Involving companies in local policy making

A case study on the Regional Energy Strategies (RES)

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1. Introduction

In 2015 a large part of the world's leaders saw the need to tackle climate change. At a special UN-council in Paris they signed the Paris treaty against climate change. 192 countries committed to the goal of containing global warming to 2 degrees Celsius, including the Netherlands (RTL Nieuws, 2019). This lead to the writing of the Dutch national climate agreement. On the 28th of June 2019 the Dutch government signed the decree for the climate (Klimaatakkoord, z.d.). To reach these goals custom regional execution is preferred. However, space is scarce in the living environment of humans and animals. Local governments (provinces, municipalities and water boards) where given the task to form regions for cooperation and governance. To get towards applicable regional frameworks, 30 regions have been formed where decentralized governments work together towards a regional energy strategy. The regions where formed on economic and regional factors (Rijksoverheid, IPO, Unie van Waterschappen & VNG, 2018). The policy was decentralized to find a better fit to local opportunities in the energy transition. This program is called the national program for Regional Energy Strategies (RES) (Regionale Energie Strategie, z.d.).

In the past, decentralization of energy policy has not always led to a better fit. Previous decentralized energy projects turned out to be less effective and efficient then their centralized counterparts. Sometimes local governments were not able to construct proper policy including enough support base among the local residents for big infrastructural projects. The consequence was societal backlash leading to centralized intervention (Akerboom, 2019; Boogers, 2019).

To avoid bad fits and societal backlash, the national committee wrote a guide for the regional committees. Participation – in different forms - on the process is one of the central themes. Meaningful participation with a sense of ownership is key for support among elected officials and citizens. But at the same time commercial business actors are important to ensure qualitative and feasible plans. Their expertise is needed, and even recommended to be used by national government. A tradeoff should be made regarding new stakeholders on fit and applicability to the problem at hand (Rijksoverheid et. al, 2018).

There is however no guidance on the exact process towards participation or on who to involve. Problems like conflicts of interest, weighing interests wrong and bad governance from governmental actors could arise (Akerboom, 2019 & Boogers, 2019). That is why this research is interested in factors influencing the considerations of the local governmental actors for companies and their involvement in the process. For a clear difference in interests and relationship with the policy this research focusses on the choice for commercial energy companies only. These are on the executive side competing with other market parties, while their expertise may be needed by the local governments.

The main goal of this research will be to analyze the process in which expert knowledge from commercial energy companies is used in making policy. This will also be the focus of the main research question: *"What factors influence the choice of local governments to use expert knowledge from energy companies in the RES?"*

Relevance and context

The relationship between business interest and policy and politics has been the subject of many research projects in the past. More classical political influence literature was trying to measure

influence on policy and the struggle between different interests to acquire that influence (Dickie, 1984; Becker, 1983). However, researchers later agreed influence is rather arbitrary to measure and started looking for other ways to approach the search for influence on policy. Theories on access focused on (business) interest getting access to legislative processes as a way of measuring influence (Coleman & Grant, 1988; Austen-Smith, 1995). These theories of access where later applied to European contexts in theoretical frameworks to measure the degree of access and the organizational features influencing the degree of access (Eising, 2007; Bouwen, 2002; Falkner, 2000; Schmidt, 2005).

For example, Bouwen constructed his framework in 2002 and later empirically tested it in three EU institutions (Bouwen, 2004). In the framework the relationship between businesses and governmental institutions is seen as an exchange relationship where the actors are dependent on each other. The businesses exchange 'access goods' for access to- and information on the legislative process. The theory of access focusses on access rather than influence, and specifically on business actors. This in combination with the early stage of the RES where the focus is on gathering relevant actors makes the theory of access suitable for this research. The RES is still in the formulation phase and has been postponed due to COVID-19 (Wiebes, 2019). This research has a limited time and will not be able to analyze the final RES, thus influence of companies is still not clear at the end of this research project. By applying parts of the theory in a national policy context rather than the EU this thesis will contribute to knowledge on business interest in policy processes and the theory of access in particular.

The RES policy process is still not finished, so insight in these relationships can help local governments reconsidering the energy companies they involve in future policy processes. Knowing the factors influencing their choices whether or not to include expert knowledge from energy companies makes them more conscious. Hopefully this leads to a better understanding whether they need expert knowledge, and what energy companies to choose to receive it from. On the other hand it could be interesting for energy companies to know on what basis their expert knowledge is considered – or not - in policy processes. These understandings hopefully lead to better governance of interests and more effective policy making.

Substance of the thesis

The RES will be studied in a comparative case study using empirical data from document analysis and semi-structured interviews. An analysis on the process of picking energy companies can be made studying the document published by the RES committees. The concept-RES is the first big step towards the first full RES. All the choices regarding the process are covered in the concept. Following a statistical analysis of this document study some of the region's can be identified which differ on outcomes. A comparison of these regions using semi-structured interviews hopefully confirms the factors influencing these choices in the RES and will possibly reveal other explanatory variables.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework chapter consists of the necessary theoretical background for this research. First the main research question will be captured in a broader theoretical question this research is trying to address. This will help formulate a theoretical argument and expectations. After the theoretical question there will be a literature review on existing literature about the main concepts. Their limitations will be analyzed. From this literature review a theoretical argument will be formulated, which will be followed by expectations about what the empirical findings of this research will show.

Following the main research question, the broader theoretical question this research is trying to address is:

"What factors influence the choice of government to use expert knowledge from private companies in policy making?"

Literature Review

To be able to formulate an answer to the theoretical question the dependent variable and the independent variable, as well as their possible relationship, will be explained using existing literature. The dependent variable is the use of expert knowledge from energy companies by local governments in policy making. The independent variables are the possible factors influencing this choice. The theoretical framework will be structured as follows. First the relationship businesses have with expert knowledge will be examined. Then existing literature on the use of this knowledge by local governments is covered. The analysis of factors influencing this use will be done using the theory of access.

Expert knowledge in businesses

The Cambridge Handbook of expertise and expert performance follows the definition from Webster's New world dictionary of an expert as "one who is very skillful and well-informed in some special field" (Webster's New World Dictionary, as cited in Ericsson, 2018, p. 3). Following this definition, experts are deemed as the most capable in their field. McBride & Burgman (2012) think expert knowledge is all the things experts know as a result of their experience. These 'experts' got together in guilds to exchange the practical know-how. With growing expertise in the world, these guilds evaluated into institutions. In here the craftsmen set rules on how they deemed someone could gain and/or should distribute knowledge. Those where the first versions of the scientific institutions we know today; universities (Hetmański, M. 2018; Ericsson, 2018). The knowledge and expertise in these institutions became more valuable for most people than the practical craftsmanship.

Knowledge became an exchangeable good, subject of competition for possession, authority and legitimacy. Expert knowledge and skills evolved from something to possess to a 'good' to use. Perera, Drew & Johnson (2012) found that expert knowledge comes in many different forms. Businesses have consequently become a more important factor in the accumulation, use and exchange of expertise and knowledge. At the same time our world became more complex due to technological innovation and globalization. Running a business/government and making strategic choices consequently became harder and more

complex. Which in turn makes the need for accumulation and use of expert knowledge more apparent (DiBello, 2019). This expert knowledge acquired by businesses is then used for multiple applications.

One of these application is to use the knowledge to further the business interest towards politics or other governmental institutions. The relationship between business interest and policy and politics has been the subject of many research projects in the past. More classical business influence literature was trying to measure influence on policy and the struggle between different interests to acquire that influence (Dickie, 1984; Becker, 1983).

Dickie (1984) was one of the first academics to conduct a large empirical research on the management of external affairs by companies in the United States. He conducted a survey across 1000 of the largest companies and over 40% responded. He asked them about public affairs on state level and on national level – in Washington. He found out how these public affairs offices where organized. Furthermore, he was able to ask how much influence they had on the corporate agenda on the one hand, and the public (Washington) agenda on the other. His findings – size and budget of the company are the factors which determine corporate or public influence – are at the basis of policy influence literature.

Becker's (1983) research was not only about political influence by companies. Becker did research on 'interest groups' representing their interest in an economic context: *"Individuals belong to particular groups - defined by occupation, industry, income, geography, age, and other characteristics - that are assumed to use political influence to enhance the well-being of their members. Competition among these pressure groups for political influence determines the equilibrium structure of taxes, subsidies, and other political favors."* (Becker, 1983, P. 372). The struggle of these interest groups has been at the basis of many policy influence literature after Becker.

However, researchers later agreed influence is rather arbitrary to measure in policy contexts and started looking for other ways to approach the search for business influence on policy (Coleman & Grant, 1988; Austen-Smith, 1995). Theories on access focused on business interest getting access to policy processes as a way of measuring their influence. Austen-Smith (1995) for example saw that legislators and interest groups looked for the counterpart with the most corresponding thoughts to themselves. The groups will then financially contribute to likeminded legislators to grand themselves access to the policy process and get their ideas across. In an indirect way money therefore buys political influence via access.

Coleman & Grant (1988) found that big companies were ever better able to be a part of policy processes. The company interests were taken into account by legislators and this became one of the main ways for companies to assert influence in a political landscape. Their main findings about factors influencing the possibility of access was the organizational structure: *"Simply put, the more centralized, concentrated and representative is the organization of business interests, the more regular, institutionalized and incorporated will be the voice of business in the making of policy and the more tasks it likely to be is delegated for the implementation of policies"* (Coleman & Grant, 1988, P. 479).

Governments and their need for expert knowledge

As explained above, businesses can be quite successful at influencing government policy. Or at least are able to access the policy arenas. But why would governments need this expert

knowledge? This question is particularly interesting for this research, since the focus is on a policy process from the perspective of local governments. Boswell (2008) and Ludin & Öberg (2014) did research on the use of expert knowledge in governments. Lundin & Oberg conducted a large survey experiment in Sweden on the use of- and deliberation on expert knowledge in local policy making (Lundin & Oberg, 2014). They covered expert knowledge regardless of the producer and distributor as long as the basis was scientifically grounded. Lundin and Oberg argue that legislators are not always experts themselves in every territory they work in. Which is more likely as the administration is smaller and more locally focused. This forces the people working there to look outside of the administration for knowledge. This search for decent expert knowledge can be difficult, many suppliers of that knowledge are politically motivated. However, the search itself can already help improve the policy proposed. Their surveys showed that during political disputes and public attention the local administrators used expert knowledge to a greater extend (Ludin & Oberg, 2014).

In her 2008 article on expert knowledge and legitimation in a political context Boswell covers the three functions/dependencies literature finds for knowledge in governmental bureaucratic organizations. The first is an instrumental function. Governmental organizations use knowledge to base their decisions on good reasoning and empirical proof. Knowledge is used by the organization to do its work. On the other hand, two more symbolic functions play a role. Knowledge being used to legitimize the place the governmental organization occupies in the organizational landscape. These organizations operate in an institutional context. Possession of knowledge is used to strengthen the claim to certain jurisdiction and policy areas. Furthermore, they use their internal knowledge as a means for credibility towards others (Boswell, 2008). Lastly and particularly interesting for this research is the substantiating function of knowledge attributed to policy positions in policy making processes. Inside as well as outside of a governmental institution the policy can be (politically) contested. In these instances the institution can utilize expert knowledge as a way to defend, and substantiate the choices they previously made. For example to explain to protesting citizens why they made certain policy choices affecting them. Boswell furthermore finds a distinction in the use of expert knowledge for policy between the kind of policy arenas. A more democratic model, where the majority is decisive. And a more technocratic arena, where knowledge is accepted as tool to adjust preferences independently of majorities (Boswell, 2008).

The functions of knowledge Boswell derives all entail strengthening legitimacy for an organization, both internally and externally. Organizations adopt various strategies in their search for legitimacy and use knowledge for this in the abovementioned ways. Brunsson (as cited in Boswell, 2008, p. 5) found that these strategies vary with the type or organization. There is a difference between political organizations and action organizations. Where action organizations derive legitimacy through their output and tactics, ‘political’ organizations do through talks, norms and decisions. Local governments can best be seen as political organizations deriving legitimacy through talks and decisions. They have a mandate to make decisions and that is their function in society. In a political policy environment, policy choices of governments are contested by citizens and companies. Expert knowledge can be a good means for the government to strengthen their policy position, convince the public and create support base. Moreover, as mentioned before, decision-making in political policy arenas is subject to different modes of settlement – technocratic or democratic (Boswell, 2008).

Boswell found that a contested policy arena where the contestants accept a more technocratic way of making decisions will probably have a higher chance of seeing knowledge being used. This involves bureaucratic policy processes in political organizations where talk and norms are important. Boswell empirically shows this with the example of bureaucrats working for the European commission on immigration and asylum policy. Working on this highly contested policy the organization used the expert knowledge from the field to substantiate their policy choices and secure their legitimacy (Boswell, 2008).

The literature on governments and their need for expert knowledge show the *size of administrations, the contest on the political issue and the mode of decision making* influence their chances of seeking external expert knowledge.

Framework for the logic of access in corporate lobbying in government institutions

Following the literature above, a relationship between the use of expert knowledge and the search for expert knowledge can be presumed. Scholars tried to analyze this relationship and constructed a framework called the theory of access. This exchange model is based on sociological research on interorganizational relationships. It was built on two theories, those of interorganizational exchanges, and those of resource dependency.

Interorganizational exchange & resource dependency

Essentially, everything from lobby, to helping, to co-creation, between the private and public actors is an exchange between two entities. The governmental actors for example are interested in the expert knowledge from the professional businesses. This happens in an interorganizational exchange. The following definition of organizational exchange is used: "*Organizational exchange is any voluntary activity between two organizations which has consequences, actual or anticipated, for the realization of their respective goals or objectives*" (Levine & White, 1961, P. 588). Not only reciprocal activity can mean an exchange. The exchange is there between organizations when the activity works towards both of their goals. In political decision-making processes these exchanges become essential because of the ever more complex context the actors operate in. Actors become depended from each other because they need goods and services from the other to succeed. This is called a resource dependency (Bouwen, 2002).

The resource dependency theory is first used by Pfeffer & Salancik in their 1987 book called *'The external control of organizations: a resource dependence perspective'* (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Older organizational theory focused on the internal factors of an organization as having influence on how the organization acted in its environment. However, resource dependency theory uses a more external point of view: *"The central thesis of this book is that to understand the behavior of an organization you must understand the context of that behavior-that is, the ecology of the organization"* (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003, p. 1). In other words, not only do the internal characteristics of an organization affect its behavior, the direct environment in which the organization operates also has a great influence. According to Pfeffer & Salancik (2003) organizations operate in a hostile environment while being dependent on the resources of other organizations to survive. The exchange of these resources in this environment is done through social relationships. In this environment organizations could never operate in isolation. The main reason being the need for goods other organizations poses that they in turn need to be

successful and the other way around. The theory thus investigates these so-called resource dependencies and the ways organizations find ways to influence their environment to obtain the needed resources.

Access Goods

The scholars working with the theory of access called the goods (mostly information) that where being exchanges access goods. To get a good view on this supposed exchange, it is key to look at these goods. The governmental party needs certain goods to formulate the policy (for example expert knowledge). The business interest on the other hand wants inside information on the policy process, or influence on the policy at hand. This leads to a dependency between the two actors. These scholars showed the supply and demand between them can tell a lot about the access relationship which follows. Analyzing the supply side, what influences the goods the businesses can supply, on the one hand. And the demand, what influences the demand of governmental actors when writing policy, on the other. For example, the conceptual framework from Bouwen (2002) shows how this relationship works.

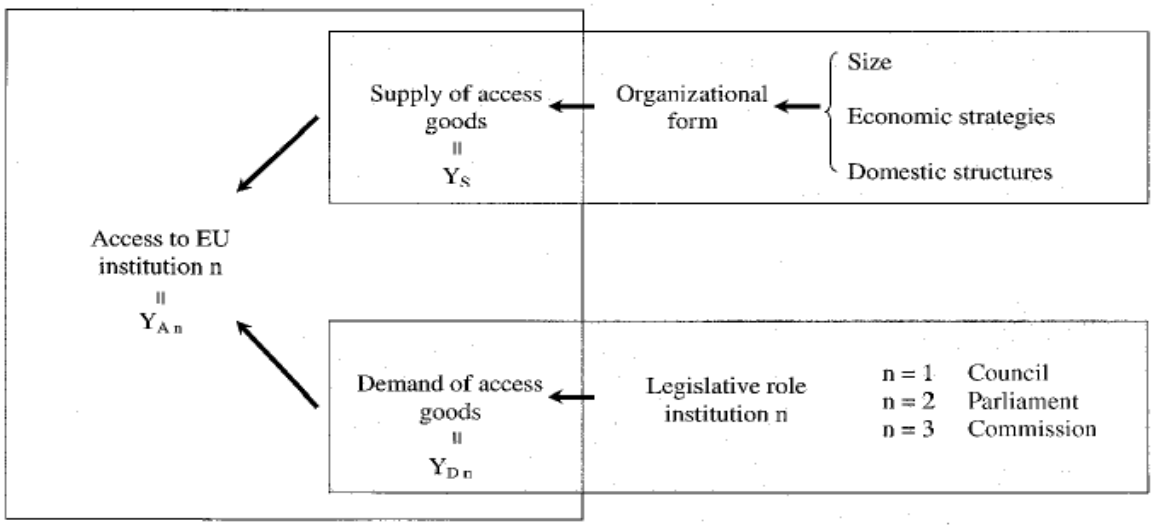

Figure 1: the conceptual framework from Bouwen (2002, p.372)

What influences this relationship

The literature shows two ways of explaining the factors influencing this supply and demand of access goods. One of external institutional factors, and one of internal factors. Schmidt (2005) and Falkner (2000) focused more on external institutional factors influencing this. Vivien Schmidt for example focused on institutional factors of the legislative bodies the interest tried to get access too. Schmidt argues that institutional context matters in interest access in the European union. The multi-level system and junction of national and European interest groups and companies working on both levels. The legislative process is of big influence on the extent to which business interest can assert influence and acquire access. In the EU the complexity of mandate and authority make for a more closed arena: *"In the EU, however, policy formulation is less open in terms of interest access because of EU civil servants' gate- keeping role in deciding which interests to allow into the official consultative fora and committees"* (Schmidt, 2005; p.765).

Falkner (2000) argues that the sectoral characteristics have influence on the access and influence to policy networks. Different sectors have different ways of interacting with government and different ways of organizing interest representation. However, Falkner finds convergence rather than differences in the multi-level European context. While this is a pluriform legislative context Falkner calls it an *'uniform pluriformism'* (Falkner, 2000; p. 112).

However, Bouwen (2002) and Eising (2007) hold a different view. They see internal characteristics of the companies and the governmental institutions influencing the exchange of access goods. They find characteristics like size and budget as factors influencing their ability to supply access goods. The other way around the internal characteristics of the governmental institutions influence their demand for these access goods.

According to Bouwen (2002) the choice of organizational form for the interest representation influences the ability to supply access goods: the size of the firm, its economic strategies and the domestic structures the company operates in. For example, a large firm is better able to individually take action because of its economic power. A niche company can have an economic strategy that will not invite them to individual action, but action through an association might be interesting. The domestic structure is important because some companies might have the backing of strong national associations and feel less need to take individual action. The demand for access goods is based on the government institution's role and place in the legislative process. For example, the European Commission; the work of the commission is at the beginning of the policy process. To be able to write concise legislation the bureaucrats at the commission need a lot of expert knowledge and information. They are inclined to look outside of their organization because of the vast availability of information.

Eising, in his 2007 study on interest group access in the European Union, the theory on access was at the basis. According to Eising there are a variety of reasons businesses or other interests try to acquire access to policy networks. Such as making sure the legislators will take into account their interest when making policy, or remaining relevant as a business and earing its spot in the public discourse (Eising, 2007). Important variables Eising takes into account are among others: the strategic choices made by the organized interest, the relevance an interest attributes to an institution and the characteristics of the sector domain the interest comes from. He argues that for a complete analysis on the study of interest group access in a multi-level context like the EU all of these factors should be taken into account. Also taking into account social movements and the political context.

All the theoretical work on business interest in policy and the use of business knowledge by governments focusses on context which is in effect over a longer period of time. International contexts like the EU legislative context or the national context of a country. But they do not cover more ad hoc policy contexts (like the RES). The covered literature finds factors influencing the acquiring of expert knowledge in business and the need for that knowledge in governmental organizations (Dickie, 1984; DiBello, 2019; Becker, 1983; Ludin & Oberg, 2014 & Boswell, 2008). And political dependency literature analyzes the supply and demand of this expert knowledge in institutional contexts (Bouwen, 2002; Falkner, 2000; Schmidt, 2005; Eising, 2007). These are focused on long term strategies for the companies, whether to push for interest representation for example. This happens in existing arena's where actors work together for longer periods. The consultative bodies are in place, meant to work together and most of the time the distinction between levels of government is more obvious. While these are important

to take into account these concepts lack more dynamic and 'short turn' aspects of interest representation. When a legislator needs ad hoc help on a policy process other less institutional factors might come into play.

Theoretical argument

This research focusses on the governmental actors in the RES process towards the first concept version of the RES. Drawing on the literature on the need for expert knowledge in governments and the theory of access a theoretical argument is made. A supply and demand relationship is expected following the theory of access, this expected demand is used for a conceptual model.

The literature on governments and their need for expert knowledge show why governments use external expert knowledge in the first place. Lundin & Oberg (2004) argue that legislators are not always experts themselves and thus need external expert knowledge, and Boswell (2008) shows the substantiating function knowledge has when making and implementing policy. Lundin and Oberg's study is particularly interesting because of their focus on local governments. The smaller a governmental organization is, the more likely the governmental officials need extra knowledge. In this case expertise has to be found external. On contested policy issues with a technocratic mode of decision making expert knowledge is more likely to be used to substantiate policy. There is a lot of public debate on the policy, so the officials want to be sure of their facts. However the decisions are made in an environment where not the majority (normative) arguments win, but knowledge prevails. So there is a demand for external expert knowledge.

The theory of access focusses more on the supply side of the relationship. Internal factors influencing the demand according to Bouwen (2002) and Eising (2007), sectoral characteristics and legislative role, are the same for every region. Thus these are expected to have no influence. However Schmidt (2005) did find interesting external factors which can be applied to the RES. The multi-levelness of the arena. This could influence the RES because of its complex governance challenges. In the European Union the multi-level systems makes for a more closed policy arena where access is harder for interest representation like companies. In a complex arena mandate and authority are questioned and contested internally. This increases the gate-keeping function of governmental actors on participants trying to join. Internal struggle prevails and there is less demand for external actors (and their knowledge). The multi-levelness lowers the chances of businesses getting access.

The abovementioned concepts can be implemented in the demand side of the theory of access. Following the rationale of the literature regions which consist of less inhabitants and municipalities and thus smaller governmental institutions will have a higher demand for expert knowledge. Because they have less capacity to write all the policy themselves. The literature also shows that in policy arena's where there is a technocratic mode of decision making there will be a higher demand for expert knowledge. Furthermore, a multi-level system of governance makes for a more closed and difficult policy process which has influence on the demand for company access by governments.

This leads to the following theoretical expectations:

H1: Regions with less municipalities – thus governmental institutions - involve more energy companies.

H2: Regions with less inhabitants – thus governmental institutions - involve more energy companies

H3: Regions with a technocratic mode of decision making will involve more energy companies.

H4: Local governmental actors in a multi-level policy arena will involve less energy companies.

Conceptual framework

The above leads to the following conceptual framework:

Figure 2: conceptual framework

3. Research design

Following this theoretical framework, the factors influencing the use of expert knowledge from energy companies (or not) are influenced by the access good in the resource dependency relationship which are exchanged in the interorganizational exchange in the making of the RES. This research will compare the RES regions on the basis of the concepts posed in the framework above. As stated earlier in the theoretical argument, for a comparison this research is interested in the specific factors that affect the demand of expert knowledge from energy companies in the theory of access. For this research design the book of Alan Bryman on social research methods is used (Bryman, 2012).

Research design

This research design consist of a 2 step analysis of the RES policy process using mixed methods. The first part is a quantitative case analysis in the 30 regions using documents and descriptive statistics. This is then complemented with a qualitative comparative design of four regions which vary in outcome to validate the findings using interviews.

Since this research is limited in the available time and possible scope, doing interviews in every region is not possible. Therefore the analysis of all the 30 cases will be done using document analysis and descriptive statistics. The concept-RES documents from all the regions will be analyzed on their description of the process towards the concept-RES. These chapters will be analyzed on the variables this research is interested in. From the documents an overview of the defining concepts influencing the main concepts will be made. The table containing all the data can be found in Appendix A. This table makes for an extensive empirical basis to do the rest of the analysis. The data will help examine whether there is covariation between the dependent variable (the use of expert knowledge from energy companies) and the independent variable (the possible factors influencing this choice). It will show whether there is influence between the variables. The co-variational approach is suitable for theoretically oriented research, where the researcher is interested in the effect of factors on the independent variable. Just like this research is interested in the factors influencing the choice of the independent variable. For the analysis case selection is important. You select on the independent variable instead of the dependent variable.

A comparative design like this one is able to get a better understanding of the factors then by looking at one case. Using the mixed methods this research is able to test the theory on the RES process in the quantitative part and then validate and deepen with the qualitative part. A standard critique on case study designs is the fact they are hard to generalize because of a great deal of context-dependency (Bryman, 2012). This is also the case for a case study on a policy process like the RES. However, the comparison of 30 cases and extensive analysis of some cases, using a well-developed theory of access, will allow for generalization on theory. This will lead to a better understanding of the factors influencing choosing expert knowledge in policy processes, helpful for both companies and local governments.

Furthermore the policy-process as seen in the RES is used in more occasions of policy making. Decentralization of policy happens more often in the Dutch national government (Gradus, 2019). So although the region and process for the RES is unique as far as this research goes, the outcomes could be useful in future similar policy processes. Decentralization of policy

happens in every field in government. The generalization on theory will tell a lot. For the energy companies it might be helpful in determining when to propose the knowledge they deem useful, or to choose not to do so because it won't help them anyway. On the other hand, the government may find out expert knowledge is not used enough. Doing so the next time can help speed up the policy formulation.

Case selection

In the RES policy process 30 regions where formed to write the policy for which makes for a suitable process for a case study (Rijksoverheid, IPO, Unie van Waterschappen & VNG, 2018). Because of the mixed methods the first document analysis and quantitative analysis can be done on all the 30 regions. So the regions make for the 30 cases. The RES case selection can be copied for this research, which makes for a complete analysis on the whole policy arena.

For the qualitative analysis the case selection will be done on variation in outcome. So on their outcomes on the independent variables. For the best comparison case selection should be on the outcomes in independent variables. To achieve enough distribution among the data 4 regions will be picked distributed on the dependent variable, and the independent variables that showed correlation. So two smaller regions, one which did involve companies and one which did not. And two bigger regions, one which did involve companies and one which did not.

Data sources

This research is trying to intensively look at the use of expert knowledge from energy companies in the policy process of the RES. A qualitative approach is chosen to be able to zoom in on the process of choosing to use external knowledge in the RES or not. For this analysis a well-developed theory is used. The theory of access resulted in 4 theoretical hypothesis about the factors in the RES process. These will be tested in a comparative case study between the regions active in the RES policy process.

For this research design two research methods will be used: *qualitative semi-structured interviews* and *the collection and qualitative analysis of texts and documents* (Bryman, 2012, p. 383).

Documents*:*

The RES regions publish official government documents which are a useful source of information. Since the RES is a policy process a lot of official documents will be available to gather essential information on the processes on the RES. These documents are written for the goal of explaining the choices the governments made, also on including companies. There will thus be much helpful information about the intentions and thought processes of the governments. An advantage of official government documents is that in general these satisfy the four criteria for documents in research, posed by J. Scott (as cited in Bryman, 2012). These criteria are authenticity, credibility representativeness and meaning. Government documents can be deemed authentic, the evidence is genuine and the origin of the document is known and ascertained. A level of credibility can be perceived from official government documents with the checks and balances in the government bureaucracies. The presentation of the data should

be clear and understandable since their official status which gives them meaning. The representativeness of the data may need some more consideration. The government bureaucrats can perceive the reality different from a bureaucratic standpoint. Which is another consideration for the use of interviews to deepen the outcomes.

Another advantage of using documents as a source of data is that documents are non-reactive. Since the documents are not written for the purpose of this, or other, research. The government bureaucrats writing these documents are thus not influenced by this. The fear of the data being reactive because of the research is thus no limitation on validity of the documents.

For the document analysis the concept-RES of each of the 30 regions has been used. This is a first full draft towards the RES 1.0 every region had to write. After the concept-RES interregional coordination can take place. All the concept-RES documents can be publicly found at the website of the national organizations, via https://www.regionale-energiestrategie.nl/bibliotheek/res++media/1571136.aspx?t=Concept-RES-per-regio.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews will be used where the researcher has a pre-made list of topics needing to be discussed as well as some questions. This topic list will be used during the interview, but with some freedom. The interviewer will still be able to ask supplementary questions if needed. But most of the interview guide will be followed directly (Bryman, 2012).

The pitfall with interviews is the reliability of their outcomes. The interviewees may find different words for the concepts and processes then the theory does. Furthermore interviews are with a limited amount of people from an organizations, these people may not portray the full reality of it. To overcome this the semi-structured nature of the interviews can help. Since the interviewer can ask follow up questions and examples to make sure a decent analysis can be made. A thorough and clear coding process can also help with the understanding and reliability of the outcomes (Bryman, 2012).

For this research this combination of document analysis and interviews is key. The table with the outcomes of the document analysis, and the outcomes on the theoretical expectations will give guidance in the kind of questions the interviewer should ask to validate the outcomes. But the semi structured form makes for freedom for the interviewee to be able to voice a different view. This could for example help explain the difference between the theory and the more ad hoc policy processes. If this turns out to exist.

Methods of analysis

The first analysis will thus be done using documents. With a document analysis the companies initially chosen can be compared with the needs of the local governments and how they align. Semi-structured interviews can validate this analysis.

Using the document analysis, an overview will be made on how the different RES regions stand on the different defining concepts. These include: *the number of inhabitants, the number of municipalities and the mode of decision making in the region.* When this is all found from all the different regions, an analysis will be made using *IBM SPSS 24*. This will allow for descriptive statistics like correlations. The theoretical expectations can be confirmed or denied and co-variation between the variables can be seen.

Then the semi-structured interviews with people working for the RES regions will be used to validate these findings and find possible alternative explanatory factors. Another interesting difference the interviews can possibly show is the presumed difference between the theory and the ad hoc policy processes. The interviews will be analyzed using an open coding method. Since the interview-approach is dependent on the outcomes of the document analysis the interview questions will be constructed after. The process of analyzing the data will thus have an open coding approach. Strauss and Corbin (as cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 569) explain this as *"the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data"*. The concepts used are the ones from the conceptual model and some that may come up from the interviews themselves. They will be analyzed then. Furthermore the open approach leaves room for new perspectives on the difference between the theory and the ad hoc reality.

Operationalization of concepts

For the empirical analysis of the concepts presented in the conceptual model measurements need to be provided. Measurements of these concepts enable us to use them in theories and variables. It also allows us to consistently show fine differences over time and uncover the relationship between certain concepts (Bryman, 2012). Operationalization provides measurements of concepts. Sometimes when a concept is not directly quantifiable operational definitions are used, also known as indicators. Since this research has both a quantitative and qualitative analysis the measurements in the operationalization table have been divided in two columns.

For the dependent variable, the documents will be analyzed on whether the region involved a private energy company on its own. Then the measurement will be yes. For all other involvement, like associations, or governmental organizations the measure will be no. The size of the governmental actors will be measured through the number of municipalities and number of residents in the regions. These are measures already and show what the variable wants to know.

The mode of decision making for the concept-RES knows 2 modes. Decision making on these kinds of policy plans is vested with democratically legitimized bodies. Active in the RES are municipalities, provinces and water boards. The first mode is when the daily administrators in the municipalities, province and water boards have the final deciding vote. Which is an indicator for a technocratic mode of decision making. The second is when the final decision is with the local councils which is an indicator for democratic decision making. The indicator that daily administrations vote on the plans will be measured as technocratic, and the local councils as democratic.

The influence of the multi-level variable cannot be measured using the documents, since all the regions face this problem. The RES regions all are collaborations between different layers of government. As was also prescribed in the guiding principles from national government. Since this multi-levelness is the same for every region the documents are insufficient to explain the influence this has on the choice to involve companies or not. The interviews are helpful to explain the influence of the multi-levelness on the process and the way it affected the choice to involve companies or not.

Variable	*Indicators*	*Measurement (quantitative)*	*Measurement (qualitative)*
Use of expert knowledge from energy companies by local governments in the RES	Single private energy companies participated on its own.	*No (0), Yes (1)*	Example questions: - Did you involve energy companies in the RES process?
The number of municipalities in the region	- Municipalities	- Number of municipalities	N/a
The number of residents in the region	- Residents	- Number of residents	N/a
The mode of decision making in the region	Who has final deciding powers on the concept-RES? - Daily administrators - Local councils	- Technocratic - Democratic	Example question: - Who has the final deciding vote in the RES? - Does this influence the selection of external actors?
Multi-level policy arena	- Multiple layers of government involved - RES project organization as new actor 'in between' layers of government - Unclear jurisdiction	N/a	Example questions: - How is the cooperation between the different layers of government? - Which layer of government has the biggest influence on the input/process of the RES? - Is there friction between the layers on who thinks what is important? - Is there friction between the layers on who should be involved? - Does this friction have influence on the involvement of companies?

TABLE 1: Operationalization of variables

4. Empirical analysis

Context of the RES

The RES process is a special one which should be taken into account in the analysis on the factors mentioned above. As mentioned before, little guidance and a lot of freedom for regions to formalize the approach towards the RES. From decision making procedures, which private actors to involve and how to shape participation by citizens. The decentralized basis where the RES policy process is based on poses additional risks and shapes the decisions the regions take along the way. A more thorough understanding is necessary. Analyzing the choice of local governments to use expert knowledge from energy companies is especially interesting with the RES. The open decentralized process with only a little guidance from national government poses risks for the local governments. Their eventual choice for certain energy companies is not influenced by national governments, making for an interesting research object.

The Dutch government has a history of decentralization (and re-centralization) of policy. Some of it is assigned to the province level, to municipalities, to water authorities or cooperation of several municipalities based on social or economic factors (Gradus, 2019). The national government even made it common practice, stating as a guiding principle for making policy: *'decentraal wat kan, centraal wat moet'* (decentralized if possible, centralized if crucial). The government wants to give the local governments as much freedom in creating their own measure made policies. The local governments can divide the budget as they wish and are subject to fewer rules (Kenniscentrum Wetgeving en Juridische Zaken, 2019; Het Rijk, 2013). The question about which level of government should be responsible for making decisions has always been a conflict, leading to decentralization (and re-centralization) of policy.

Scholars mostly agree on motives for decentralization. The most important being the subsidiarity principle, efficiency because of custom local policy and the fact citizens are able to have more influence on the process on a local level (Raijmakers, 2015). Boogers, Schaap & Munckhof (2009) identify four goals policy makers try to reach when making decentralized policy: integral policy, custom policy, decisiveness and democratization. When evaluating old decentralization processes they find positive as well as negative practices. The positive examples saw an increase in local custom policy and no problems in capacity carrying out the policy. The more negative examples saw no increase in efficiency and misalignment between local governments which lead to dissatisfaction with policy makers and citizens.

This negative outcome should be avoided. However, the energy transition has known misalignment between local governments and dissatisfaction with citizens before (Akerboom, 2019; Boogers, 2019). These difficulties when trying to reach sustainable projects lead to national intervention. Good guidance from national legislative bodies for this policy process seems logical to prevent the same mistakes. Enabling the local governments to construct energy policy which is regionally tailored and has support base, even when big infrastructural projects need to be realized. But the design principles given by national government for the RES are stated very open and broad and the policy outcome from the different regions is not regulated. The national government only gave two minimal guiding rules. Being the period in which the RES needs to be drafted and a five-step plan to follow to be sure everything is in the RES (Akerboom, 2019). These five steps include: an assessment on energy use, available heat sources, available sources for renewable energy and the consequences for the regional

infrastructure. The responsible government can decide per region who is invited from society and companies, which renewable sources will be used, so on and so forth. Because there is no legal ground for the final product, it is mainly an instrument to create support base in society and among companies in the energy transition.

This little guidance makes the RES process vulnerable for risks as Boogers (2019) and Akerboom (2019) show in their papers. This regional approach where stakeholders like companies are essential with an open design is given poses certain risks. Regions where advised to write an initial memorandum on who to engage in the policy process, and how. Many regions were quick to write this memorandum including the usual suspects of external actors in the region. In the memorandum agreements are made with the stakeholders on procedures. Future reconsiderations on who participates can be made by the steering groups writing the RES to ensure support base. Another risk is the way the democratic decision making is centered at local governments for regional decisions, local interest could prevail over the best solution for that region. Furthermore the vague process requirements and freedom for regions to shape their policy process could lead to depoliticization for effective decision making. Government workers could choose the experts from companies as they like and make all the policy decisions with them. While there should be a public policy debate on big energy transitions like these.

Another risk is the multi-level character of the RES. Multiple layers of government are involved. The new RES committee is formed for the RES only and operates somewhere between the municipalities and the province. Only if there have been collaborations with regional players before in some kind of body there is experience with this kind of governance. Which will probably not be sufficient to tackle all the problems with this new RES body. Other regions have no cooperation on this level at all and start all the way from the beginning. Who is going to have more influence on the process and will this be the source of friction between layers of government?

The policy process could also pose a possible other explanatory factor this theory did not cover. The ad hoc policy process. In the RES, where a newly formed committee needs to write the plans with little guidance on how to make the policy. These committees are not as intertwined with the interest representation institutions. Whereas in the theory of access the institutional context of the EU was one of pre-existing institutions. More external factors could come into play like geographical factors (physical presence of a company in a certain region). For example, when a legislator needs expert knowledge on an electricity related subject a company with a power plant close by would be a logical place to start. Furthermore, psychical presence means the governmental institutions probably have an existing relationship with the company. Another external factor could be the kind of work a certain company does. In policy on electricity for example, a grid operator has to be taken into account for it is delivering the energy later. However, a specialist company on solar panels is less likely to be taken into account. For their knowledge is not essential for the policy.

The fact the RES operates out of the existing cooperation schemes in a region may uncover different factors then the theory shows. New cooperation's had to be formed, or existing ones had to be combined into a commission for the RES. Somewhere in between the existing layers of government (Akerboom, 2018). As Schmidt (2005) shows this multi-levelness influences the characteristics of the actors in a policy arena and thus their willingness and need to incorporate business actors.

Descriptive data and results

As mentioned before from the theory and the research design the analysis will be done based on the scores on three independent variables and the dependent variable. That way the demand for expert knowledge from energy companies and the consequent choices for the use – or not- of expert knowledge is analyzed. The concept-RES documents from all 30 regions have been analyzed and scored on the variables. In this chapter the results of this empirical document analysis will be presented using statistical analysis. These analyses have been done using the computer program IBM SPSS Statistics 24. First the frequencies, distributions and descriptive statistics will be shown and described. To be able to show co-variation between the variables a correlation analysis follows. Then interesting variations in regions and independent variables will be explained, this will also lead to the selection of cases for the interviews.
In table 3 and figure 1 & 2 the frequency statistics of the data are shown. These give an overview of the distribution of the empirical data.

TABLE 2 *Frequency Statistics (N = 30)*

Variables	**Frequency**
Use Of expert knowledge	
1. No	19
2. Yes	11
Mode of decision making	
1. Technocratic	17
2. Democratic	13

Interesting to see is that more regions chose not to use expert knowledge from energy companies in the RES process while the national government advised to involve many stakeholders. To make sure the support base needed for (big infrastructural) energy projects energy companies themselves seem essential. Which is the basic premise of the whole RES process. However, 19 of the 30 regions did not involve energy related companies in the RES process. For the concept-RES most regions followed a technocratic mode of decision making, where the daily administrations had deciding power. Which is also interesting looking at the basic premise of support base in society and then deciding on the plans in administrations. From the theory more technocratic decision making would expect to make for higher involvement, but the above tends to indicate otherwise.

Below are the frequency tables for the other two variables: the number of municipalities and the number of inhabitants per region. The frequency figures on number of municipalities show quite a standard distribution. The RES regions represent a pretty standard distribution on municipalities, which is good for this analysis. However looking at the inhabitants, most regions are around 500.000, with 2 outliers above 2.000.000 (*Noord-Holland Zuid* & *Rotterdam-Den Haag*). This needs to be taken into account in the analysis. These two regions are also the two largest in the number of municipalities with respectively 23 and 29 municipalities in the region.

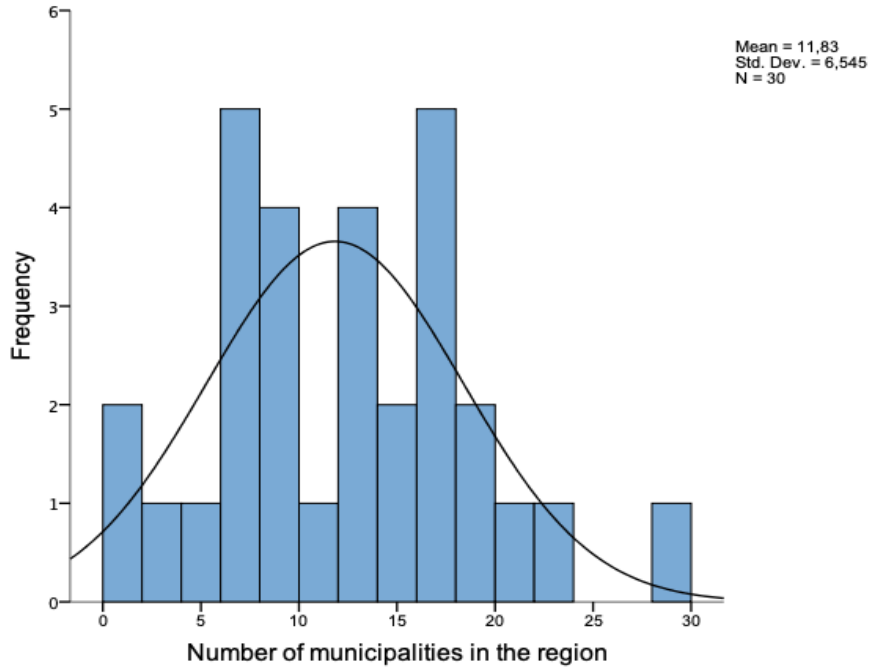

Figure 1: Frequency table of the number of municipalities per region (with normal distribution)

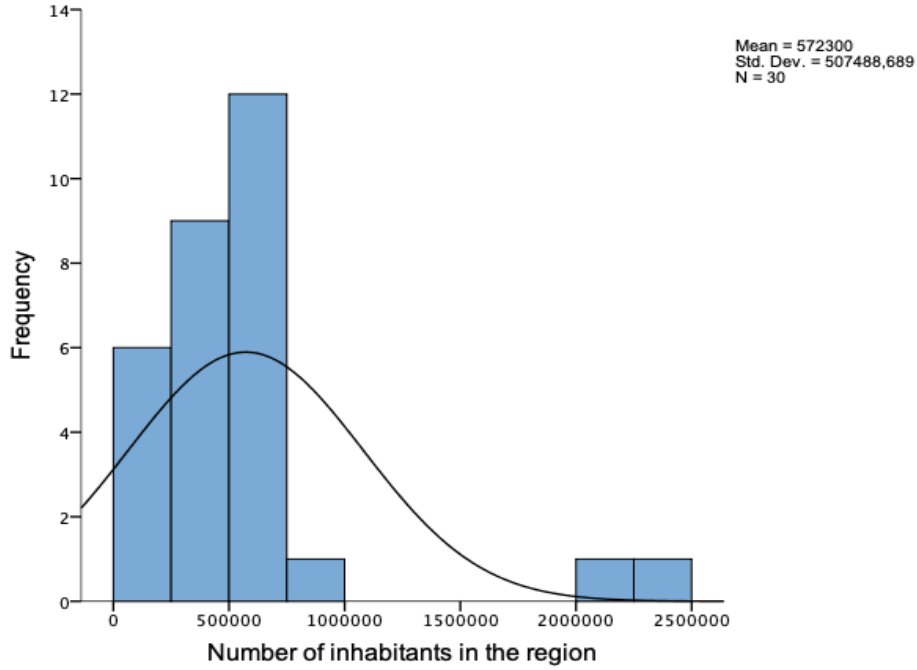

Figure 2: Frequency table of the number of inhabitants per region (with normal distribution)

In table 3 the means (Me), standard deviation (SD) and skewness (SK) are displayed of all the variables. The dependent variable has been measured on values 0 or 1. The municipalities range from 1 to 29 and the number of inhabitants ranges from 49000 to 2348000. The mode of decision making has been measured on values 0 or 1.

TABLE 3 *Descriptive Statistics*

Variables	Me	SD	SK
Dependent variable			
1. Use of expert knowledge from energy companies by local governments in the RES	.37	.49	0.58
Independent variables			
2. Number of municipalities	11.83	6.55	0.45
3. Number of inhabitants	572300.00	50400.00	2.57
4. Mode of decision making on concept-RES	.43	.50	.28

As the frequency statistics and skewness numbers show, the mode of decision making and number of municipalities are normally distributed with a skewness < (-)0.5. The mean and standard deviation of the number of inhabitants show how much of outliers the 2 regions above 2.000.000 are. 29 of the 30 regions are above 1.000.000 and 15 of the 30 regions – half – is below 500.000.

In table 4 the correlations between the variables are shown.

TABLE 4 *Correlations between variables*

Variabele	1	2	3	1
1. Use of expert knowledge from energy companies	1			
2. Number of Municipalities	.45*	1		
3. Number of inhabitants	.48**	.84**	1	
4. Mode of decision making on concept-RES	-.11	.08	.10	1

*p <.05, **p <.01

First the variables that correlate: number of inhabitants- and number of municipalities in a region. As can be seen the number of municipalities, as well as the number of inhabitants correlate positively with the independent variable. The number of inhabitants in a region even has a very strong positive correlation with the use of expert knowledge. A co-variation between these variables exist. The data from the concept-RES documents thus shows two things. First; the higher the number of municipalities the higher the chance that private energy companies are involved. Second, the higher the number of municipalities in a region, the higher the chance that private energy companies are involved. Bigger regions, with more inhabitants, more municipalities and thus more governmental institutions turn out to involve more external private energy actors. This is quite surprising giving the expectation that smaller numbers would make involvement more likely for both the number of municipalities and inhabitants.

However, this does not explain why the size of the region turns out to be positively correlated with the choice to involve energy companies rather then negatively. Hopefully the interviews can find an explanation.

The correlation is also very clear in the data. When looking at the number of inhabitants the 7 largest regions all involved companies. This is 7 of the 11 regions which involved companies. And they all are the opposite of the theoretical expectation. For number of municipalities only Friesland is in between the 7 which involved companies at the top. Friesland has a high number of municipalities (18), but is closer to average on the number of inhabitants (648000). So this data shows that a high number of municipalities and inhabitants creates a higher chance on the region using expert knowledge from companies.

Then the last variable, which did not correlate: the mode of decision making on the concept-RES. There is no linear relationship or co-variation between the variables. So the mode of decision making on the concept-RES has no significant influence on the use of expert knowledge from businesses in the RES. This means that no expectation on the use of energy companies by governmental actors can be derived from the mode of decision making in the region. Where the theory expected a relationship, the data on the concept-RES does not show one. When looking at the data the insignificance is quite clear. In the top 7 regarding the number of inhabitants, which all involved companies, the modes of decision making are divided. Four regions technocratic and three regions democratic. The smaller regions who did not involve companies, are also divided on the modes of decision making. This supports the outcome regarding correlation for this variable. The size of the region clearly tells something about the chance of companies being involved – a significant correlation. While the mode of decision making does not, and can be both either way – no significant correlation.

The distribution of scores on the use of expert knowledge from businesses also shows the insignificant correlation. Below in figure 3 is a stacked bar chart with the distribution.

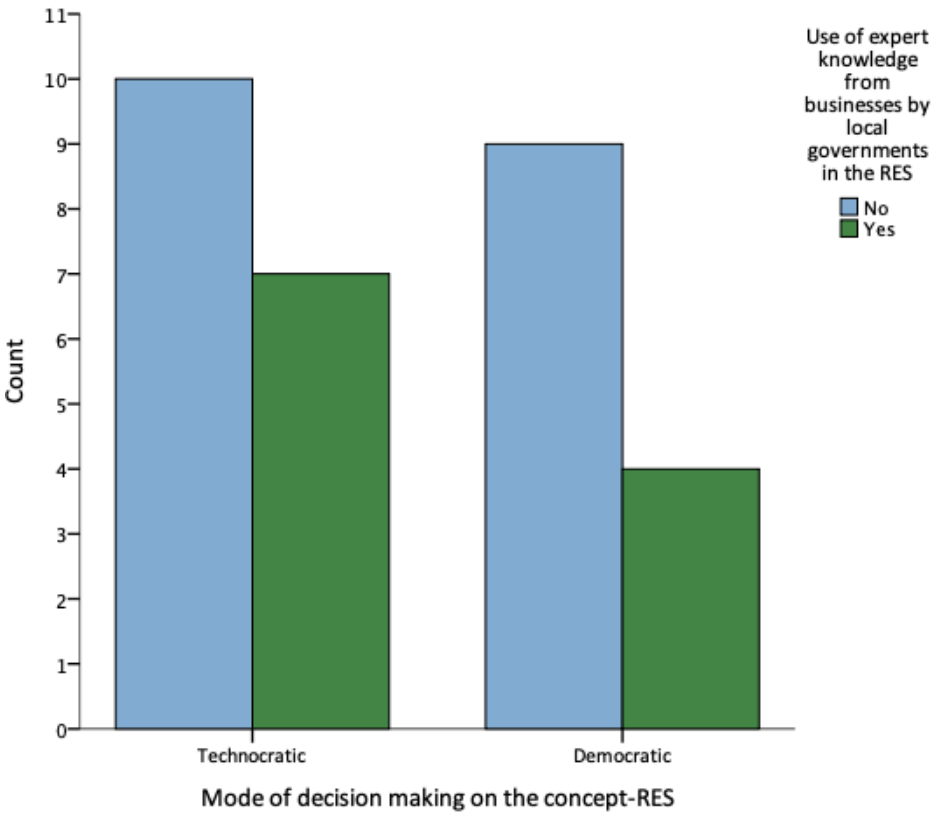

Figure 3: Stacked bar chart with the distribution of use of expert knowledge between the different modes of decision making.

First of all, the graph shows the differences in involvement of energy companies is verry little between technocratic and democratic regions. Very little can be concluded from this distribution. Two interesting things: the majority of technocratic regions did not involve energy companies. This is opposite from the theoretical expectation. On the other hand, the majority of regions which did involve energy companies did follow the expectation being technocratic. But the difference is quite small. Again, the numbers are so close, and so evenly distributed, most of all the graph shows and supports the insignificance of the correlation.

Maybe the multi-levelness of the RES process makes the mode of decision making not significant. It is not per se important where the decision is made, but the type of governance matters. So a multi-level systems makes for awaiting and careful bureaucrats who make the policy arena more closed then normal.

The above results tell if, according to the data on the concept-RES, the theoretical expectations are confirmed or denied. Interestingly the first two theoretical expectations are disproven. A negative correlation between number of inhabitants and number of municipalities was expected, while the data showed a positive correlation. The last one could not be confirmed nor denied. There is no correlation between the mode of decision making and the involvement of energy companies.. What is even more interesting is that the first two turn out to be significant exact the other way around. This data from the RES shows regions with more inhabitants and more municipalities have a higher chance of involving companies.

H1: Regions with less municipalities – thus smaller governmental institutions - involve more companies.

H2: Regions with less inhabitants – thus smaller governmental institutions - involve more companies

H3: Regions with a technocratic mode of decision making will involve more companies.

Interviews

However, to be able to explain this difference and to pick cases for the interviews a closer look at the regions and data is needed. For the best comparison case selection should be on the outcomes in independent variables are best. To achieve enough distribution among the data 4 regions will be picked distributed on the dependent variable, and the independent variables that showed correlation. So two smaller regions, one which did involve companies and one which did not. And two bigger regions, one which did involve companies and one which did not.

A good region for the confirmation of the theoretical expectations is *Hoeksche Waard*: small (86.000), 1 municipality, a technocratic mode of decision making and they did involve companies. On the other hand, a good region for the refute of my expectations would be *Rotterdam-Den Haag*. They did involve companies but are the second largest region for inhabitants (2.348.000) and municipalities (23) and have a very democratic mode of decision making. However, I can also do this logic the other way around. So a region which refutes the expectations being small in inhabitants and municipalities and being more technocratic which did not involve companies, like *Goeree-Overflakkee (no; 1, 49.000, middle)* and. And then confirmation in a large region with a democratic mode of decision making which did not involve companies, like *Noord-Oost Brabant (no; 16; 612.000, democratic).*

Respondents

To be able to compare these 4 regions, people working for the RES – which have been involved in the choice to involve companies or not – are interviewed. For Goeree-Overflakkee and Rotterdam-Den Haag two people, and for Noord-Oost Brabant and Hoeksche Waard one person.

- Respondent 1 works for the municipality of Goeree-Overflakkee as 'RES director', in that role he has the final and official responsibility for the RES 1.0 in the municipality and the region.
- Respondent 2 works for Stedin, the grid operator in Goeree-Overflakkee. He works as an 'area director' and is representative for Stedin at different levels of decision making. For the RES, he is representative for Stedin in both the core operational team as well as the steering group in the Goeree-Overflakkee region.
- Respondent 3 works for the municipality of Hoeksche Waard, she is policy officer on sustainability and project lead for the RES. In that role she has the final and official responsibility for the RES 1.0 in the municipality and the region.
- Respondent 4 is the project lead for the RES Noord-Oost Brabant. In that role he has the final and official responsibility for the RES 1.0 in the municipality and the region.

- Respondent 5 works for the municipality of Rotterdam in the sustainability department as task manager. He is representative for the municipality in the team of officials who are responsible for the process and its content.
- Respondent 6 is an independent strategic advisor on sustainability and energy. She is now involved in the RES as expert on heat. Before she worked as a strategic advisor on the energy transition for the municipality, in that role she represented the municipality in the team of officials.

All the regions that where interviewed have a similar structure for the RES project organization. A steering group of administrative representatives from at least the governments (province, municipalities and water board), the network operator and sometimes other external parties. This steering group is then supported by (civil) servants from the concerned parties.

Goeree-Overflakkee

Goeree-Overflakkee is the only region of the 4 with external parties included in the steering group. Inside the project organization, with more decisive powers. On top of the governmental and semi-governmental organizations a housing corporation, a wind-energy cooperative, a business association and the LTO (agriculture association). Involvement of single energy companies would be expected in such an inclusive project organization, but this is not the case. Respondent 1 & 2 both see willingness to work together with bigger energy companies in the RES. In the past with the other projects about the energy transition there has been contact with them. But the RES is more a question for spatial planning, meant to generate societal support base. In this early phase of the RES this is not relevant for big energy companies. The scale of the mission on Goeree-Overflakkee is not interesting enough, contrary to other regions says respondent 1: *"The goal of this process is gaining societal support base. Which is not that interesting for smaller businesses, very time consuming with results only after a long time. Look, if there needs to be a supply of heat in Rotterdam, the big boys are willing to work in a consortium. A lot of money can be earned there. But for us this is not the case."*

He furthermore thinks the RES is not a search for expertise specifically. There is enough expertise to write a policy document like this in the governmental organization. External involvement is rather in search for societal support. Respondent 2, who works for Stedin says the involvement of the grid operator is very useful. Being involved means they are better able to anticipate large infrastructural changes needed on the grid following the plans in the RES.

Involvement of energy companies

According to respondent 1, Goeree-Overflakkee does not involve single big companies because of several reasons. There is a scale issue, Goeree-Overflakkee is a small region in size with not that many inhabitants compared to other regions. The representation of certain sectors and bigger companies is in turn lower. The businesses who are present and active in the region don't have the scale and resources to invest in an administrative process like the RES. Respondent 1: *"It is all about scale size, you can fantasize all you want about certain constellations. But the scale size determines everything. Who you are able to involve, and who is interested in your work."*

Furthermore, citizens are not always aware of the RES, which makes it even less interesting for companies to invest time and resources in. Most of the inhabitants on the island work in the big city.

The external parties which are involved, are mostly associations of multiple business owners. These are harder to grasp and for them it is harder to represent every member. In Goeree-Overflakkee the associations are too fragmented. However, respondent 2 sees their importance in the process of gaining societal support base plus they bring knowledge about their members. The members of the association can serve as indicator on how society thinks about the plans. Especially the municipal council is interested in this.

Respondent 2 adds that municipalities in general tend to look for locally rooted businesses. Involving a single bigger energy company comes with the risk of suspicion for bias. For a region with a central project organization inside one municipality with known knowledge networks, the associations and corporations are a 'safe choice'. When the municipality does lack specific market knowledge, they tend to acquire this from advisory companies, not the market players themselves. This way you involve the market indirectly, with a lower chance of bias or conflicts of interest. Goeree-Overflakkee is also planning on involving such an advisory company specialized in technical possibilities. But this will only be in the implementation phase. They are also supported by a company in the process of the RES.

For the concept-RES the technical knowledge has already been accumulated in the processes before the RES. Goeree-Overflakkee has been thinking about the energy transition for 10 years already. This process was not completely repeated for the RES, the knowledge was just re-used. Respondent 1 thinks this makes for a bit of a democratic deficit. Since the process before the RES has been pushed by the province and not through the local council.

Independent variables

Both respondent 1 and 2 think scale of the region and its organization is a reason for the weak interest in the RES from bigger energy companies. The results from the document study seem to be confirmed. But this is contrary than theory, because the regional organization is open to cooperation with these companies.

The multi-levelness also plays a role. Before the RES the emphasis has been on governance from the province. Goeree-Overflakkee was, in respondent one's words: *"the best kid in class"*. There was a lot of attention and interference from the province in the local sphere. And the province used Goeree-Overflakkee as a test case for developments in the energy transition. Now in the RES the municipality has the biggest voice, which makes for a rather conservative stance according to respondent 1. The rules on governance and decision making powers in the RES region brings administrative acrobatics. What is the administrative position of the project organization? Who is the final responsible party? Uncertainty of the phase of the process and responsibility are also reasons for no involvement of big energy companies according to the respondents.

For Stedin, their role as semi-governmental organization without democratic legitimacy, in a decisive body is also challenging. These governmental challenges are a reason for the high overbid of the sum of the concept-RES plans (50 TW-h), thinks respondent 2. Although the decision making should have been regional, and the goal is set nationally (35 TW-h), in regional

cooperation the local reality sometimes turns out to be slightly different then agreed. Which can cause trouble during national/regional coordination.

Other variables

Getting external stakeholders involved was fairly easy in Goeree-Overflakkee because of the small size and the single municipality. Respondent 1 and 2 both agree, for the most part, the right stakeholders are in play for the RES. In other policy arenas regarding sustainability there is cooperation with the same actors. This network can be exchanged, all inside one organization (municipality). All of the external parties in Goeree-Overflakkee for example, where already working together and knew the municipality. In bigger regions with multiple municipalities this integrating existing networks may be more difficult.

On top of the scale and process challenges, respondent 2 furthermore mentions the time pressure and uncertainty about what to do as challenges to involve big energy companies. This also makes comparison between regions more difficult. Respondent 2: *"There are so many local conditions and challenges, it is almost impossible to conclude things on the basis of a few regions you interview. I think, in the RES, there is still too much pragmatism and a certain political reality which hinders progress. There is too much forming still going on."*

Hoeksche Waard

Hoeksche Waard is the second region with only one municipality, and it is a special one. The municipality is a merger of 5 former smaller municipalities. In the process of the merger, during 2019, the parties also discussed their status and future plans on sustainability and energy production. They also worked together before in a cooperation named 'Hoeksche Waard', where sustainability was discussed. In that constellation a search for stakeholders lead to the 5 external actors also involved in the RES process. The municipality, the province of Zuid-Holland, Stedin (grid operator) and the only housing corporation in the region: HW wonen. Five administrators from each are represented in the steering group, with the same amount of official support in the core operational team.

Involvement of energy companies

The region Hoeksche Waard divides involved stakeholders in three categories with different success regarding engagement. Those being the inhabitants in the region, the societal organizations and finally the businesses. Mapping stakeholders was quite easy for Hoeksche Waard, all of the actors already worked together in other projects for example the earlier realized wind plans. This puts Hoeksche Waard ahead compared to many other regions regarding the phase of the RES process.

Inhabitants are not really interested or invested in the plans for the RES (yet), thinks respondent 3. The process is still pretty abstract for an ordinary citizen not working in sustainability. When citizens have the feeling plans like this mean actual changes in their daily lives they will become engaged. This is something the RES need to do better. However Hoeksche Waard is already engaging in participation trajectories for citizens. Many other regions are able to yet because of time consuming alignment of plans earlier in the process.

Societal organizations on the other hand have been working together with the municipalities for years and are interested and engaged for the RES. Businesses which are

engaged are local and most of them part of the local business association. Most of these have also been involved with the municipality for years.

The big energy companies involved come from the earlier realized wind plans. For the RES specifically they are not that concerned. Their role is more in implementing concrete energy plans and infrastructure. Hoeksche Waard is trying to synchronize all of these processes as much as possible. Respondent 3 thinks all of the simultaneous processes influence the others. Every moment of decision making in each of the energy related process will. Furthermore, like many other regions Hoeksche Waard hired an advisory bureau to support the process both with knowledge and employees.

Independent variables

Involving new big energy companies seems harder, respondent 3 thinks scope and diverging goals between governmental actors are at the basis.

When organizing meetings for input the region invites as many stakeholders (inhabitants, societal organizations and businesses) as possible. But the actual attendance and involvement is dependent on who is interested and available. Most of the businesses who attend are member of the local business association. Respondent 3 thinks the region is doing a good job in involving the companies, although local. For a small region with only one municipality they have about two third of the businesses in the region involved in some way or another. For other local companies, and bigger energy companies, the RES is not interesting enough to invest time and resources in. The scale and scope are also too small for bigger companies.

The municipality has a leading role in governance in the Hoeksche Waard region. According to respondent 3 they acquired budget from national government, proposed to hire the advisory company and do most of the writing. There is constant coordination and tuning on decisions with the steering group but most of the initiatives are from the municipality. There has been some struggle to synchronize the goals and needed work between the partners. The municipality is striving to be completely energy neutral in 2040, but this is a goal solely for them. Which demands other policy choices and action then the RES, for solar- and wind power the goals need a lot of extra generation. The idea was to incorporate the policy goals for efficiency reasons because both include big scale renewable energy generation. The other actors did not agree with the high goals from the municipality which led to disagreement and struggle. For the RES only a part of the plans where needed, the rest was no priority for the other partners. The processes have been segregated again and the goals are now aligned. Goals and expectations should be communicated well. Especially in a multi-level process like the energy transition with different (governmental) actors with different capacities and authorities.

Other variables

The biggest reason for the involvement of single energy companies is the phase of the RES process. Hoeksche Waard has been talking about sustainability and thus is well advanced regarding regional tuning. A few years ago a national goal for wind energy production was fulfilled partly by wind parks in the Hoeksche Waard region. Some of them are still in production, but all the spatial coordination between the parties and governments has taken place. This was most of the goal in the concept-RES. This in combination with the size of the region make it easier to make decisions. Compared to other (bigger) regions, Hoeksche Waard

is more in an early implementation phase. Which brings different questions and dilemma's then the visionary phase most regions are still in do.

Respondent 3 thinks the RES is too abstract for a clear demand for expert knowledge from energy companies. It depends on how a region looks at the RES as a document, the phase they think the RES is in now and the steps needed to deliver a RES. Many regions have a multitude of municipalities involved, everyone has their ideas on solutions, steps to take and who to involve. The demand for expertise from single big energy companies will probably be higher when the process is more in an implementation phase, which takes longer for other regions.

Region Hoeksche Waard is even already anticipating unrealistic plans in the – much higher than needed - national bid of 50 TW-h. Their own plans are feasible and realistic because a large part is already in production. It could be the case regions are unable to make their bid reality and the national government will interfere. By anticipating where extra capacity may be possible and feasible in Hoeksche Waard the stakeholders are better prepared.

Noord-Oost Brabant

The two other regions are both one of the largest for number of citizens and municipalities, which makes for a more complex process organization The process organization consists of the 16 municipalities in the region, the province of Noord-Brabant, 2 water boards and grid operator Enexis. There is a steering group with administrative representatives from the governmental parties plus a representative from Enexis. Then there is a program-team, consisting of employee support, which writes the RES. Outside of this core project organization there is a large group of stakeholders supporting and delivering input, where also representatives from company associations take part.

Involvement of energy companies

Finding all the right stakeholders was, and still continues to be, an ongoing process. The region has done a decent job mapping and engaging relevant stakeholders. Housing corporations, agricultural association (LTO), young professionals (JongRES), business association (VNO-NCW), energy cooperatives and nature organizations. Respondent 4 is pleased with the engagement until now, but for a fully regionally supported RES there is still room for improvement.

No single energy company was involved in the region which is quite big and has a democratic mode of decision making. This is also what respondent 4 emphasized during the interview, he thinks the involvement of non-governmental actors could potentially be better, but is still in process and will be the whole time. For the implementation and policy which will follow after RES 1.0 respondent 4 thinks energy companies are essential.

Independent variables

According to respondent 4 there is sufficient knowledge within the governmental actors to write the RES. People working in different departments provide input and are available. Since the goal for the RES is regionally supported policy with support base in society. The officials from local governments are suited to write these plans because of their local roots and knowledge.

They also know where to get the further needed knowledge and whom to involve. This could be an explanation

However there are parts of the process the region would like single (bigger) energy companies to engage. If companies for example have a business proposition or an idea on how to generate renewables they would be involved. Until now the involved business actors are regional and represented in an association. Respondent 4 thinks their RES, the scope and what they offer, is too small/local for bigger companies that act nationwide. And a lot of companies are dealing with the consequences of the COVID-crisis and keeping their own business running. Sustainability is not a priority for a lot of companies. Especially not processes with vague policy goals like the RES.

Regarding the multi-levelness of the RES, respondent 4 sees the local governments having a bigger voice in the process. This leads to a more local scope of the RES, which results in more local involved companies. The province most of the times is finding out its role in the RES still. While municipalities have decent local roots and now their ways towards citizens and local companies alike. This multi-levelness has influence on the way citizens are involved and he thinks it may affect the companies and other actors being involved.

For example, the province operates further away from society then municipalities. This affects their role in the RES process, who decides on what and who to involve. Officials from municipalities most of the times are better grounded locally and have a better network there. While province officials may have a better network on a regional scale. Respondent 4 sees officials from municipalities being more citizen centered, with a bigger emphasis on participation then the province.

Other variables

Most governmental actors in the region see the RES as a vision for future energy policy, rather than concrete policy to immediately execute. For the writing of the RES, not much difficult technical knowledge is needed, all of which is needed is there. The RES is in its basis a regional piece, the regional roots are more important for which the municipalities are better able to utilize than big companies.

In Noord-Oost Brabant and regions around them respondent 4 sees geographical or technical reason influencing this decision. Are big companies regionally present, or do they have good local roots? How big is the scope of the projects and energy demand? If yes and big, they are more likely at the table region wide. Sometimes a big company will even only be interested in talking with a local municipality where their presence is. In his region for example, Heineken is present (but also rooted) in Den Bosch, but only talks directly with the municipality. Because they have no bigger regional importance or interest in the process. When looking at other regions with big industrial clusters, the companies there are already at the table from the beginning, simply because the RES covers their territories and the regional governments need their specialistic knowledge.

Also the substantive focus of the region for the RES makes for a different approach towards stakeholders. If a region has a lot of focus on nature preservation the interests of companies, citizens and nature organizations probably will not align. But the citizens and nature organizations will be vocal, contrary to most businesses. Finding common ground in this type of policy can be hard. The RES is a process of transition, of vision. Almost like a big

participation experiment with a substantive goal inside. For respondent 4 the visionary characteristics of the RES make for a smaller need for expertise of companies. In the current process only their preferences are important. Respondent 4: *"In the RES we want to know the interests and motivation to act of the different actors, including companies. But this has not much to do with their technical expertise, which we are still going to need very much in the implementation of policy"*

Rotterdam-Den Haag

The project organization has an administrative network, this consists of a representative of the participating parties: the municipalities, the province, the water boards, the grid operator, a nature organization and a network of civil servants and employees supporting them. The daily state of affairs is supervised by a steering group from the administrative network and a civil servant project group.

One of the biggest challenges for this region, which both respondent 5 & 6 mentioned multiple times, is decision making in 23 municipalities and balancing between them. The RES region consist of 23 municipalities, 4 water boards and the province. The 23 municipalities already worked together in a cooperative body called the "Metropoolregio Rotterdam Den Haag" (Metropolitan Region Rotterdam-Den Haag, MRDH). Even before the plans for a RES where official, the MRDH discussed the energy mix in the region. Respondent 6 came up with the idea to do a scenario study towards 2050. When the national thematic tables started regarding the 'klimaatakkoord', MRDH did this regional. This was the starting point for the RES.

The RES is a complex document to write, balancing decisions between so many actors sheer impossible. This results in the region not having time for certain parts of the process. Like talking to a vast array of external non-governmental stakeholders for their input and really making them part of the process. This is something that is still lacking according to respondent 5. Another consequence is that the more actors to balance between, the more vague goals and arguments get. The plans for the RES get stuck in vision making and strategies, rather than concrete policy plans. About which respondent 6 says: *"So, a civil servant first needs to align in their own municipality and then between all the others and the rest of the actors in the region. This also means: the more actors, the more arguments stay vague or general. It gets stuck at vision and strategies, that is further away, thus easier. Concretization is hard. That is a challenge for this RES. How are we making sure there is a balance between hosanna stories and concrete plans that bring the region further."*

Involvement of energy companies

The region is willing to work with external energy companies under the right circumstances. Giving the time and process constrains they have done so. Energy companies are also involved in the thematic groups supporting the project organization. But there still is a struggle between the smaller and larger municipalities on who to involve and how. A good example is the port of Rotterdam and its companies. The harbor area officially is not part of the RES region. The industrial characteristics and size of these operations make for a completely different approach. The industrial clusters of the Rotterdam and Moerdijk ports are covered separately for the climate agreement. This means they are making their own plans to make their energy use

renewable. But geographically the harbor is part of Rotterdam, so the two organizations work together where possible. For example the are large amounts of rest heat produced in the harbor which the municipalities in the RES can use. A workshop was organized at the Port of Rotterdam, the port authority, for their input. Via the Port of Rotterdam other companies (also energy companies) – active in the port are – are also (in)directly involved. For example, Shell is planning on building a hydrogen factory in the port with power from wind at sea. The Port of Rotterdam proposed these plans to the RES so they could incorporate them.

The vastness and complexity of the RES and the region result in the process stuck at answering the question: what to do? Although the RES should lead to an answer and actions on how to do it. Getting and keeping companies involved is hard with a high abstraction level and doubts on their role. However, the municipality of Rotterdam is on itself able to get to the concrete 'how' question with energy companies. This is because of the ambition of their Aldermen for sustainability, Arno Bonte. He started writing a municipal climate agreement: 'Het Rotterdams Klimaat Akkoord'. The focus in this document is on concrete deals for the city, together with society and businesses. The feasible projects from this document are then proposed and used in the RES, many of them already with a business case and supplier. For these projects the municipality is also in constant contact with energy companies and societal stakeholders. The scale of a municipality like Rotterdam helps with this, says Respondent 5.

Apart from energy companies a consortium of three advisory companies was involved to supervise by means of the process: APPM, Generation Energy and CE Delft. These actors most of all bring manpower and knowledge on how to successfully shape and execute a multi-level process in the energy transition. But more importantly they also bring knowledge and expertise from the market at the table. For example their experience in the energy sector working on similar projects, their market research which produces data and tools for mapping and analyzing energy infrastructure. Indirectly this brings expert knowledge from companies to the RES project, emphasize both respondent 5 and 6.

Independent variables

Because of the scale and size of the projects and plans in the region involvement of bigger energy companies is inevitable. Which confirms the variables again. Furthermore, Rotterdam used its municipal plans and size to ensure more involvement through its own climate agreement.

In the multi-level arena the municipalities tend to have the upper hand, the main reason being that there are a lot more municipalities compared to other actors. Although the province tends to have better regional overview, if they raise a contrasting view there are 23 others with a municipal view. The emphasis on governance is on the two large municipalities, just like in the existing metropolitan cooperation. Their capacities and authority outweigh that of the province. The project organization made very clear agreements and set clear goals in the beginning of the RES. And this is repeated every time a sub-product or sub-goal is reached. This helps govern the multi-leveled and multitude of involved governmental actors. For example, if an actor changes its goals during the process the earlier agreements can be reassured. After provincial elections there has been some struggle with diverging plans from the province, but they now follow the original goals and plans again after pressure from the other actors.

Contact with external factors was also mainly through the municipalities. The two large cities, one with the biggest port of Europe, are already working together with a lot of (bigger) companies in their daily practice. And some smaller municipalities have large greenhouse horticulture with a big energy demand.

Other variables

Respondent 5 and 6 talk about a number of reasons that influence the involvement of single market companies.

The first being the phase the process is in. The biggest challenge of the region, as mentioned before, is the size and number of actors who have to decide. Slowing down the process and making goals more vague. This results in the process being stuck in what, rather than progressing to how. External companies are needed more in the how phase. That is when support base and development is important. The complexity of the RES makes for limited time. The municipality of Rotterdam uses its daily work with companies on other energy projects in the RES to make up for this, thanks to the Rotterdam climate agreement.

Ultimately, the decision to involve companies or not is with the administrations of the governmental organizations. It is a policy process. This makes it susceptible to a political reality where conflicts of interest are close. Governments have to really think about why a certain actors is needed in the process. And for what purpose a certain action is taken also determines who to involve. The process of selecting companies depends on the question at hand and who has that certain knowledge. Where local companies are the most likely to be known. In the end it is a vision document for government, no business case for companies.

Respondent 5 and 6 do see a supply and demand for market for expert knowledge. But the characteristics and context of the process influence the exchange between government and commercial market actors. The governmental parties struggle with the progress and how to involve companies, while most companies would like to get more information and involvement.

Respondent 6 then explained how she also sees a less visible and less obvious demand for knowledge. The regions all hired advisory companies to help them shape and execute the process. Rotterdam-Den Haag is a good example, they even have a consortium of three of these. These advisory companies, besides counseling regarding the process, bring a lot of market knowledge on energy. This fulfills a part of the demand for expertise, but without directly involving companies. Which respondent 6 thinks is less susceptible to conflicts of interest. Commercial energy developers are not per se interested in a broadly supported RES, but rather in a RES that suits their commercial goals. Advisory companies on the other hand want to deliver high quality work which the governmental actors support. They want to be considered again in case of a complex policy process. Their interest for a good product, aligns with these of the governmental actors. This results in a different relationship and approach in the RES. These advisory companies have a serving role inside the project organization and less visible in the text. This is also clear in the next quote from Respondent 6: *"That is where the difference in interest is clear. Eneco is not interested in the quality of the whole RES, but rather a RES that fits what they want. To put it in too strong terms. Which is a very different market interest than APPM's interest. They want the government saying they were very capable in supporting the process. Next time you should hire them. Consequently, governmental actors have a different relationships towards these companies."*

Comparison and analysis

First the cases will be compared on the concepts from the theory and the conceptual model. Then possible other explanatory factors will be described. In general the interviews supported the data that was collected from the document analysis. Which means the data from the interviews also supports the statistical analysis conducted, denying the first two hypothesis:

H1: Regions with less municipalities – thus governmental institutions - involve more companies.

H2: Regions with less inhabitants – thus governmental institutions - involve more companies

All of the regions think the scale and scope of their institutions and projects had influence on the involvement of companies or not. But not in the rationale of the theoretical expectation. Rather a bigger region, with larger governmental actors and more inhabitants, has a bigger scale and scope regarding the projects they incorporate in the RES. This larger scale is perceived to be more interesting for big companies to get involved, according to the respondents. However, this would be a supply factor in the theory of access and the perspective from companies is not taken into account. This does not really tell anything about a 'demand' for expert knowledge from energy companies. All of the respondents said there was a willingness to work together with such companies. The scale and scope factors said more about companies not engaging, but this not automatically means a demand for their expert knowledge. Furthermore, bigger municipalities like Rotterdam and Den Haag tend to work with bigger projects and thus bigger companies in their daily work. Like the respondent working for Rotterdam told about how they incorporated existing municipal plans and their collaborations with companies in the RES. The two smaller region's would have liked to involve more and bigger companies. However their numbers are not interesting and mostly covered by local stakeholders. Hoeksche Waard did indirectly involve bigger single companies, but also because of the plans from earlier energy policy processes. For the RES they have been focusing on societal partners until now. The respondent from Noord-Oost Brabant is pleased with the current involvement of local (societal) stakeholders. The region is putting a lot of effort in engaging external stakeholders. But they are not able to engage single bigger companies. Which he attributes to the scale and scope of their RES (being mainly local and small), and their plans not concrete enough.

Statistical analysis showed no significant correlation between the mode of decision making and involvement of companies from the third expectation.

H3: Regions with a technocratic mode of decision making will involve more companies.

This was also not supported in either of the interviews. At the end of the day, the RES is a governmental policy plan. The only actors with real decision making power thus are the governmental actors with democratic legitimacy. Like the municipalities, province and water boards. The national committee even decided for the RES 1.0 the plans have to pass every local council. For the concept-RES the choice was between the local councils and the daily administrations. Noord Oost Brabant was the only region of the four from the interviews where

the municipal councils had to decide. The mode of decision making turned out to be no variable of importance. There is however difference in the way actors are involved in the steering group and project information. For example, in Goeree-Overflakkee is the only region respondent 2 knows where external non-governmental actors are part of the core steering with administrative responsibilities as well.

The decision making context for the RES is special for another reason. Not per se because of the modes of decision making, which turn out to be democratic for RES 1.0. But the characteristics of regional decision making in a multi-level arena are interesting. The regional RES organization hoovers somewhere between the municipalities, province and water boards in Dutch governance. But it has no decision making power, which is still with the existing democratic actors like the municipality, the province and the water boards. They have to decide on the interregional plans from the project organization in their own political reality and local conditions and needs. These realities, conditions and needs can be quite divergent. Where, according to respondent 2 from his personal experience, the region/province eventually loses out: *"In my experience working for a regional cooperation, regional decision making might initially sounds good but turns out different. Actors afford the luxury to present the plans slightly adjusted at home then regionally agreed. In the tension between the region vs. municipalities, the region gets the worst most of the times."*

From theory the theoretical expectation arose that this complex governance in the multi-level policy arena would negatively influence the demand for the involvement of external companies:

H4: Local governmental actors in a multi-level policy arena will involve less companies.

The interviews showed the multi-level characteristic did have an influence, but what kind of influence and how is contextually dependent. For example Goeree-Overflakkee where the municipal focus led to a more conservative stance towards the goals. But this is due to the political reality in the region, where conservative parties have the majority. In Hoeksche Waard misalignment in goals led to the municipality having to cover their own high ambitions in other projects apart from the regional cooperation. The respondents were well aware of the challenges this multi-level governance poses. For example respondent 2 who said the focus on local governance in many regions, and not taking into account the plans of other regions could also be a reason for the high national bid which seems unrealistic. Respondent 6 told about the clear and irreversible agreements the actors make each step of the process. Serving as procedural grips in the capricious policy arena: *"There sometimes is discussion on steps, or de province saying they disagree. But the municipalities are able to get them on the same page again. (…) There are certain agreements. Like the next picket post, you can go back to the last post but not any further. That really helps."*

Another goal of the interviews was to find possible other explanatory factors. All the respondents saw a great willingness to involve single private energy companies in the process. But not because of a specific demand for expert knowledge, but rather for a broader support base In society. The lack of demand for specific expert knowledge from energy companies most respondents attribute to the phase the RES process in. All of the respondents mentioned the progress as a challenge or as a chance. The two smaller regions of Hoeksche Waard and Goeree-

Overflakkee are already thinking about implementation because of earlier plans on energy production. The implementation phase needs the involvement of companies and their knowledge on big energy infrastructure. Engaging new energy companies for the RES has in turn been no success because of scale and scope issues mentioned earlier. The other regions are still in the middle of the planning stages. This is characterized as more vague and 'official', this phase comes with different needs. The regions do not really have a demand for the involvement of energy companies. Those companies on the other hand also are not interested, or do not have the capacity, to work on vague plans like these. Their interest is more with the concrete implementation of policy. The reason the respondents think Rotterdam is still stuck in this phase is the complexity of the democratic coordination process with 23 municipalities. Which is more time-consuming than anticipated.

Furthermore, since the process is not clear or thought through yet in most region's the regions change their process and actors a lot. The RES is characterized by a lot of local context and its challenges. Which makes comparison harder, but can also be an explanation why the theory seems to not fit this policy process.

The two respondents who are not working for governmental actors mentioned another factor in play. It is interesting none of the governmental actors did. Involvement of commercial market actors like energy companies always bears the risk of conflict of interest. Especially in the renewable energy production, which covers very big projects which serves citizens but also has to make money from them. Governments should therefore be selective and cautious on who to involve and how. Respondent 2 said the following: *"In general municipalities think involving market parties is scary. Because of a strict tender basis a lot of them operate under. Maybe you unwillingly take risks by involving them."*

But the involved advisory companies, which respondent 6 mentioned and where initially not taken into account, seem to be a solution to avoid this problem. They directly or indirectly bring market knowledge and thereby fulfil a certain demand. However, they are hired by the government and their goals and interest aligned with the governmental actors. The risk of conflicts of interest is less apparent. It is however not sure if the governments do this on purpose, and they did all mention a high willingness to involve more private companies.

5. Conclusion

In the final chapter of this thesis the conclusions of this research will be presented. First the research project will be summarized followed by the answer to the research question. After this the research process as well as possible future research on this topic are discussed. Finally the implication of this research for the theory and practical policy implementation will be discussed.

Results and answer research question

The goal of this thesis was to analyze the process of choosing whether to use expert knowledge from business actors in making policy or not. Specifically to try to find factors influencing this choice. The RES was chosen because of little procedural rules from national government. From existing literature a theoretical argument was constructed by combining different approaches to the *Theory of Access (*Bouwen, 2002; Eising, 2007; Falkner, 2000; Schmidt, 2005). A conceptual model was constructed from a governmental perspective.

The size of the region (inhabitants and municipalities), the mode of decision making and the multi-level policy context where expected to influence the choice of involving energy companies. A comparative case study was conducted using empirical data from document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The concept-RES, the first big step towards the first final RES, of all the 30 regions was analysed. Following the statistical analysis four regions where selected on differences in outcomes on the independent variables. In these regions interviews were conducted with people working for the RES. Goeree-Overflakkee, Hoeksche Waard, Noord-Oost Brabant and Rotterdam-Den Haag. The results from these interviews were compared and analysed together.

The document analysis showed interesting results, regarding the size of the region the expectation a negative relationship was expected. The analysis showed a positive one. The number of inhabitants and the number of municipalities in a region have a positive influence on the choice of local governments to use expert knowledge from energy companies in the RES. So, the higher both numbers, the more likely energy companies are involved. The mode of decision making in the region did not have a significant influence in the case of the RES.

The interviews supported the above. An explanation for the positive rather than negative relationship the respondents thought of was the scale and scope of the process. Bigger regions tend to have bigger project more interesting for big energy companies. Furthermore, bigger governmental organisations are more likely to already be in contact with big companies. The mode of decision making turned out to be almost the same everywhere for the concept-RES. Differences in how ‘democratic’ and inclusive a project organization is rather is influenced by the involvement of external factors or not. Not the other way around, as expected. The interviews also showed possible extra factors. A possible extra factor influencing the involvement of companies is the phase the process is in a certain region. The progress differs a lot, and regions who are more in the implementation phase tend to involve more companies. Other regions are still constructing vague visionaries which are not interested for commercial parties. A second possible extra factor is the fear of conflict of interest between local governments and big companies. Indirectly bringing their knowledge inside the project via advisory companies could be a way the local governments avoid this from happening. With the

abovementioned results the research question can be answered: *"What factors influence the choice of local governments to use expert knowledge from energy companies in the RES?"*

This research showed that for the RES the number of inhabitants in a region and the number of municipalities influence the choice of local governments to use expert knowledge from energy companies. Possible other factors could be the phase of the process and fear of conflicts of interest.

Discussion results & research

This thesis project was limited in time, resources and scope. The combination between a statistical analysis on all the regions and interviews in four of them was an effective way to cope with this. This thesis was able to test the theory on all the RES, and thus conclude things about the RES which are reliable. Then the case selection on the results made sure to cover enough variance in the interviews. The semi-structured interviews also provided with in-depth information which could support the results from the statistical analysis from the practice. The interviews gave the possibility for possible other explanatory factors for the RES not covered in the theory. However, a downside to this approach and the number of cases interviewed is the limited possibility to generalize the findings from the interviews to the RES, let alone to other policy processes. From the interviews the process turned out to still be unclear and unpredictable in some regions. The differences between regions in progress further complicate accurate and reliable comparison. The possible other explanatory findings – phase of the process and fear of conflict of interest – could thus not be concluded for all the regions. Repeating this research design after the first RES is done and then with interviews in every region interviews would vastly improve the possibility to generalize for the whole RES and beyond..

Another factor is the difference in progress and clarity regarding the process between different regions. All regions are doing the process at their own pace and with their own rules. Comparison and drawing conclusions from the interviews seems almost impossible. Every region has its own local conditions, challenges and political reality. The open character of the RES process in combination with these factors can be an explanation why the theory did not fit perfectly. The theory turned out to not completely capture the difference in reality between the European Union and a policy process like the RES. The theory of access had only been constructed and used in the context of the European Union. The RES context turned out to be very different. The focus on expertise from energy companies also may have been too small, given the interesting mentions of advisory companies. Their role may in the end have been more interesting than anticipated. Future research should take them into account and then rethink the theoretical argument with this knowledge. This also strengthens the suggestion on future research only when the RES 1.0 is done and including more regions.

During the interviews the progress regarding the process turned out to have influence. Following this it would have been interesting to have interviewed the region Zeeland. Which is the first and only region already done with their RES 1.0 including citizen and business participation.

Practical implications and policy proposals

As mentioned multiple times in the analysis, the different (political) reality in the regions makes it difficult to determine practical implications throughout the whole RES. Or practical/policy proposals towards a specific regions. Some general practical implications can be defined. It seems every region wants to involve energy companies in the end, to get the most support base as possible. There seems to be no question for demand in expert knowledge yet in most of the processes, the involvement of these companies has more to do with the support base. The reasons energy companies are already involved or not seem to differ from region to region. But size, phase of the process and fear of conflict of interest seem to be the major factors. A real demand could come into play in the implementation phase, so involvement should be possible in most regions. This could be a task/goal for the national committee, there now is too much discrepancy between big regions with lots of possibilities and contacts and the smaller ones who seem to mis the connection with big energy companies.

A start could be to map the phase of the process in every region, because that seems to influence the efforts and successes to involve energy companies. Also their challenges in possible conflicts of interest could be taken into account. A good overview of the opportunities and needs for the different regions could be mapped. The national committee could then help specific regions, or pair regions with each other on the basis of their opportunities and needs. Another proposal would be to more actively promote the willingness of the RES regions to work with big energy companies. It could very well be that they are not informed of the willingness of smaller regions because of the lack of contacts.

For the RES regions and their project organizations this thesis could provide a better understanding of their relationship with big energy companies in such a policy process. The data gives a good overview of involvement through all the regions which can help foster regional cooperation.

Practical implications for future policy processes are hard to determine. The theory did not fit the practical reality so generalization on theory is not possible.

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Appendix A.

Data on RES regions:

Regio Achterhoek	
Municipalities:	Aalten (27000), Berkelland (44000), Bronckhorst (36000), Doetinchem (57000), Montferland (36000), Oost Gelre (30000), Oude IJsselstreek (40000) en Winterswijk (29000).
Decision making:	Other stakeholders where only consulted or received information. The decision making on the concept-RES was with the daily administration of the municipalities, province and water board. So ***technocratic***.
Business:	In expert meetings some organizations where consulted but no private business was invited. Most of the organizations consulted where societal/citizen powered organizations. **No.**
***Regio* Alblasserwaard**	
Municipalities:	Gorinchem (37000), Molenlanden (44000)
Decision making:	The decision making was done by daily administrations, so technocratic. But from early on 250 participants were involved in the choice process. So not only consulted for input, but also coordinated on the choices that were made. **technocratic**
Business:	Woningcorporaties, industriële kring Gorinchem, bedrijven molenlanden where all involved from early on **No**.
***Regio* Arnhem / Nijmegen**	
Municipalities:	Gemeente Arnhem (157000), Gemeente Berg en Dal (35.000), Gemeente Beuningen (26.000), Gemeente Doesburg (11000), Gemeente Druten (19.000), Gemeente Duiven (25000), Gemeente Heumen (16000), Gemeente Lingewaard (46000), Gemeente Nijmegen (176000), Gemeente Overbetuwe (47000), Gemeente Rheden (44000), Gemeente Renkum (31000), Gemeente Rozendaal (2000), Gemeente Westervoort (15000), Gemeente Wijchen (41000), Gemeente Zevenaar (43000)
Decision making:	Decision making is technocratic for the concept, the region worked with a base organization from the 16 municipalities, the three water boards and the province. To involve as many stakeholders a participation trajectory was set up where every step of the RES went through all the stakeholder levels in cycles. These stakeholders are involved from the beginning. But decision making lies with the daily administrations. **Technocratic**
Business:	Almost 450 organizations, from energy cooperation's, entrepreneurs, farmers, NGO's and schools. ***Yes***
Regio Amersfoort	
Municipalities:	Aalten (27000), Berkelland (44000), Bronckhorst (36000), Doetinchem (56000), Montferland (36000), Oost Gelre (30000), Oude IJsselstreek (40000) en Winterswijk (29000).
Decision making:	With the daily administration of the municipalities, province and water board. So **technocratic**.

Business:	No. In expert meetings some organizations where consulted but no private business was invited. Most of the organizations consulted where societal/citizen powered organizations. **No**
***Regio* Cleantech (stedendriehoek)**	
Municipalities:	Apeldoorn (161000), Brummen (21000), Epe (33000), Heerde (19000), Lochem (34000), Voorst (24000) en Zutphen (48000)
Decision making:	Technocratic- only the daily administration of the municipalities, province and 2 water boards. But 'strategische' board was consulted for input. **technocratic**
Business:	Strategische Board (representatives from companies, gemeenten en mbo- en hboonderwijs in de Cleantech Regio) and Liander. No single private company. The strategic board is a foundation which represents the local companies. At the local and regional sessions the strategic board was the representation from companies. **No**
***Regio* Drechtsteden**	
Municipalities:	Alblasserdam (20000), Dordrecht (118000), Hardinxveld-Giessendam (18000), Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht (31000), Papendrecht (32000), Sliedrecht (25000) en Zwijndrecht (45000)
Decision making:	Concept-RES - Technocratic- only the daily administration of the municipalities, province and 2 water boards **Technocratic**
Business:	Because they see the concept RES as an intermediate step, only some companies who signed the Energy agreement Drechtsteden where involved in the first steps of information collection. The writing was done by the administrations. In the organization with partners for the RES only semi-public businesses are involved. Or associations of other businesses. **No.**
***Regio* Drenthe**	
Municipalities:	Aa en Hunze (25000), Assen (68000), Borger-Odoorn (25.000), Coevorden (35000), De Wolden (24000), Emmen (107000), Hoogeveen (56000), Meppel (33000), Midden-Drenthe (33000), Noordenveld (32000), Tynaarlo (33000), Westerveld (19000)
Decision making:	Democratic, the writing process knew a multitude of stakeholders and working groups. Eventual decision making on the choices and texts is done in the local municipal council, the provincial council and that of the water board. **Democratic**
Business:	Regional cooperation is a dynamic process where not only administrative stakeholders should partake in. In Drenthe the administrations and societal partners work as equals. Administrative partners from municipalities, 4 water boards, the province, netbeheerders and associations from society took part in the 'Drentse Energie Tafel. They worked together in multiple bodies towards the RES and are responsible for the outcomes together. **No**.
***Regio* Flevoland**	

Municipalities:	Almere (204000), Dronten (41000), Lelystad (77000), Noordoostpolder (47000), Urk (21000), Zeewolde (22000)
Decision making:	Democratic, before the RES process the governments where already working together with organizations, companies and associations. They are writing and making choices together. Democratic decision making is for the councils of the municipalities, province and water board. Chapter 5.2 **Democratic**
Business:	In their search for societal support and more integrated solutions they started the Flevolandse Energieagenda (FEA). A network of societal stakeholders (20 at the start) consisting of a coalition of the willing with corresponding goals and ambitions. Any societal stakeholder or company can join the FEA after pledging to four common rules. All kinds of organizations are member of the FEA. From societal organizations to companies, company associations, network operators and local governments. **Yes, multiple energy companies.**
***Regio* Foodvalley**	
Municipalities:	Scherpenzeel (10000), Rhenen (20000), Renswoude (5000), Nijkerk (42000), Barneveld (57000), Ede (115000), Wageningen (38000), Veenendaal (65000)
Decision making:	Very democratic: the region shapes the RES process with the mutual gians approach. A systematic approach where every stakeholder and every interest gets involved in the process, in the end everyone should think; this is better than no deal. The democratic decision making happens in the councils of the municipalities, province and water board. **Democratic**
Business:	The region sees stakeholders only as socially relevant stakeholders. The participants are part of the stakeholder table. Consisting of the eight municipalities, 2 provinces, the waterboard and representatives from the agriculture and horticulture sector, the nature and environmental organizations, the energy cooperation's and netbeheerders. **No**.
***Regio* Friesland**	
Municipalities:	Achtkarspelen (28000), Ameland (4000), Dantumadiel (19000), De Fryske Marren (52000), Harlingen (16000), Heerenveen (50000), Leeuwarden (122000), Noardeast-Fryslân (45000), Ooststellingwerf (25000), Opsterland (30000), Schiermonnikoog (1000), Smallingerland (56000), Súdwest Fryslân (90000), Terschelling (5000), Tytsjerksteradiel (32000), Vlieland (1000), Waadhoeke (46000), Weststellingwerf (26000).
Decision making:	Democratic, the writing process knew a multitude of stakeholders and working groups. Eventual decision making on the choices and texts is done in the local municipal council, the provincial council and that of the water board. **Democratic**
Business:	For the purpose of societal grounding with the RES The 'Friese Energie Alliantie' was founded. This is a group of organizations operating from a standpoint of social awareness. This group of stakeholders was invited to participate in the writing and also make tradeoffs on contents. The RES fryslan was a participative process, but **no**.
***Regio* Goeree-Overflakkee**	
Municipalities:	Goeree-Overflakkee (49000)

Decision making:	Technocratic until now. The concept RES has not yet been evaluated by the local councils. The concept RES until now is a product of Coöperatie Deltawind, FOGO, gemeente Goeree-Overflakkee, LTO Nooord afdeling Goeree-Overflakkee, Provincie Zuid-Holland, Stedin, Waterschap Hollandse Delta en Wooncorporatie Oost West Wonen. **Technocratic**
Business:	**No**. Only an association.
***Regio* Groningen**	
Municipalities:	Appingedam (12000), Delfzijl (25000), Groningen (231000), Het Hogeland (48000), Loppersum (10000), Midden-Groningen (61000), Oldambt (38000), Pekela (12000), Stadskanaal (32000), Veendam (27000), Westerkwartier (63000), Westerwolde (25000)
Decision making:	Democratic, the writing process knew a multitude of stakeholders and working groups. Eventual decision making on the choices and texts is done in the local municipal council, the provincial council and that of the water board. **Democratic**
Business:	Semi- public businesses have been involved in the writing of the concept RES and for content. But no private business on its own participated. The RES Groingen compiled a list of stakeholders to involve: Enexis, New Energy Coalition, Gasterra, Natuur en Milieu Federatie (NMF), Gasunie, Tennet, Groninger Energiekoepel (GrEK), VNO-NCW LTO Noord Waterbedrijf Groningen **No**
***Regio* Hart van Brabant**	
Municipalities:	Dongen (26000), Gilze en Rijen (26000), Goirle (24000), Heusden (44000), Hilvarenbeek (15000), Loon op Zand (23000), Oisterwijk (26000), Tilburg (216000) en Waalwijk (48000)
Decision making:	The concept RES has been written and submitted by the steering group. So this has been technocratic until now. The road to the full RES Will be more democratic, where the region is set to decide as being one municipality. With representatives of all the municipalities/waterboards and province deciding in one meeting. **Technocratic**
Business:	No private business has been involved in the writing. The steering group consisted of representatives from the municipality, the province, the waterboard, the grid operator, nature conservation organisations and the energy cooperations. For the execution of the plans companies and citizens will be involved, but later on. **No**
***Regio* Holland Rijnland**	
Municipalities:	Alphen aan den Rijn (110000), Hillegom (22000), Kaag en Braassem (27000), Katwijk (67000), Leiden (124000), Leiderdorp (27000), Lisse (23000), Nieuwkoop (28000), Noordwijk (43000), Oegstgeest (24000), Teylingen (37000), Voorschoten (25000) en Zoeterwoude (8000)
Decision making:	Technocratic- only the daily administration of the municipalities, province and 2 water boards. For the RES the local councils will decide. The concept RES is written by a 'steering group' with representatives from the sub-regions (municipalities), the province, the water board, the grid operator and **Technocratic**
Business:	For the connection with society and businesses the region formed a 'programmaraad' which delivers input on the 'steering group'. In this body several associations representing groups of businesses are involved (energy

	cooperations, gardeners, housing corporations, entrepeneurs and environmental organizations). Also represented are Dunea (a water company), Heineken (drinks multinational) the grid operator **yes**
***Regio* Hoeksche Waard**	
Municipalities:	Hoeksche Waard (86000)
Decision making:	The concept-RES is drafted by administrators of the municipality, the province, a water board, the grid operator (Stedin) and a housing corporation (HW wonen). The local councils did not decide on the concept-res. So technocratic. Only the daily board decided on the concept RES. **Technocratic**
Business:	Regarding municipal goals to be energy neutral in 2040 a lot of work has already been done on the production of wind energy. The region has decided to focus on societal support base in a participation process for the RES. So the goal for the RES is set at existing, or upcoming projects. So businesses are (indirectly) involved who are developing these. **yes**
***Regio* Midden-Holland**	
Municipalities:	Bodegraven-Reeuwijk (34000), Gouda (71000), Krimpenerwaard (56000), Waddinxveen (28000), Zuidplas (42000).
Decision making:	Democratic, the concept RES will be decided on by all the local councils in the region (municipality, province and water board). Furthermore, the process of coming to the concept RES has known a 'steering-group' for substantive considerations and input. The steering-group consist of the governmental actors, the grid operators, energy cooperations, energy representatives from businesses, agricultural organizations, nature organizations, knowledge organizations, housing corporations and health organizations. The steering group is responsible for the creation and delivery of a concept-RES and a final RES, to be decided on by the politicians in the region. **Democratic**
Business:	No single private business has been involved. As mentioned above only representatives from associations have. **No**
***Regio* Metropoolregio Eindhoven**	
Municipalities:	Asten (17000), Bergeijk (18000), Best (29000), Bladel (20000), Cranendonck (20000), Deurne (32000), Eersel (19000), Eindhoven (229000), Geldrop-Mierlo (39000), Gemert-Bakel (30000), Heeze-Leende (19000), Helmond (91000), Laarbeek (22000), Nuenen (23000), Oirschot (19000), Reusel-De Mierden (13000), Someren (19000), Son en Breugel (17000), Valkenswaard (31000), Veldhoven (45000) en Waalre (17000)
Decision making:	The concept RES is decided on by the daily administrations. The concept RES was submitted for consultation to the local councils. Furthermore from the start of the process all kinds of societal stakeholders have been consulted in different work forms. But the responsibility and writing was with the municipalities, province, water board and grid operator. **Technocratic**
Business:	Because the RES is a societal process since the beginning a taskforce energy transition has been formed with companies such as Brainport Development, Differ (TUe), Signify, Fontys Hogescholen, VDL, Eneco, Heijmans and a local

	energy cooperation has been formed. This way businesses can deliver input in the feasibility of the proposed plans. **Yes**
***Regio* Noord- en Midden Limburg**	
Municipalities:	Mook en Middelaar (8000), Gennep (17000), Bergen (13000), Venray (43000), Horst aan de Maas (42000), Venlo (101000), Peel en maas (43000) en Beesel (13000), Leudal (36000), Weert (50000), Nederweert (17000), Maasgouw (24000), Roerdalen (21000), Roermond (58000) en Echt- Susteren (32000).
Decision making:	Technocratic, the first accord was with the daily board of the RES region. Now the daily administration of the municipalities, province and water boards have to decide. **Technocratic**
Business:	Although the region stresses the importance of working together with local stakeholders in the execution of the plans not much stakeholders have been involved in the writing of the plans. The region knows a sounding board group consisting of mayor representative associations of businesses and organizations in different fields. This is to gather input on the presented plans. No single private company has been involved. **No**
***Regio* Noord-Holland Zuid**	
Municipalities:	Aalsmeer (31000), Amstelveen (90000), Amsterdam (854000), Beemster (10000), Beverwijk (41000), Blaricum (11000), Bloemendaal (23000), Diemen (28000), Edam-Volendam (36000), Gooise Meren (57000), Haarlem (160000), Haarlemmermeer (153000), Heemskerk (40000), Heemstede (27000), Hilversum (90000), Huizen (41000), Landsmeer (11000), Laren (11000), Oostzaan (10000), Ouder-Amstel (13000), Purmerend (80000), Uithoorn (30000), Velsen (68000), Waterland (17000), Weesp (19000), Wijdemeren (24000), Wormerland (16000), Zaanstad (155000), Zandvoort (17000)
Decision making:	The concept RES is decided on by the daily administrations. The concept RES was submitted for consultation to the local councils. And participants where offered to give their view on the final plans. For the RES 1.0 the local councils from municipalities, province and the water board have to accord the plans. The concept-RES is the product of a working group between municipalities, water boards, the province, the grid operator. They worked together with citizens, energy cooperation's, experts and societal organizations. **Technocratic**
Business:	Furthermore from the start of the process all kinds of societal stakeholders have been consulted in different work forms. Grid operator Alliander, experts and societal organizations like energy cooperatives, (local green) energy businesses (for example HVC), farmers, nature conservation organizations, interest groups and associations, schools, housing corporations, and businesses and inhabitants. **Yes**
***Regio* Noord-Holland Noord**	
Municipalities:	Alkmaar (108000), Bergen (NH.) (30000), Castricum (36000), Den Helder (56000), Drechterland (20000), Enkhuizen (18000), Heerhugowaard (56000), Heiloo (23000), Hollands Kroon (48000), Hoorn (73000), Koggenland (23000), Langedijk (28000), Medemblik (44000), Opmeer (12000), Schagen (46000), Stede Broec (22000), Texel (14000), Uitgeest (14000)
Decision making:	The municipalities, province, water board and grid operator wrote and worked on the RES.

	The concept RES is decided on by the daily administrations. The concept RES was submitted for consultation to the local councils. And participants where offered to give their view on the final plans. **Technocratic**
Business:	In participatory processes a lot of organizations worked with them. experts and societal organizations like energy cooperatives, (local green) energy businesses (for example HVC), farmers, nature conservation organizations, interest groups and associations, schools, housing corporations, and businesses and inhabitants. In total around 1500 people participated and thought through the plans. This makes the concept RES the product of a very intense cooperation's between the abovementioned parties, the grid operator the municipalities, the province and the water board. A lot of the people present also represented a bigger following. **Yes**
***Regio* Noordoost Brabant**	
Municipalities:	Bernheze (31000), Boekel (11000), Boxmeer (29000), Boxtel (31000), Cuijk (25000), Grave (12000), Haaren (14000), Landerd (15000), Meijerijstad (80000), Mill en Sint Hubert (11000), Oss (91000), s-Hertogenbosch (153000), Sint Anthonis (12000), Sint-Michielsgestel (29000), Uden (42000), Vught (26000)
Decision making:	Democratic, the concept RES will be decided on by all the local councils in the region (municipality, province and water board). Furthermore, the process of coming to the concept RES has known a 'steering-group' consisting of all the governmental actors and the grid operator. Furthermore input has been delivered by different actors, the grid operators, energy cooperations, energy representatives from businesses, agricultural organizations, nature organizations, knowledge organizations, housing corporations and health organizations. **Democratic**
Business:	Societal organizations associations for businesses and entrepeneurs. Associations for energy cooperations, agriculture, a nature organization, housing corporation, **No.**
Regio Noord Veluwe	
Municipalities:	Elburg (23000), Ermelo (27000), Harderwijk (47000), Hattem (12000), Nunspeet (27000), Oldebroek (24000), Putten (24000)
Decision making:	Democratic, the local councils of the provinces and municipalities can decide on the concept-RES after it was put together by a steering group of the governmental actors in a deciding role. The substantive contributions were also done by a group of bureaucrats from the governmental organizations and the advisory actors. **Democratic**
Business:	No single businesses, there is an advisory role for the grid operator, energy cooperation's, housing corporations, the association for entrepreneurs and environmental organizations. Some smaller business associations where invited in the smaller meetings locally, for substantive advice. (appendix 1) **No**
***Regio* Rivierenland (fruitdelta)**	

Municipalities:	Buren (26000), Culemborg (28000), Maasdriel (24000), Neder-Betuwe (24000), Tiel (41000), West Betuwe (50000), West Maas en Waal (19000), Zaltbommel (28000)
Decision making:	Democratic, the local councils of the provinces and municipalities can decide on the concept-RES after it was put together by a steering group. In the steering group where representatives of the eight municipalities, the water board, housing corporations in the region, the grid operator, entrepreneur association and a citizen organization. **Democratic**
Business:	Most of the actors in the 'ateliers' where societal actors, citizens and associations. No single business has been involved. **No**
***Regio* Rotterdam-Den Haag**	
Municipalities:	Albrandswaard (25000), Barendrecht (48000), Brielle (17000), Capelle aan den IJssel (67000), Delft (102000), Hellevoetsluis (40000), Krimpen aan den IJssel (29000), Lansingerland (61000), Leidschendam-Voorburg (75000), Maassluis (33000), Midden-Delfland (19000), Nissewaard (85000), Pijnacker-Nootdorp (54000), Ridderkerk (46000), Rijswijk (52000), Rotterdam (639000), Schiedam (78000), s-Gravenhage (533000), Vlaardingen (72000), Wassenaar (26000), Westland (107000), Westvoorne (15000), Zoetermeer (125000)
Decision making:	Very democratic, the RES goes to a democratic path of deciding groups. Starting at the steering group of the RES, then the daily administration of the municipalities, province and water board the final government actors who have to give accord to the plans are the local councils of the previously mentioned government actors. **Democratic**
Business:	A lot of stakeholder (including businesses) have been involved since 2018. They already started thinking about the energy plans until 2050. From that group the concept res is also written. **Yes**
***Regio* Twente**	
Municipalities:	Almelo (73000), Borne (23000), Dinkelland (26000), Enschede (158000), Haaksbergen (24000), Hellendoorn (36000), Hengelo (81000), Hof van Twente (35000), Losser (23000), Oldenzaal (32000), Rijssen-Holten (38000), Tubbergen (21000), Twenterand (34000), Wierden (24000)
Decision making:	Democratic, the political representatives in the local councils decide on the plans, The writing process is done by the daily administrations of the municipalities, the province and the water board. A Steering group with representatives from Enexis, Coteq, Woon, Twence en Universiteit Twente helped them. Grid operators and housing/environmental organizations. Citizens will be involved after the concept RES Is finalized. **Democratic**
Business:	In the RES process the politicians and administrators from the region where the main actors. But representatives from associations from the professional field have been involved along the process for validation of the choices from the politicians. **No.**
***Regio* U10/U16**	
Municipalities:	Bunnik (15000), De Bilt (43000), De Ronde Venen (44000), Houten (50000), IJsselstein (34000), Lopik (14000), Montfoort (14000), Nieuwegein (62000), Oudewater (10000), Stichtse Vecht (65000), Utrecht (347000), Utrechtse

	Heuvelrug (50000), Vijfheerenlanden (55000), Wijk bij Duurstede (24000), Woerden (52000), Zeist (63000)
Decision making:	Decision making takes place in the municipalities, the water board and the province. In the RES many interest will come together so the region chose to give the daily administrations in these governmental actors the final vote. The "bestuurstafel" makes the propositions which are submitted to the municipalities, the water board the province and the grid operator for a vote. Members of the bestuurstafel are aldermen from the municipalities, the director of one water board, an alderman from the province and a director from the grid operator. **Technocratic**
Business:	Environmental organizations, nature conservators, energy companies, land owners, energy cooperatives, grid operators, producers of wind mills, energy advisors and scientists have been informed about the RES. They were also asked to participate in sessions for input. Organized interest have a lot of knowledge about the landscape and the energy transition. The region wants to use their knowledge in making the RES and provide their following with possibilities to cooperate. **Yes**
***Regio* West Brabant**	
Municipalities:	Alphen-Chaam (10000), Altena (55000), Baarle-Nassau (7000), Bergen op Zoom (66000), Breda (183000), Drimmelen (27000), Etten-Leur (44000), Geertruidenberg (22000), Halderberge (30000), Moerdijk (37000), Oosterhout (55000), Roosendaal (77000), Rucphen (22000), Steenbergen (25000), Woensdrecht (22000), Zundert (22000)
Decision making:	The concept RES is written by an administrative steering group consisting of representatives from the municipalities, the province, the water boards and the grid operator. The concept RES and the RES 1.0 are decided on by the local councils. **Democratic**
Business:	The region thinks participation is very important. The goal is to involve, and keep involving the relevant citizens, businesses and societal organizations. Furthermore, the goal is to construct plans they also can accord. This information and participation process is mostly vested in local (municipal) context to ensure the right stakeholder is involved. **Yes**
***Regio* West-Overijssel**	
Municipalities:	Dalfsen (28000), Deventer (100000), Hardenberg (61000), Kampen (53000), Olst-Wijhe (18000), Ommen (18000), Raalte (37000), Staphorst (17000), Steenwijkerland (44000), Zwartewaterland (22000), Zwolle (126000)
Decision making:	The concept RES is written by an administrative steering group consisting of representatives from the municipalities, the province, the water boards and the grid operator. In the process until the concept RES almost all of the input has been from the administrative governmental actors. Towards the RES the other stakeholders like societal organizations and businesses will be involved for further development of the plans. **Technocratic**
Business:	For now, the substantive editors to the process have been energy cooperation's, nature organizations, associations for entrepreneurs and agriculture and a housing corporation. **No**.

***Regio* Zeeland**	
Municipalities:	Borsele (23000), Goes (38000), Hulst (27000), Kapelle (13000), Middelburg (48000), Noord-Beveland (7000), Reimerswaal (21000), Schouwen-Duiveland (34000), Sluis (24000), Terneuzen (54000), Tholen (26000), Veere (22000), Vlissingen (44000)
Decision making:	The decision making itself only happens in the daily administrations. The steering group, responsible for the construction and delivery of the RES consisted of representatives from the province, the municipalities, the water board, the grid operator, and economic board, verbrugge terminals and the hogeschool. Furthermore from the beginning even before the national climate agreement stakeholders in Zeeland started working together on climate goals through all kinds of working groups. From here the steering group for the RES formed. **Technocratic**
Business:	Verbrugge terminals, the hogeschool and an economic board In the steering group, and a lot more in other working forces. The goals is a big ever learning network of stakeholders in the energytransition. **Yes**
Regio Zuid-Limburg	
Municipalities:	Beek (16000), Beekdaelen (36000), Brunssum (28000), Eijsden-Margraten (26000), Gulpen-Wittem (14000), Heerlen (87000), Kerkrade (46000), Landgraaf (38000), Maastricht (123000), Meerssen (19000), Simpelveld (11000), Sittard-Geleen (93000), Stein (25000), Vaals (10000), Valkenburg aan de Geul (16000), Voerendaal (12000)
Decision making:	Until now technocratic. The concept RES has been decided on by the daily administrations of the municipalities, province, water board and grid operator. The local councils have been informed but played no decisive role. Towards the RES 1.0 the politicians and other important stakeholders will play a bigger role. **Technocratic**
Business:	Until now it has been an administrative process. So no. For the rest of the process a “klankboordgroep” has been made with representatives from nature organizations, housing corporations, scientific institutions and societal organizations. Their knowledge and experience should add to a better RES. The chair of this group will take a seat in the steering group which leads the RES process. **No**

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