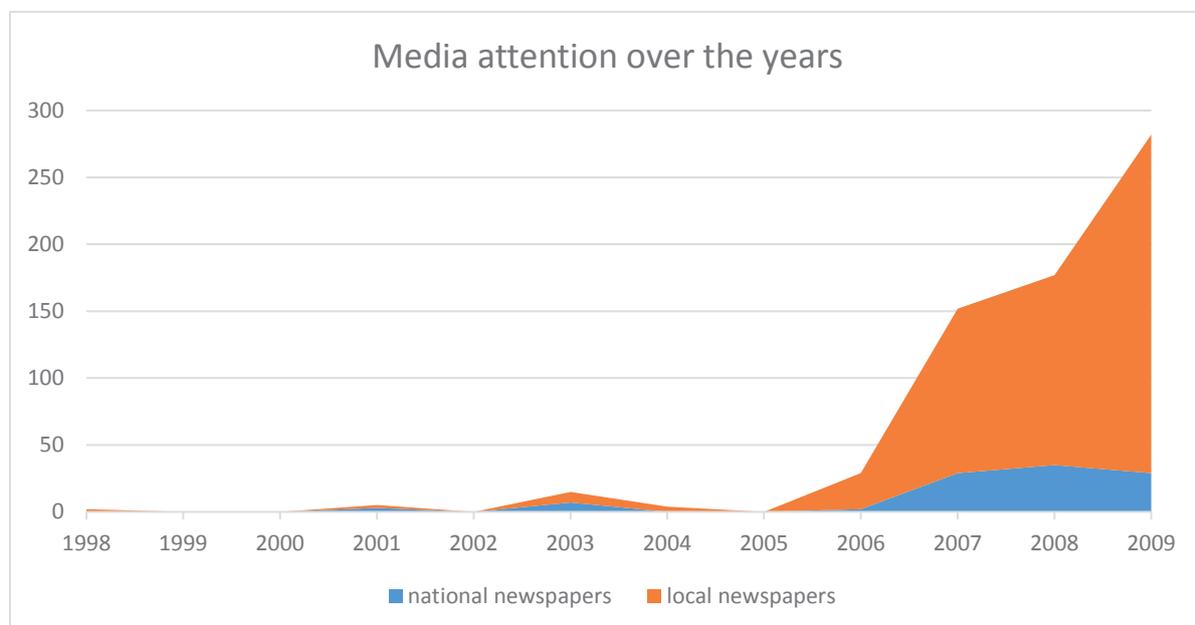


Figure 1.3 Media attention over the years in both local and national newspapers

To get a better view on the peaks of attention in the last four years we need to zoom in on the graph. Figure 1.4 shows the amount of news articles on Natura 2000 in both national as local newspapers

per month from January 2006 till December 2009. Key events around Natura 2000 are marked at the dates they took place.

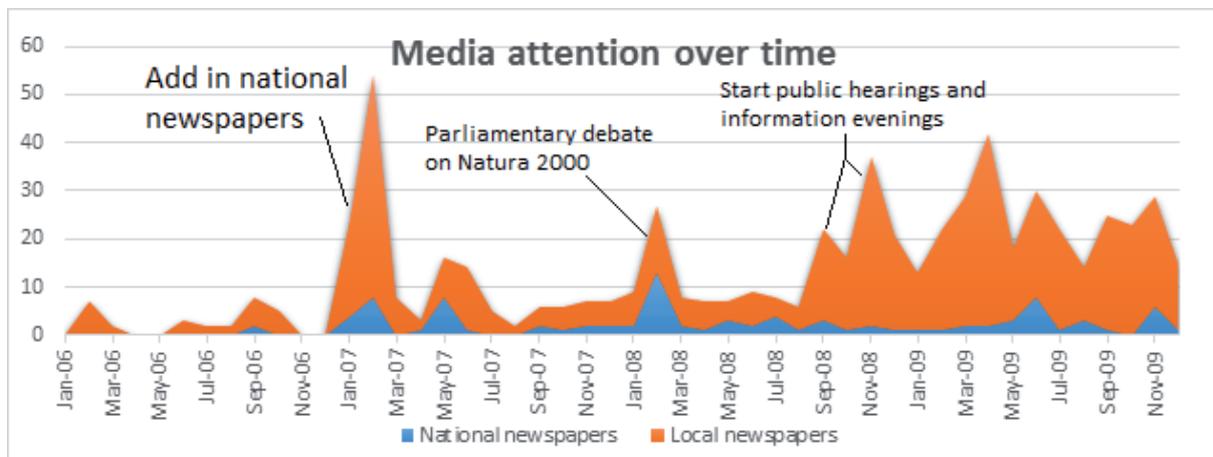


Figure 1.4 Media attention over time in both local and national newspapers

Period 1998-2005

In the first years Natura 2000 is not a subject that gets a lot of attention in either regional or national newspapers. Between 1998 and the end of 2005 only 26 news articles about Natura 2000 were found, of which 16 were published in regional newspapers, and 10 in national newspapers. The news articles are for a large part about the European Union and the Netherlands, about European subsidies for Dutch nature areas, about the special European status of a nature area and about The Netherlands being a laggard in implementing Natura 2000.

2006

In 2006 the attention for Natura 2000 is growing with a total of 29 articles over that year, of which only 2 were from national newspapers. The possible consequences of Natura 2000 on economic activities are expressed, especially fishery is named often as an economic activity that might be limited by Natura 2000. The uncertainty about the designation and the consequences is often voiced.

2007

In 2007 there is a big rise in media attention, especially in January and February. This follows after an ad placed in national newspapers by the responsible ministry of agriculture, nature and fishery. The government is legally obliged to inform citizens about new legislation, to make sure that the new legislation is known by the public, but also to give them the opportunity to react. The term to react to this new legislation was till February 20th, which also explains the peak in February (see figure 1.4). Because the ad only showed which nature areas were on the nomination of becoming a Natura 2000 site and showed what type of nature made the area worth protecting, the consequences of the designation were unclear. The management plans still needed to be made, and it was unsure till how far from the designated area Natura 2000 would have influence on economic activities. But since the term to react was already one month later, there were a lot of news articles that advised people to react to the designation, so that they would have a say. It was feared that not reacting before the

end of the term might lead to a situation in which objecting to the designation or the consequences would be impossible.

The second, much smaller peak in May and June 2007 was because the objections sent in to react to the designation were received (5500 letters). Also the suggestion by the responsible minister to include the Wadden Sea in Natura 2000 led to an increased media attention. The rest of the year the media attention was higher than previous years, but lower than January and February and May and June 2007.

Overall in 2007 152 news articles about Natura 2000 were published, in which 123 were from local/regional newspapers and only 23 from national newspapers.

2008

The peak of February 2008 follows after a parliamentary debate about Natura 2000 that month. Before the debate news articles about Natura 2000 already increased with a lot of different actors giving their opinion on the matter, often in quite strong wording. After the debate in which the minister suggested that provinces would get until September 2009 to come up with management plans for fifty of the designated areas before the final borders of the area would be determined, the attention continued.

The peak from August to December follows after the start of public participation rounds to react on the designated Natura 2000 areas. The first draft management plans for some areas were ready and public hearings were organised. Note that the attention in the media was mainly in local newspapers, while the other peaks till this point were also found in national newspapers.

In total in 2008 177 news articles about Natura 2000 were found, 142 of them in local/regional newspapers and 35 in national newspapers.

2009

In 2009 the most news articles about Natura 2000 were published, a total of 282 news articles. But this rise in media attention is only found in the local/regional newspapers, with 253 news articles. The national newspapers published 29 news articles which is even less than in 2008. There are a few different peaks, none of them as high as in February 2007, but we see an increase in media attention. The increase in local/regional newspapers is for a large share explained by the public hearings and information evenings about Natura 2000. These meetings are typical local/regional affairs, in which the designated area and the possible consequences for economic actors around that area are discussed and explained. These evenings however, are not all held at the same time, which explains the spreading of the peaks in the graph, it is more like a series of evenings in which the responsible provincial politicians go on tour to visit the potentially affected areas.

The information evenings are usually announced in a local newspaper beforehand, sometimes accompanied with a background article about the relevancy of the evening in the same local/regional newspaper. After the evening, the local newspaper usually reports how the evening went, what people said and what will happen next. National newspapers do not (often) report about these events, which might explain the difference between local/regional newspapers and national newspapers in attention. Something interesting that is appearing in news articles in June 2009 is the link between Natura 2000 and the Crisis and Recovery Act (Crisis- en Herstelwet). This act to spur the economic recovery by making the procedures around infrastructural developments faster and easier, is suggested to be used to avoid the legislation around Natura 2000 areas. Whether this leads to an

increase in media attention is unsure, but it does make the link between the economic crisis and Natura 2000.

4.2 Standing

Overall

In all the analysed news articles 61% of the articles contained at least one speaker that was able to directly give his or her opinion about the matter. Politicians (either local, provincial, national, European or the responsible minister (or a spokesperson of the ministry of LNV)) had 45% of the standing, which means 45% of the people that were able to have their say in the news articles about Natura 2000 were politicians. Agriculture (either a farmer or a farmers organisation) had 20% of the standing, which means 20% of the speakers in the news articles were representing agriculture. Nature organisations (either local or national) had 17% of the standing, while entrepreneurs (either one entrepreneur or an entrepreneurs organisation) had 9% of the standing. Recreational entrepreneurs or the organisations for entrepreneurs in the recreational sector got 5% of the standing, while scientists only had 4% of the standing (figure 1.5).

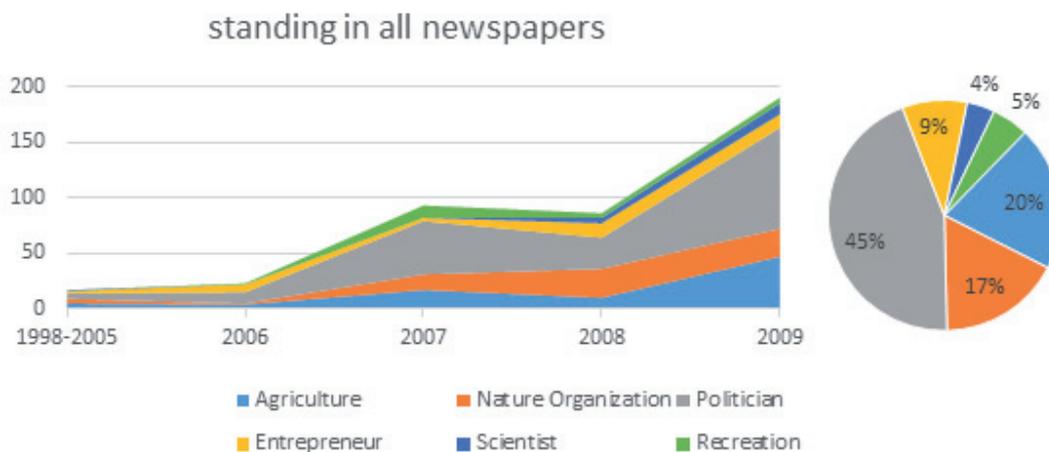


figure 1.5 Standing in all newspapers over the years (left graph), and the relative share overall (right pie chart)

In national newspapers the standing of politicians and the standing of agriculture is smaller than in the local newspapers (figure 1.6 and 1.7). It seems that farmers and farmers organisations are especially interesting for local newspapers and less for national newspapers. This sounds logical because agriculture can be a very important economic actor regionally, while a few farms in a certain region are not that newsworthy nationally.

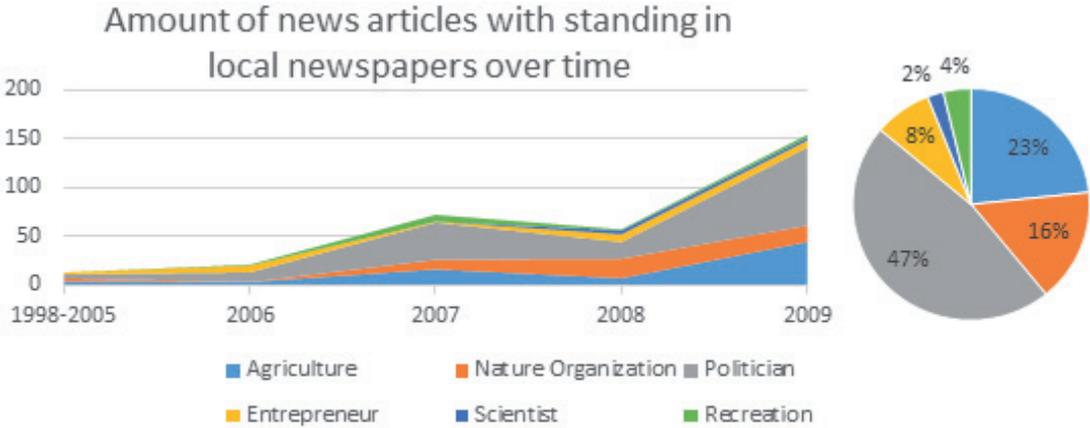


Figure 1.6 Standing in local newspapers over the years (left graph), and the relative share overall (right pie chart)

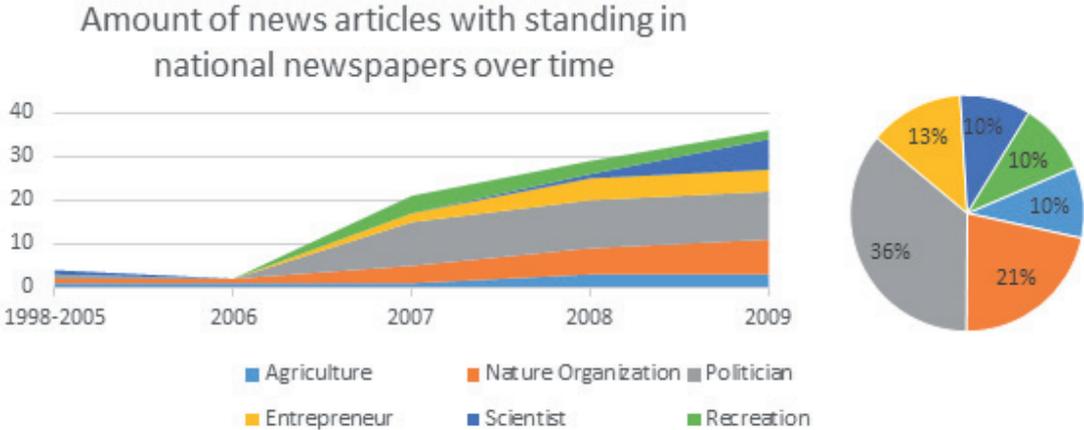


Figure 1.7 Standing in national newspapers over the years (left graph), and the relative share overall (right pie chart)

The difference in political actors however is harder to explain because we included the politicians from all the levels of government. To understand how this difference comes about we need to look into the political standing, to see which levels of government appear in which type of newspapers. When looking into the politicians and separating the national and local newspapers (figure 1.8), it is clear that there are quite some differences. The local politicians are very present in local newspapers, but not that present in national newspapers. The responsible minister/ministry is very present in national newspapers, but only plays a marginal role in local newspapers. National politicians are also

more present in national newspapers than in local newspapers. Provincial politicians have a similar share in local newspapers as in national newspapers, while European politicians play a marginal role in both newspapers.

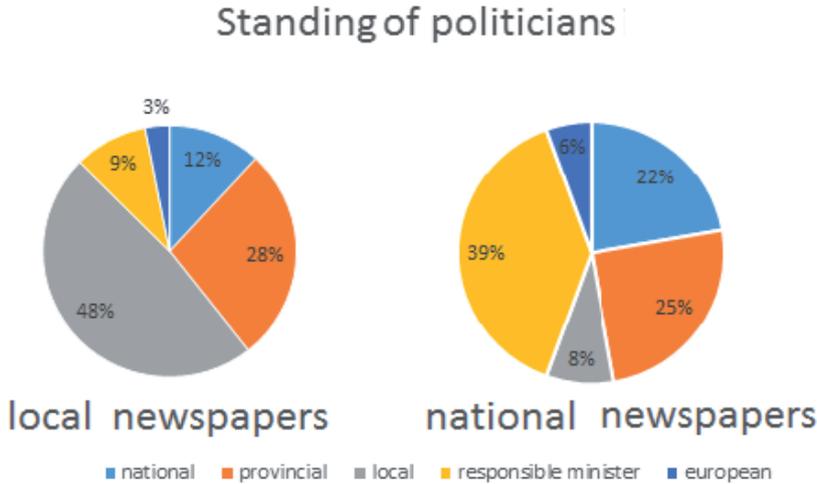


figure 1.8 Standing of politicians in local (left) and national (right) newspapers

Standing in peaks of attention

In January and February 2007 the most news articles about Natura 2000 were published in the newspapers, a total of 82 news articles between 1st of January and the 3rd of March. Of these 82 articles 59 news articles contained at least one actor with standing, which is 72% of the news articles in that period. Overall only 61% of the news articles contained at least one actor who got standing,

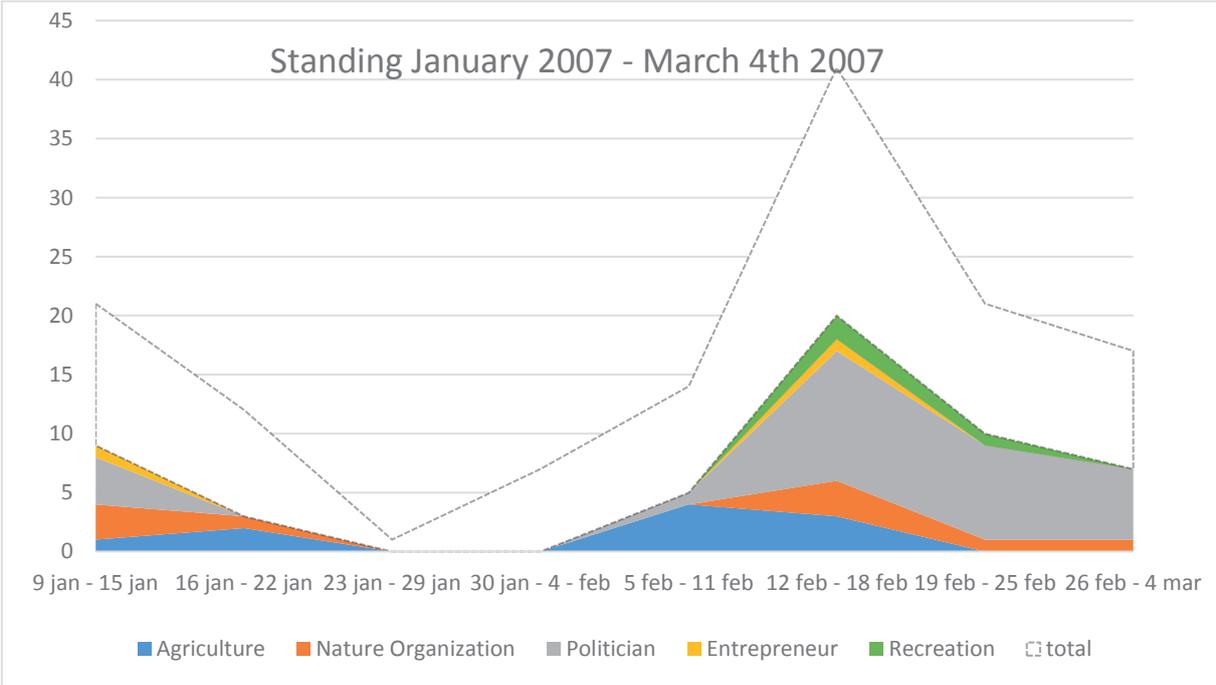


figure 1.9 Standing in the peak of media attention of January and February 2007

so there is a rise in actors giving their opinion on the designation around the published ad. 78% of the news articles in this peak was published in local newspapers and 22% in national newspapers. Overall the local newspapers accounted for 84.4% of all news articles, and the national newspapers for 14%, which shows that this peak, triggered by the ad about Natura 2000, was covered in the national newspapers slightly above average. This is not surprising since the ad was placed in national newspapers. Figure 1.9 shows which groups of actors got standing at which point in time of this peak of media attention.

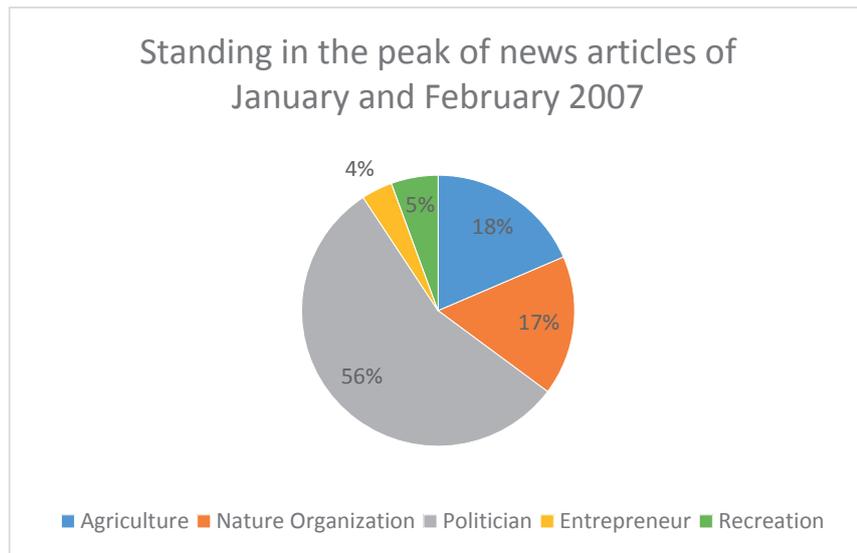


figure 1.10 Relative standing in peak of media attention

Politicians got a lot of standing in this peak of attention, more than half of the speakers in these news articles were politicians. Agriculture and nature organisations play a smaller role, while recreation and entrepreneurs get little standing. Scientists got no standing in this peak of media attention (figure 1.10).

4.3 Framing

A total of 1200 different statements divided over 52 sub-frames were found during both the initial and extensive search. Of these 52 sub-frames only 29 sub-frames contained 12 or more statements, which made these

sub-frames responsible for at least 1% of all the statements made in the news articles. The sub-frames with less than 1% of all the statements are not analysed further. First, because sub-frames with less than 1% of the statements do not play a major role in the debate, and second because the analysis gets distorted by these small sub-frames.

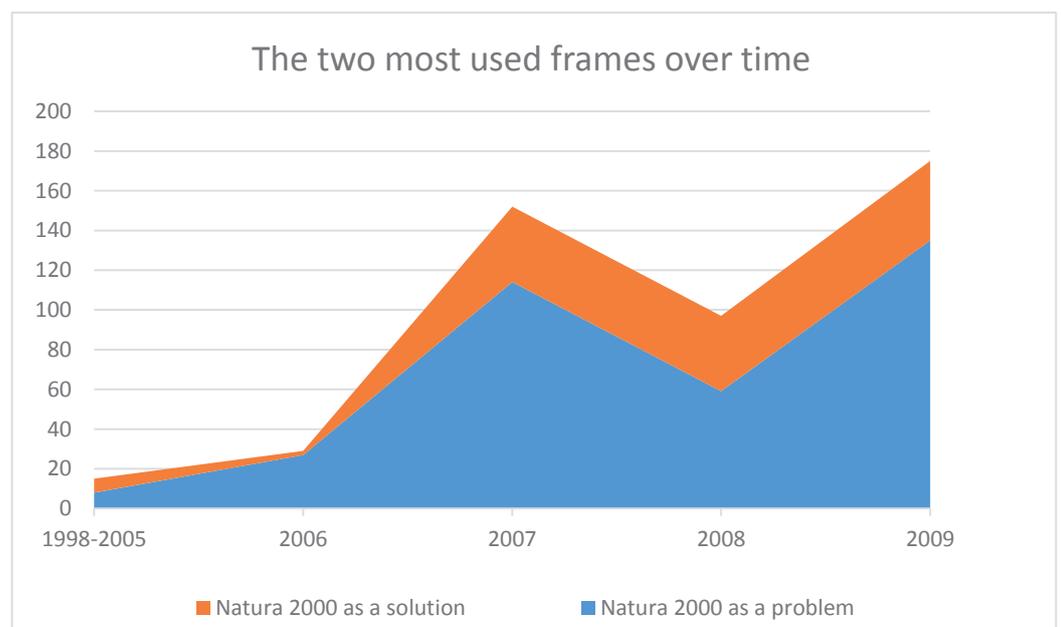


Figure 1.11 The two most used frames over time

When only looking at the sub-frames with more than 1% of the statements we have 29 different sub-frames that account for 97.8% of all the statements.

21 of the 29 sub-frames found fit into two frames, 'Natura 2000 as a problem' and 'Natura 2000 as a solution'. Both frames contain 81.3% of all the statements, 16.6% is categorized in the 'other frame' (a miscellaneous frame for sub-frames that did not fit in the other two) while 2.2% belonged to sub-frames <1%.

Natura 2000 as a problem

'Natura 2000 as a problem' contains all the statements that frame Natura 2000 as a problem and is the most used frame (see figure 1.11), in total 62.8% of all the statements made in the news articles about Natura 2000 fits in this frame. 15 sub-frames belong to this frame, of which 'Natura 2000 damages economic activities' is by far the most important sub-frame with 25.8% of all the statements. 'The Dutch implementation is too ecological/too strict' is the second most important sub-frame in this frame, with 8.5% of all the statements, while 'The consequences of the designation are not certain' is third with 7.6% of all the statements.

'Natura 2000 damages economic activities' is the most used sub-frame, over a quarter of all statements belong to this. Statements in this sub-frame are for a large part about agriculture and the limitations they face, these limitations are often not very specifically explained, but rather vague and sometimes quite extremely formulated:

"Nature conservation is nice, but thwarting economic progress with extreme bureaucracy, especially in times of economic crisis, is incredibly stupid."

("Natuurbescherming is mooi, maar de economische vooruitgang dwarsbomen met doorgeslagen regeldrift is, zeker in crisistijd, ontstellend dom." ¹).

Or even more extreme:

"I am not the villain who is out there to prey on poor birds! Yet, the farmer must hang."

("Ik ben geen bandiet die het op arme vogeltjes heeft voorzien! Toch moet de boer hangen." ²).

Other statements are less extreme but still point out the problems caused by Natura 2000 sites close to their agricultural lands:

"Living next to nature areas is for our agricultural sector like living with threats."

("Leven naast natuurgebieden is voor onze agrarische sector leven met bedreigingen." ³)

The second most used sub-frame "The Dutch implementation is too ecological/too strict" contains statements of which the majority focusses on either the Dutch implementation, which is perceived as gold-plating of European rules, or the focus on ecology over economy. About gold-plating:

"That's why it is wrong that the Netherlands formulate more targets for the areas than what the European Commission prescribes, according to Gerrits. 'The Netherlands is again the teacher's pet and goes a lot further than for example Germany or Belgium', says the 62 year old."

¹ De Telegraaf, Dom, 30-6-2009

² De Telegraaf, 'DE BOER MOET HANGEN'; Agrariërs hekelen Europees netwerk van beschermde natuurgebieden 'Wij hebben geen enkele inspraak' 27-2-2009

³ Noordhollands Dagblad, Angst Natura blijft, 24-3-2009

“Daarom klopt het volgens Gerrits niet dat Nederland meer doelstellingen voor de gebieden formuleert dan de Europese Commissie aangeeft. „Nederland is weer eens het braafste jongetje van de klas en gaat veel verder dan bijvoorbeeld Duitsland of België”, zegt de 62-jarige”⁴).

And about the focus on ecology over economy:

“The Tundra Vole and quacking bogs; two nature goals for which the circumstances in the Eilandspolder must stay optimal. “But they forget the most important goal: The farmer” says one of the people present on the information evening about Natura 2000 yesterday in ‘s Lands Welvaren in Schermerhorn”.

(De Noordse woelmuis en trilveen; twee van de natuurdoelen waarvoor volgens Natura 2000 de omstandigheden in de Eilandspolder optimaal moeten blijven. „Maar ze vergeten het belangrijkste doel: de boer”, aldus een aanwezige tijdens de informatieavond over Natura 2000 gisteren in 's Lands Welvaren in Schermerhorn.⁵)

The third most used sub-frame, overall and within this frame, is “The consequences of the designation are not certain”. Statements in this sub-frame are all quite similar and are almost exclusively about the financial consequences of the Natura 2000 designation, although the financial aspect is not always explicitly mentioned. The next quote shows the uncertainty about the consequences, and also indicates that the priorities are wrong, since ‘they’ *do have time to describe every little bird and plant in great detail*:

“What the consequences are for entrepreneurs, nobody knows, but every little bird or plant that will be protected is described in great detail. Apparently they do have time for that.”

(“Wat de gevolgen voor ondernemers zijn weet niemand, maar wel is iedere vogeltje of plantje dat beschermd gaat worden tot in detail beschreven. Daar hebben ze kennelijk wel tijd voor.”⁶).

The uncertainty is a problem, but the fact that the whole process takes so much time, time in which the uncertainty is not removed, is also perceived and expressed as a problem:

“It bothers him that for six years there have been talks about relocating his business, but still nothing is clear.”

(“Het steekt hem vooral dat er al zes jaar sprake is van verplaatsing van zijn bedrijf, maar er nog steeds geen enkele duidelijkheid is”.⁷)

And the uncertainty even grows:

“But almost a year after the designation of 162 areas the uncertainty for companies has only become bigger.”

(“Maar bijna een jaar na de aanwijzing van 162 gebieden is de onzekerheid voor bedrijven alleen maar groter geworden”⁸)

‘Natura 2000 causes a bureaucratic burden for economic actors’, which contains 3.7% of all the statements is about the extra paperwork that Natura 2000 brings. Two elements are especially a burden for economic actors, the reversed burden of proof that the economic activity is not harming

⁴ De Telegraaf, 'DE BOER MOET HANGEN'; Agrariërs hekelen Europees netwerk van beschermde natuurgebieden 'Wij hebben geen enkele inspraak' 27-2-2009

⁵ Noordhollands Dagblad, Natura 2000 geen reddingsplan boeren, 24-4-2009

⁶ Het Financieele Dagblad, De ondernemer legt het af tegen vogeltjes en plantjes, 20-6-2009

⁷ De Twentsche Courant Tubantia, Boeren zitten klemvast door Natura 2000, 4-3-2009

⁸ Het Financieele Dagblad, Natura 2000, 27-12-2007

the surrounding nature and the extra paperwork to get compensation for damage caused by protected animals.

“VVD-member of state Johan Houwers: ‘But then it should be, give a little, take a little. And that is what’s lacking. As a farmer you have to do all sorts of things to receive your compensation’ “

(“VVD-Statelid Johan Houwers: “Maar dan ook boter bij de vis. En daar ontbreekt het aan. Je moet als boer ik weet niet wat uithalen om je compensatie te ontvangen.”⁹).

These expressions of increased bureaucracy are not seldom accompanied by a derogatory tone about the species that need to be protected:

“Fine, care for nature. But things are getting out of control. For only the smallest actions you get buried in paperwork to get a permission. And even then there is a chance you are not allowed to do anything anymore, just because some sort of small animal or plant is in that area.”

(“Prima, aandacht voor de natuur. Maar ‘t wordt onderhand te gek. Om het minste of geringste moet je een hele molen in voor een vergunning. Dan loop je nog de kans dat je niks mag omdat er een of ander beestje of plantje in de buurt zit.”¹⁰).

This derogatory tone is found in quite some statements and adds to the view of a legislation that damages economic activities because of ‘some sort of small insect or plant’. These statements are made by people objecting to Natura 2000, like:

“For example, you have a project that can not continue because a green-spotted tree beetle (made-up animal J.H) is sitting somewhere”

(Dan krijg je bijvoorbeeld dat een project niet kan doorgaan omdat ergens een groengespikkelde boomkever (verzonnen dier J.H.) zit¹¹).

Or this description of Natura 2000, that is not even expressed by an actor, but is presented as a description of what Natura 2000 is:

“ This way, The Netherlands protects the territories of birds, plants and everything that crawls.”

(Nederland beschermt zo territoria van vogels, planten en alles wat kruipt.¹²).

Note that the title of this news article is *“Caught by the green dictatorship” (In greep van groene dictatuur).*

The “All is Locked” sub-frame is used for statements that literally mention that all is locked (in Dutch (staat) op slot). There is not much variation in these statements, often about agriculture, sometimes about recreation, but most of the times it is even not really clear what is meant. All is locked is some sort of catchphrase, often repeated, but seldom made explicit.

“Arnoud Vlaar fears his company will be locked because of Natura 2000”

(“Arnoud Vlaar vreest dat zijn bedrijf door Natura 2000 op slot gaat”¹³)

⁹ De Gelderlander, Natura 2000 – Boeren zijn beperkingen door natuur meer dan zat, 9-1-2007

¹⁰ De Gelderlander, Natura 2000 – Boeren zijn beperkingen door natuur meer dan zat, 9-1-2007

¹¹ Het Financieele Dagblad, ‘Veel ecologie, te weinig economie’, 20-5-2008

¹² De Telegraaf, IN GREEP GROENE DICTATUUR; Boeren en bouwbedrijven voelen zich als Kafka in de polder Bouw vakantiepark ligt stil wegens gehoorschade vogels, 30-5-2009

¹³ Noordhollands Dagblad, ‘Over 20 jaar ben ik een kleintje’, 10-2-2009

And:

“Industry fears that because of the designation of Natura 2000 areas, certain areas will be locked”

(“Het bedrijfsleven vreest dat de aanwijzing als Natura-gebied ertoe leidt dat bepaalde regio's 'op slot gaan'”¹⁴).

Natura 2000 as a problem	# of statements	% of total
Natura 2000 damages economic activities	309	25.8%
The Dutch implementation is too ecological/too strict	102	8.5%
The consequences of the designation are not certain	91	7.6%
Natura 2000 causes a bureaucratic burden for economic actors	44	3.7%
All is locked	44	3.7%
Lack of communication/participation in the process	21	1.8%
The designation of the Natura 2000 site is not done properly	20	1.7%
Natura 2000 does not respect prior agreements	20	1.7%
The economic activity is not harming nature	18	1.5%
Natura 2000 could affect infrastructure	17	1.4%
Economic actors who get in trouble because of Natura 2000 should be compensated	17	1.4%
Natura 2000 puts pressure on the relationship between nature (actors) and (economic) actors	14	1.2%
Object just to be sure	13	1.1%
Linking Natura 2000 to other (economically harming) nature legislation	12	1%
Uncertainty for economic actors is increased by delaying the procedure	12	1%

Table 1. The use of the sub-frames of 'Natura 2000 as a problem' and their share of the total

Natura 2000 as a solution

‘Natura 2000 as a solution’ contains all the statements that frame Natura 2000 as a solution, mostly as a solution for biodiversity loss or as a solution for nature damaging activities in general. Of all the statements made about Natura 2000 in Dutch newspapers, 18.4% belonged to the frame ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’

The sub-frame ‘Dutch nature is very special/high quality’ is the most used sub-frame within this frame with 6.2% of all the statements. The statements within this frame point out the special nature in the Netherlands and often accompany this praise with the responsibility that we have to preserve this. Like this statement about the special nature type:

“The wet heathland of the Dwingelderveld is the largest wet heathland area of Europe! This are (nature) areas for which we bear a great responsibility.”

¹⁴ Het Financieele Dagblad, Start grote inspraakronde over natuur; Aanwijzing 'zeldzame' gebieden kan bedrijvigheid drastisch inperken, 9-1-2007

(“De natte heide van Dwingelderveld is het grootste natte heidegebied van Europa! Dat zijn gebieden waarvoor we een zeer grote verantwoordelijkheid dragen.”¹⁵).

Or this quote about the rare species found in a nature area:

“For De Putten it is about a few dozen very rare lesser white-fronted geese, who stay there for a few months in the winter and who feed on grasslands.”

(“Voor De Putten gaat het dan vooral om enkele tientallen zeer zeldzame dwergganzen, die er 's winters een aantal maanden verblijven en op grasland foerageren.”¹⁶).

The sub-frame ‘Improving quality of nature/fighting decreasing biodiversity/repair damage’ is somewhat similar as ‘Dutch nature is very special/high quality’ but here the focus is more on the protection or conservation, or what needs to be repaired. 5.2% of all the statements fit into this sub-frame, which makes it the second most important sub-frame within ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’ and the fifth most used sub-frame overall. Statements within this sub-frame can be very specific about what needs to be done on a certain location, but often are more general:

“The European Community has started Natura 2000 because nature in Europe is declining”

(“De Europese Gemeenschap is het project Natura 2000 begonnen, omdat de natuur in Europa achteruitgaat”¹⁷).

And the forester about the management measures in his nature area:

“We will get there”, according to Hendrix. “There is a risk that due the recovering actions all kinds of plants and animals disappear. Good management will eventually limit this. The goal is to improve the nature here significantly.

(“Dat wordt wel gehaald”, aldus Hendrix. “Het risico bestaat dat door de herstelbeurt ook allerlei plantjes en beestjes kunnen verdwijnen. Goed beheer zal dat uiteindelijk wel kunnen beperken. Het doel is de kwaliteit van de natuur hier enorm te verbeteren¹⁸.)

The third most used sub-frame within this frame, ‘Natura 2000 as a tool to stop nature damaging activities’ is used 37 times, which accounts for 3.1% of all the statements. Statements within this sub-frame are about having legislation to stop all sorts of activities that harm nature, often the legal base on which the activities are stopped are not explicitly mentioned, but it is strongly associated with Natura 2000. Statements like:

“Windmills on the Afsluitdijk could be in conflict with the European environmental regulations of Natura 2000”

(“Molens bij de Afsluitdijk kunnen strijdig zijn met de Europese milieuvoorschriften van Natura 2000”¹⁹)

But also smaller problems are mentioned for which Natura 2000 might provide a solution:

“Maybe the designation makes it a little easier to keep out dogs that are not on a leash, says forester Frans Erinkveld. “A lot of runners suffer from that. Nature also suffers. “Sometimes I see a dog walking across a heathland. Then I think: I wish he was on a leash.”

¹⁵ Dagblad De Pers, Nederlandse natuur uniek in Europa; Natuurbehoud Eén minpuntje: 'Alle dorpen en streken gaan op elkaar lijken' 12-11-2009

¹⁶ Noordhollands Dagblad, Grasland wijkt voor zoutliefhebbers, 26-7-2008

¹⁷ Nederlands Dagblad, Een stengel kan ook driehoekig zijn Ecologische hoofdstructuur, 14-5-2009

¹⁸ Eindhovens Dagblad, Plateaux-Hageven krijgt beeld van 1900 terug; Boswachter Hendrix: van de grensovergang is in het landschap niets te merken. 9-1-2007

¹⁹ Leeuwarder Courant, Provincie kiest voor drie zones voor reuzenturbines, 22-4-2009

("Misschien ook wordt het met de aanwijzing iets gemakkelijker om loslopende honden te weren, zegt boswachter Frans Erinkveld. "Veel hardlopers hebben daar last van." Ook de natuur lijdt er onder. "Ik zie soms een hond dwars door een heideveld lopen. Dan denk ik wel eens: was-ie maar aangelijnd.""²⁰)

Natura 2000 as a solution	# of statements	% of total
Dutch nature is very special/high quality	74	6.2%
Improving quality of nature/fighting decreasing biodiversity/repair damage	62	5.2%
Natura 2000 as a tool to stop nature damaging activities	37	3.1%
NL is doing too little/the implementation is too economically based	21	1.8%
Natura 2000 creates clarity	14	1.2%
Nature is important for (local) economy	13	1.1%

Table 2 The use of the sub-frames of 'Natura 2000 as a solution' and their share of the total

Other frame

This "frame" is used to categorize the sub-frames that do not frame Natura 2000 as a problem, a cause or a solution. There is not a strong link between the sub-frames or a common denominator, but it is more a miscellaneous frame.

The most important sub-frame is the "Descriptive frame" which is used to categorize all the statements about Natura 2000 that are factual descriptions of what Natura 2000 is. Especially in the first years news articles that reported about Natura 2000 explained what the policy was about. These descriptions are often very similar in different newspapers, usually consist of the same elements and are statements that can not be addressed to a speaker (it is background information from the journalist). I categorized the statements that mention the fact that Natura 2000 is an European nature policy that needs to be implemented by the member states to protect special and rare nature, and the fact that activities that harm this special and rare nature need to be limited, into this sub-frame.

The second most important sub-frame is "Nuancing the consequences". This sub-frame is used for statements that downplay the possible consequences of Natura 2000. The sub-frame "Natura 2000 includes all the relevant stakeholders" is somewhat similar to this, as it is often used in statements that emphasize the fact that 'all relevant stakeholders' will be included in the process, contrary to the statements that economic actors feel a lack of participation.

A quote that tries to counter the 'All is locked'-mantra:

"The designation of the nature areas that will be under the European Natura 2000 legislation was accompanied by promises from the government: The Netherlands will not be locked"
("De aanwijzing van natuurgebieden die onder de Europese Natura 2000-regels vallen, ging gepaard met een belofte van de overheid: Nederland gaat niet op slot"²¹)

And an example of 'nuancing the consequences':

"According to Verburg (responsible minister J.H) there is no reason for fear. She argues that there is room to carefully balance all the interests. She also made it clear that (agricultural) companies only in exceptional cases will make way for nature."

²⁰ NRC Handelsblad, Boer en boswachter ruziën om natuur, 11-2-2008

²¹ Het Financieele Dagblad, Natura 2000, 27-12-2007

(“Volgens Verburg (verantwoordelijk minister J.H.) is er geen reden voor angst. Ze stelt dat er ruimte is voor een zorgvuldige afweging tussen alle belangen. Ook maakte ze duidelijk dat (boeren)bedrijven alleen in uitzonderlijke gevallen plaats zullen moeten maken voor natuur”²²)

The sub-frame “feasibility and affordability” is used for statements that literally use the phrase “feasibility and affordability” (in Dutch: haalbaarheid en betaalbaarheid or haalbaar en betaalbaar). This phrase appeared in June 2007 for the first time in the news articles about Natura 2000 and was used 22 times in total since then. It is placed in this frame because it does not define a problem or cause, it just mentions an (economic) conditions of what the policy should be. Like ‘All is locked’ this seems to be some sort of ‘catchphrase’. It is not often made explicit, which is nicely illustrated in this quote:

“Although her predecessor did promise that the nature targets in Natura 2000 sites should be feasible and affordable, a concrete implementation is still missing”

“(Haar voorganger heeft weliswaar beloofd dat de natuurdoelen in de Natura 2000-gebieden haalbaar en betaalbaar moeten zijn, maar een concrete invulling ontbreekt.”²³).

And when it is made explicit, it seems to be used to suggest that Natura 2000 should be less strict and less ambitious:

“Feasibility and affordability means in our view also that you should be able to adjust to a lower, but realistic level of ambition.”

(“Haalbaar en betaalbaar betekent in onze optiek ook, dat er bijgesteld moeten kunnen worden tot een minder hoog, maar realistisch ambitieniveau”.²⁴)

Other Frame	# of statements	% of total
Descriptive Frame	58	4.8%
Nuancing the consequences	39	3.3%
Natura 2000 includes all the relevant stakeholders	25	2.1%
feasibility and affordability	22	1.8%
The economic activity is not harming nature	18	1.5%
Object just to be sure	13	1.1%
Linking Natura 2000 to other (economically harming) nature legislation	12	1%
Uncertainty for economic actors is increased by delaying the procedure	12	1%

Table 3 The use of the sub-frames of the ‘Other frame’ and their share of the total

²² Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau ANP, Verburg komt tegemoet aan kritiek Natura 2000 (3), 13-2-2008

²³ Het Financieele Dagblad, Natura 2000, 27-12-2007

²⁴ Noordhollands Dagblad, Mogelijk naar rechter om Natura 2000, 8-6-2009

4.3.1 The development of sub-frames over time

Before October 2007 a few sub-frames play a bigger role than after October 2007. 'The consequences of the designation are not certain', 'Natura 2000 causes a bureaucratic burden for economic actors', 'Natura 2000 does not respect prior agreements' and 'Lack of communication/participation in the process' are four sub-frames in the 'Natura 2000 as a problem' frame that play a smaller role after October 2007 than before. This seems quite logical, the consequences were still very unclear at that early stage, and this was expressed often. The procedural objections like no participation, problems with prior agreements and the bureaucracy were also expressed more often in the early stage than later on as one might expect; these aspects of the legislation play a role in an early stage of the implementation.

More optimistic sub-frames like 'Natura 2000 creates clarity', 'Nature is important for local economy' and 'Nuancing the consequences of Natura 2000' were also less often expressed after October 2007 than before. As found in literature (Beunen et al. 2013), this positive message about Natura 2000 was expressed less often in the course of the implementation which is in agreement with this difference in use of these sub-frames in both periods.

'The Netherlands is doing too little/the implementation is too economically based' is also found more often before October 2007 than afterwards, this probably has to do with how the debate developed. As Natura 2000 was more and more seen as a problem for economic actors, expressing a contrary view in which Natura 2000 was too economically based and ecological not ambitious enough might have been difficult or might not have been interesting for newspapers to publish.

'Object to be sure', was only used in 2007, in total thirteen times between January and June of that year. This is because in that period it was possible to give your view on Natura 2000, even though the consequences, or the actual management plans were unclear. People were encouraged to object to the plans so that they would have a say in the future. If they did not object this might take away their possibility to have a say later on about the implementation of Natura 2000.

After October 2007 there seems to be more focus on the practical side of Natura 2000 and a bit less for the procedural side. Sub-frames like 'Economic actors that get in trouble because of Natura 2000 should be compensated' and 'Natura 2000 as a tool to stop nature damaging activities' show a rise in use. The first is indicating that there is some acceptance about Natura 2000, something they will have to deal with and that they want to make sure that economic actors will be compensated for the consequences. The latter is already looking at Natura 2000 as a practical tool to stop nature harming activities, it is about how to use this new legislation that we get.

There is also a more appreciation expressed in the newspapers about the Natura 2000 sites with a rise in use of the sub-frame 'Dutch nature is very special/high quality'. There were more pieces in newspapers about the Natura 2000 sites and why it was important to protect them. Especially in 'De Gelderlander' there were background articles about the designated Natura 2000 sites in which a forester explained why it was so special and why we should protect this nature.

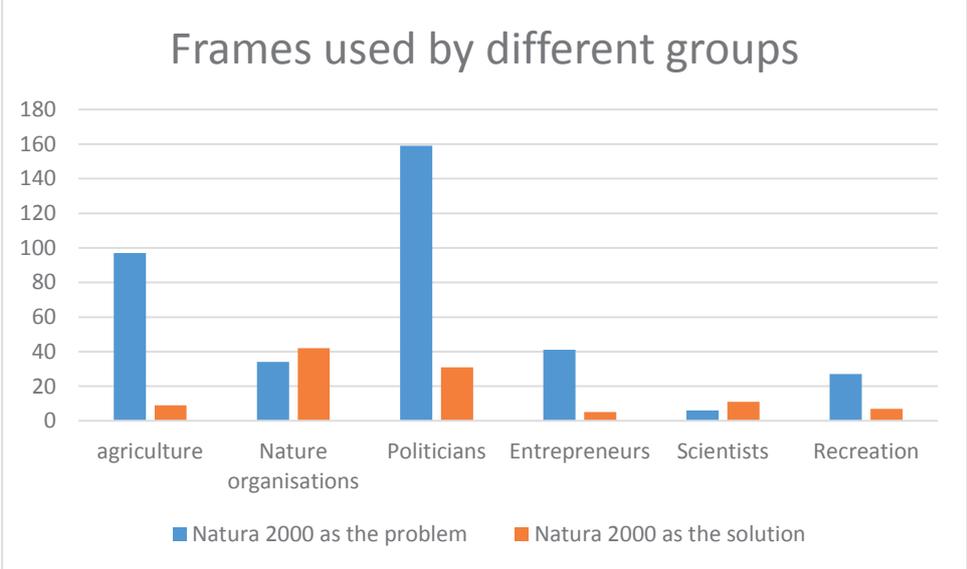
Also catch phrases seem to play a bigger role after October 2007 than before. 'Feasibility and affordability' and 'All is locked' were expressed more often later on in the debate. 'Feasibility and affordability' was used for the first time in January 2007, and became quite popular after that. 'All is locked' was present from February 2006 and was only used more and more over time.

The sub-frame 'Natura 2000 could affect infrastructure' was also used more often after October 2007 than before that time.

The other sub-frames did not show big differences in use between the two periods and were quite equally present over time.

4.3.2 Framing and Standing

Looking at *who* frames Natura 2000 *how*, is important to understand how the media report about Natura 2000. When combining these two it becomes clear that agricultural actors and politicians, who have the most standing, frame Natura 2000 more often as a problem than a solution. This can be concluded because in the news articles in which these actors get standing, Natura 2000 is mostly framed as a problem. News articles that give standing to nature organisations (who are the third in standing overall) frame Natura 2000 mostly as a solution and less often as a problem. Actually there are two clear patterns here. First, when the economical actors (Agriculture, Entrepreneurs and Recreation) and politicians get standing in news articles, Natura 2000 will mostly be framed as a problem and less as the solution. This is the same for all four groups. Nature organisations and scientists frame Natura 2000 as a solution most often, and less as a problem, given the fact that the news articles in which they get standing Natura 2000 is mostly framed as a solution. So there is a strong connection between who has standing and how Natura 2000 is framed (figure 1.12).



This is actually also visible when looking at framing and standing over time (figure 1.13 and 1.14). In 2008 the two actors with the most standing, agriculture and politicians, got less standing than the year before, while nature organisations and scientist got more standing than in

figure 1.12 The use of frames in news articles with standing

2007. In the use of frames this is also visible, in 2008 ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ is also lower than in 2007 (despite the small increase in standing of entrepreneurs), while ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’ is slightly growing in 2008 compared to 2007.

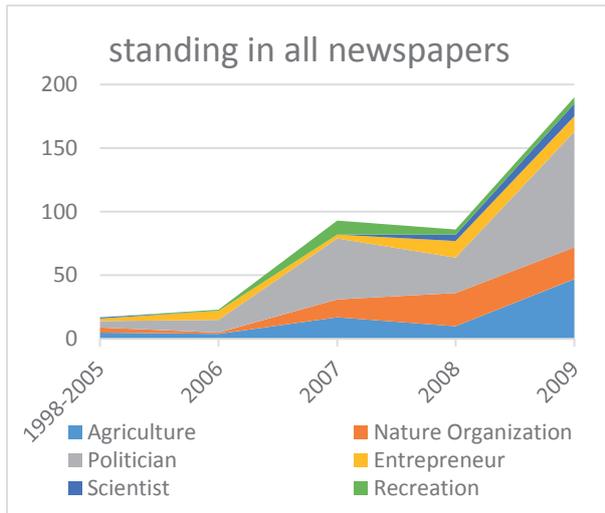


figure 1.13 Standing in all newspapers

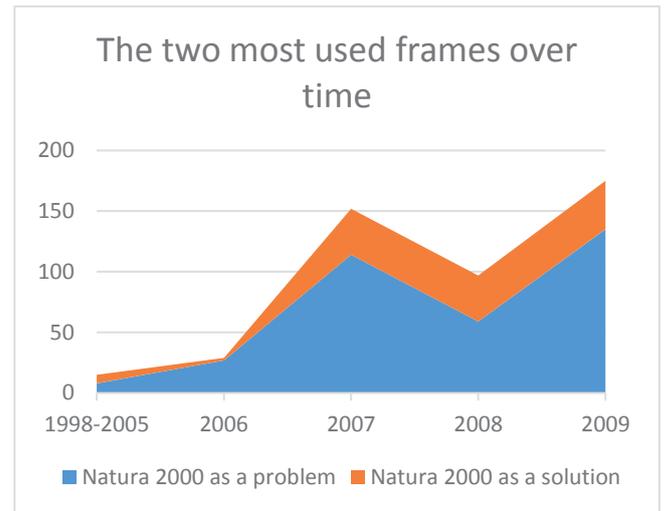


figure 1.14 The two most used frames over time

4.4 Frame parity

To determine frame parity we need to look at the most dominant frames, which is 'Natura 2000 as a problem' and look at its counter-frame which is 'Natura 2000 as a solution'. 'Natura 2000 as a solution' differs strongly from 'Natura 2000 as a problem' on several points. First the problem definition is somewhere in the loss of biodiversity and the destruction of nature area, the causes are diverse but lay mostly in economic activities that harm nature, the moral judgment or consideration

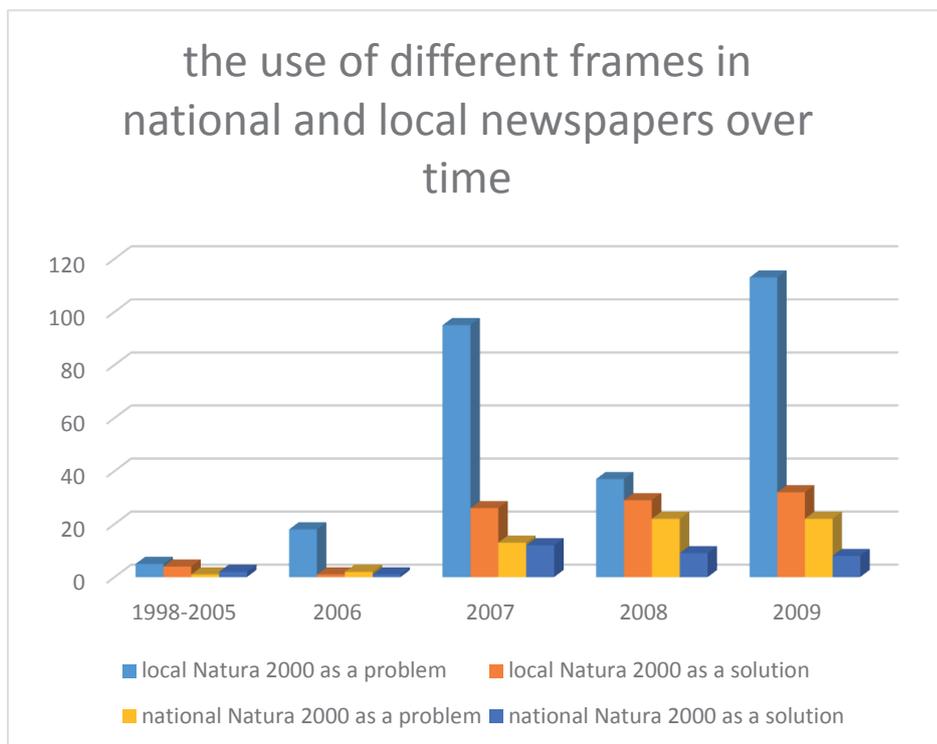


figure 1.15 The use of the two most dominant frames in local and national newspapers over time

is that we should do something about the loss of biodiversity and Natura 2000 is a solution. For 'Natura 2000 as a problem' the problem is Natura 2000, in many different ways. Sometimes it is framed as causing problems, like increased bureaucracy or economic losses, but this is always in the context of 'Natura 2000 as a problem', a problem that may lead to other problems (like lost income), but

nevertheless as a problem. The moral judgments were not often voiced, although sometimes remarks about the fact that agriculture in fact had contributed to this special and rare nature (for example with meadow birds) were made. Solutions were also not often made explicit, sometimes a

call for more participation was made, or a less ecological implementation, but even this was often in the context why Natura 2000 caused problems, not as a solution for all the problems it caused.

‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ is clearly the dominant frame, as it is found in more articles than ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’. Only in 2008 they come a bit closer to each other, but still the differences are clear. In 1998 – 2005 it seems that ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ was not as dominant yet, while ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’ was used relatively often.

When we divide the local and national newspapers and look at their framing over time we see that local newspapers are not approaching frame parity in most of the years, only in 2008 ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’ is close to ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ (see figure 1.15). In national newspapers it seems that frame parity is reached in 1998-2005, 2006 and 2007, with small differences between both frames. In 2008 and 2009

however the differences are getting larger which connects to the view of growing resistance against Natura 2000, or maybe better it connects to the view that fewer positive statements about Natura 2000 were made.

Overall in national newspapers we see a clear preference for ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ which is used more often than ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’.

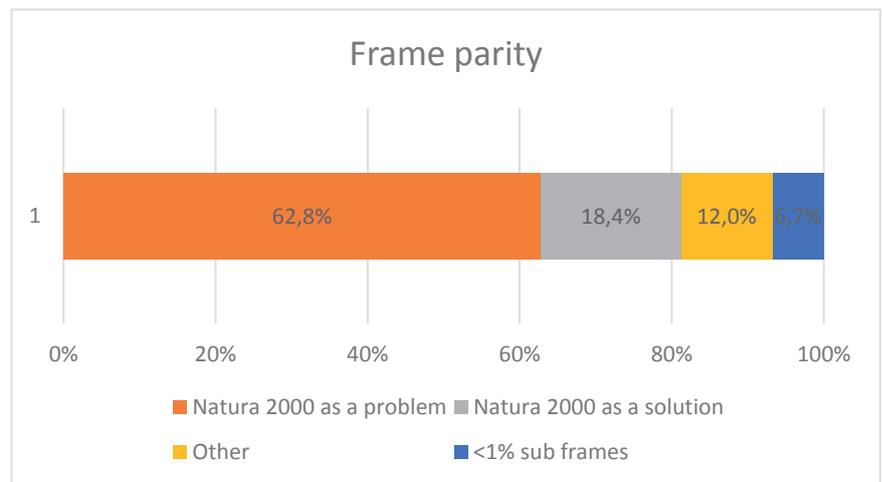


figure 1.16 Frame parity of all the frames in all the newspapers

When we only look at the two most important frames, without the other and the <1% frames, and separate the local and national newspapers, we see that in national newspapers there is less frame dominance than in local newspapers. In national newspapers 65% of the statements (when only looking at the statements that fit into these two frames) fits in the frame ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’, while 35% fits in ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’. In local newspapers the differences are bigger, with 74% for ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ and 26% for ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’. So it seems that local newspapers report about Natura 2000 as a problem more often than national newspapers, although in both it is clearly the dominant frame (figure 1.17).

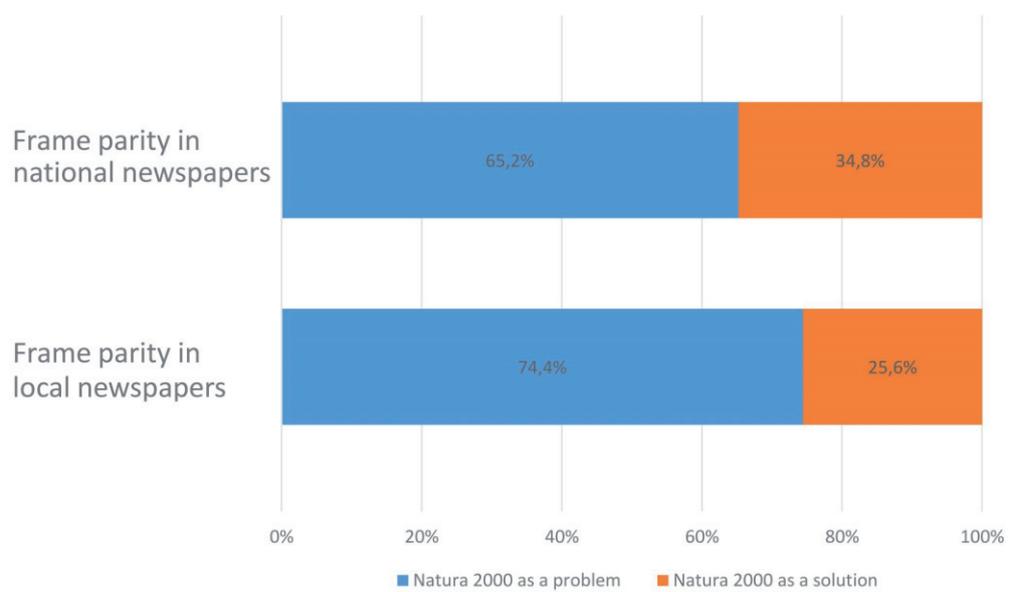


figure 1.17 Frame parity between the two most important frames in both local and national newspapers

5. Conclusions

After carefully analysing the news articles about Natura 2000 between 1998 and 2009, it is clear that Natura 2000 as a problem has become the dominant frame, while Natura 2000 is far less often framed as a solution (both frames together account for over 80% of all the statements). ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ is closely related to the ‘all-is-locked-mantra’; both views are focussing on the economic consequences of this nature legislation and expect limitations in their economic activities. This research offers different explanations how this view has become so dominant in the media.

First we see an increase in media attention over time, from only 26 news articles between 1998 and 2005, till 282 news articles in 2009. This growing media attention is for a large part in local newspapers, while the issue gets far less attention in national newspapers.

Local politicians and agriculture get the most standing in local newspapers. With the growing media attention for Natura 2000, but only small shifts in frames used or in standing, the ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ frame only becomes more dominant, since this is the frame that is far more used by agriculture and politicians than ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’.

In national newspapers politicians get the most standing, especially the responsible minister/ministry, but also provincial and national politicians. Nature organisations also get quite some standing. This difference in standing is reflected in the frames that are used, in national newspapers the dominance of ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ is less than in local newspapers, while ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’ is used more often. The relative larger standing of nature organisations, who have a strong preference for the ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’ frame (partly) causes this difference.

Natura 2000 is not reported about in a state of frame parity, 62.8% of all the statements frame Natura 2000 as a problem while only 18.4% frames it as a solution. In national newspapers the differences are smaller than in local newspapers, although in both there is frame dominance.

“The all-is-locked-mantra” that was found in literature is similar to the ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ frame that was found in news articles. The growing media attention in local newspapers, in which there were more statements that frame Natura 2000 as a problem and more standing for actors with a strong preference for that frame, has contributed to the dominance of this frame. Counter frames were not very present in local newspapers, the actors with a preference for this frame (nature organisations and scientists) got little standing in these news articles. Politicians framed Natura 2000 over five times more often as a problem than as a solution.

5.1 Discussion

The attention from local newspapers for Natura 2000 is bigger than the attention from national newspapers. When you look at the content of a lot of these news articles it becomes clear why this is the case: the possible designation of a Natura 2000 site in a certain area is newsworthy locally, but far less nationally, after all there are 162 Natura 2000 in the Netherlands. This is even more so when the consequences of this designation are not certain, let alone when the actual designation is not certain, the importance or newsworthiness for national newspapers is not really there. Besides that, media have a preference for subjects that appeal to the public, like conflict and proximity (Denham & Bryan 2010), which makes Natura 2000 more interesting for local media than national media.

Local media are under pressure because of declining circulation figures (Tijdelijke Commissie Innovatie en Toekomst Pers (2009)). Resources, like time and money are limited for journalist. O’Neill and O’Connor (2008) find that journalists are becoming more passive, especially the local journalist is

becoming less of a gatekeeper in news selection and news production. This role is more and more carried out by communication experts and public relations professionals at the source, who will look for a story that best represents their interests. Journalists are no longer active investigators who stay in close contact with their readers on a regular basis.

“This passivity also leads to an over-reliance on single sources, excluding certain views and issues relevant to the readership, and allowing routine sources to dominate the news agenda and frame subsequent stories.(O’Neill and O’Connor 2008) “.

So not only do they give access to sources, they also let these sources frame the story. Whenever an issue becomes interesting to report about, journalists tend towards the same sources (if these sources did not already pointed out the newsworthiness to them) and do not look beyond their usual sources. In addition to this dependence on one source, the frame this source puts forward becomes more available for the journalist the more often it is presented to him. (*Frequent exposure to a frame will increase the accessibility and availability of considerations highlighted by the frame. (Chong & Druckman 2007)*). These frames, as the finding of sources, are becoming something like a routine for the journalist. If these mechanisms work on the public they will probably work on the journalist too, especially a passive journalist that is more and more depending on a single source; he himself seems to act like a media public.

When we compare this to the standing of the different actors in local newspapers compared to national newspapers, we see politicians (especially local politicians) and agriculture together getting 70% of the standing in news articles about Natura 2000. In national newspapers both actors only get 46% of the standing, while the other actors all have a higher percentage of standing in national newspapers than in local newspapers. So the view of local newspapers depending more on single sources seems to correspond with the findings of this research.

When we look at the frames the different actors use we see another similarity with the findings of O’Neill and O’Connor, the two actors who got the most standing in local newspapers both show a strong preference for the ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ frame. Agricultural actors use the ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ frame over ten times more often than the ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’ frame. Politicians use the ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ frame over five times more often than the ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’ frame. So the actors who get the most standing in local newspapers also have a strong preference for a certain frame. The two actors with a preference for the ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’ frame, nature organizations and scientists, only get 18 % standing in local newspapers, while they get 31% in national newspapers.

So does agriculture have a strong public relations department that focusses on local newspapers more than on national newspapers? The results do support this view, although this research is not looking at this particular mechanism between sources and journalists and therefore can not answer this question. But when we look at Boumans and Vliegendorhart’s research (2014) on the debate on nuclear power in Dutch newspapers, and how national, regional and press agencies handle information provided by different sources, we see something similar. It was found that regional newspapers (I call them local newspapers, but they use two local newspapers (NHD and PZC), both were in my selection of five) have a strong similarity with the themes promoted by industry, while critical notes (in this case Greenpeace against nuclear power) were almost completely absent. This research has not categorized the actors as industry, but when we take agriculture, recreation and entrepreneurs together, we do have the economical actors together and we see that these three have a strong preference for the ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ frame compared to the ‘Natura 2000 as a solution’ frame (165 to 21). And this ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ frame is as we saw more dominant

in local newspapers than in national newspapers (74.4 % local, 65.2% national), even though their relative standing does not differ that much (33% for 'industry' in national newspapers, 35% in local newspapers).

So what about politicians, they do get a lot of standing (47% in local newspapers, and 36% in national newspapers) and we do see a strong preference for the 'Natura 2000 as a problem' frame (over five times more used). Even though politicians from all political parties could have entered the arena, it appears that a negative frame of Natura 2000 is dominant among politicians. First, when we look at the politicians that get standing, we see that local politicians are the most dominant of the politicians in local media, while national and European politicians as well as the responsible minister/ministry are not very present (together they account for 24%, while 48% is local and 28% provincial). So over 75% of the politicians getting standing in local newspapers is a local or provincial politician. In national newspapers these two only get 33% of the standing (and 67% for national, European and the responsible minister/ministry).

So why did so little politicians express a positive frame about Natura 2000? First, as stated in the problem description, politicians use media frames as surrogates for public opinion (Entman 2004). Local politicians who get a lot of standing in local newspapers can reach a large share of their potential voters in this way. When they see the media frames in these newspapers as representations of what the local public thinks about a certain issue, they would like to connect to this frame. The media are an important bridge between politicians and public, the public can monitor the politicians they elected through the media and can make an informed choice in future elections, based on how they judge that politician, a judgment provided by information provided by (local) media. So when local media frame 'Natura 2000 as a problem' a local politician would like to express that same view so that the public that reads these statements about Natura 2000 agrees with him which might favour him in future elections. In a way this seems like a self-reinforcing mechanism, the media represent what the public thinks, but research shows that local journalists are more and more relying on a single source (industry, like agriculture in the Natura 2000 case, but also local politicians). Politicians use the media frames to see what the public thinks of an issue so that they can connect to this. The public gets presented a story, which is heavily influenced by industry, while politicians confirm this view (partly presented by industry) in the belief that they are saying what the public thinks. However, this research is not suited to reveal these exact mechanisms around Natura 2000 or to even find who is influencing who. We need further research on these mechanisms to find out how these things work and whether those findings are in line with this research.

So we have a possible explanation for why certain politicians did enter the debate around Natura 2000 and why they expressed what they expressed. But still, this does not explain why politicians from more left-winged or green parties, politicians who traditionally value nature highly, were not expressing their opinions. A possible explanation may be that 'Natura 2000 as a solution' was perceived as a weak frame. *"Weak frames are typically seen as unpersuasive, whereas strong frames are more compelling. For example, presumably most people would see "public safety" as a strong or persuasive frame for why a hate rally should not be allowed, whereas "preventing litter on the streets" would be a weaker frame. (Chong and Druckman 2007).* In the Natura 2000 case this might have been the case, especially in local newspapers. Local economy and local employment are important issues locally. When the economic engine of that area, like agriculture, tourism, or fishery, is severely limited people will lose jobs and this might give rise to a snowball effect in which more sectors are affected by the limitations that are put on one sector. When you put this against the European state of conservation of for example a declining dragonfly, the latter will probably not be very convincing; jobs are at risk, the insect is less important will probably be the perception. When a

politician still feels that he or she should express the importance of the dragonfly this may be counterproductive. Chong and Druckman (2007) researched strong and weak frames and the effect that both have on public when presented together. *“Conscious deliberation in competitive contexts over opposing frames of sharply contrasting strengths may give rise to a countereffect. The weak frame may backfire especially among motivated individuals by causing their opinions to move in a direction opposite to the position advocated by the weak frame. In such contexts, silence would have been a superior strategy for the side that put forth the weak frame.(Chong & Druckman 2007)”*. This might have been the case here, politicians who were positive about the designation of Natura 2000 sites in their municipality did not have a strong positive frame that could compete with the strong negative frame ‘Natura 2000 as a problem’ and decided that silence would be superior. Not only would expressing a positive frame in local media be dangerous electoral (as media frame it negatively, and media frames are perceived as surrogates for public opinion) it would also be counterproductive and might lead to a public who is embracing the dominant strong frame even more.

5.2 Scientific reflection

This research has systematically looked at both local and national newspapers over the time and how they reported on Natura 2000. Although this gives an insight on the development of the debate, and adds to the literature we have on framing, standing and framing parity, there are definitely some limitations.

Because I searched in LexisNexis for news articles in which Natura 2000 plays a prominent role (either in the leading paragraph, heading or title) I might have missed news articles that take Natura 2000 together with other nature legislation and only discuss Natura 2000 in less important paragraphs.

Another limitation is that not all newspapers have put their databases online, especially before 2006 there are some periods that some newspapers were not yet digitalised. This might lead to a view in which the media attention in the first years, between 1998 and 2005, is underestimated. However, there are some local newspapers that do have all their papers online from an early stage. Leeuwarder Courant for example has everything online from 1997, and is also the first paper that came up in my results. Besides that, it is also a local newspaper in the selection of five that were analysed in the extensive search. It turns out that Leeuwarder Courant had two news articles in 1998, but no news articles till 2007, so it seems that the perceived small media attention before 2006 is not the result of newspapers not digitalising their archive. The newspapers that do have this period covered also show less interest in it.

To add to this last point, there are only a few news articles between 1998 and 2005, which makes it difficult to draw hard conclusions on these small numbers. It seems that Natura 2000 was not as negatively framed in that period, but I would have liked to have more news articles to draw these kind of conclusions.

6. References

- Arnouts, R.C.M. & F.H. Kistenkas (2011). Nederland op slot door Natura 2000: de discussie ontrafeld. Bijlage bij WOt-paper 7 - De deur klemt.
- Beunen, R., K. Van Assche, M. Duineveld, 2013. Performing failure in conservation policy. The implementation of European Union directives in the Netherlands. *Land Use Policy* 31(1):280-288
- Bleker, H., 2011a. Aanpak Natura 2000. Kamerbrief 186612. Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, The Hague.
- Bleker, H., 2011b. Commissie Elverding. Kamerbrief 183729. Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, The Hague.
- Bryan, S; (2012) Contested boundaries, contested places: The Natura 2000 network in Ireland. *Journal of Rural Studies* 28 (2012) 80e94
- Boumans, Jelle W. & Vliegthart, Rens (2014) 'Safety first' versus 'op de barricaden' Een inhoudsanalyse van het nucleaire debat in Nederland *Tijdschrift voor Communicatiewetenschap* — 42 [4] 2014
- Denham, Bryan E. (2010) Toward Conceptual Consistency in Studies of Agenda-Building Processes: A Scholarly Review, *Review of Communication*, 10:4, 306-323, DOI:10.1080/15358593.2010.502593
- EEC, 1979. Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 25 April 1979 on the Conservation of Wild Birds. European Commission, Brussels.
- EEC, 1992. Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. European Commission, Brussels.
- Engelen, E; Keulartz, J; Leistra, G. (2008) European Nature Conservation Policy Making From Substantive to Procedural Sources of Legitimacy Chapter 1, Legitimacy in European Nature Conservation Policy Case Studies in Multilevel Governance
- Entman, R (1993) Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm, *journal of communication* 43 (4) 1993, 51-58
- Entman. R. M; (2004) *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2003.
- European Environmental Bureau (2015) *SAVING BIODIVERSITY: RELEASING NATURA 2000'S POTENTIAL*, Brussels
- Feindt, Peter H. and Kleinschmit, Daniela (2011) 'The BSE Crisis in German Newspapers: Reframing Responsibility', *Science as Culture*, 20: 2, 183 — 208
- Ferree, M. M., Gamson, W. A., Gerhards, J. and Rucht, D. (2002) *Shaping Abortion Discourse. Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States*, Communication, Society, and Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Franx, K; Bouwmeester, J (2010) Bekendheid en imago Natura 2000. Regiebureau Natura 2000 I & O Research, Hoorn

Gamson, W.A. and Modigliani, A; (1989) Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Jul., 1989), pp. 1-37

Keulartz, J. (2009) European Nature Conservation and Restoration Policy—Problems and Perspectives *Restoration Ecology* Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 446–450 JULY 2009

McQuail, D (2010) *Mass Communication Theory, an introduction* 6th edition, SAGE publications, London

O'Neill, Deirdre and O'Connor, Catherine (2008) The Passive Journalist: How sources dominate the local news. *Journalism Practice*, 2 (3). pp. 487-500. ISSN 1751-2786

Sabir, M., & Rasul, A. (2011). Media frames vs. individual frames: A study of the politico-judicial crisis in Pakistan. *Asian Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 1(6), 39-52.

Scheufele, D.A.(1999) Framing as a theory of media effects. *Journal of Communication*, 49 (1) (1999), pp. 103–122

Sumares, D and Fidélis, T(2011) Natura 2000 and the narrative nature of nature: a case for critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences* Vol. 8, No. 1, March 2011, 53–68

Tijdelijke Commissie Innovatie en Toekomst Pers. (2009). *Adviesrapport Tijdelijke Commissie Innovatie en Toekomst Pers. De volgende editie*. Den Haag: Romein Grafisch.

Wurzel, R (2008) *European Union Environmental Policy and Natura 2000 From Adoption to Revision*, Chapter 20. *Legitimacy in European Nature Conservation Policy Case Studies in Multilevel Governance*, Springer

Vreese, C. H. de (2005). News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal + Document Design*, 13(1), 51–62. doi:10.1075/idjdd.13.1.06vre

Zouwen, M. van der and M. van den Top (2000). 'European nature conservation policies in the Netherlands; a pioneer unable to implement its own ambitions', *EUI-RSCAS/ Mediterranean Syndrome*. 2000.

7. Appendices

The periods covered by the different newspapers that can be found in LexisNexis

Dagblad Rivierenland

From July 11, 2002 to January 01, 2004

Provinciale Zeeuwse Courant

From December 13, 2002 to current

De Twentsche Courant Tubantia

From November 22, 2002 to current

De Gelderlander

From November 17, 1993 to current; The period of 2001-2003 with partial documents or April 2003 are missing and no coverage.

Boerderij Vandaag

From March 02, 1999 to current

BN/DeStem

From January 1994 to current; De Stem - From January 1994 to May 1998. BN/Destem - From May 1998 to October 2001 - and from July 11, 2002 to current.

AD/Groene Hart

From 2005 to current

Dagblad van het Noorden

From 1997 to current

Brabants Dagblad

From January 03, 1994 to current

Het Financieele Dagblad

From 01 April 1994 to current; No articles from January 1, 1998 upto February 2, 1998.

De Stentor (Vendor Group File) (Dagblad Flevoland, Deventer dagblad, Nieuw Kamper Dagblad, Sallands dagblad, Zutphens dagblad, Gelders Dagblad, Zwolse Courant, Veluws Dagblad

From March 12, 2003 to current

Boerderij

From February 02, 1999 to current

Reformatorsch Dagblad

From December 10, 2005 to current

Leeuwarder Courant

From 1997 to current

De Gooi- en Eemlander

From April 23, 2007 to current

Haarlems Dagblad
From January 01, 2005 to current

IJmuider Courant
From April 23, 2007 to current

Leidsch Dagblad
From January 01, 2005 to current

Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau ANP
From January 01, 1993 to current

Noordhollands Dagblad
From June 16, 2007 to current

De Telegraaf
From January 02, 1999 to current

Eindhoven's Dagblad
From August 24, 1994 to current; November 1, 2000 to December 31, 2002 unavailable due to licensing issues

Nederlands Dagblad
From June 14, 2007 to current

AD/Utrechts Nieuwsblad
From 2005 to current

Dagblad De Limburger
From June 27, 2007 to current

Limburgs Dagblad
From June 27, 2007 to current

De Volkskrant
From January 02, 1995 to current

AD/Rivierenland
From 2005 to current

AD/DeDordtenaar
From 2005 to current

AD/Rotterdams Dagblad
From 2005 to current

Forum
From October 04, 1994 to current; There's no available publication from March 9, 2000 to October 2006.

Trouw
From January 02, 1992 to current

NRC.NEXT
From 2006 to current

Elsevier
From May 15, 1999 to current

Dé Weekkrant (Haaksberger Koerier, Winterswijkse Weekkrant,
De Gooi & Vechtstreek, Huis aan Huis, Parel van Brabant)
From January 03, 2014 to current