

Climate Obstruction in the Netherlands

Strategic and Systemic Obstruction of Dutch Climate Policies (1980–Present)

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INTRODUCTION: CLIMATE ACTION AND INACTION IN THE DUTCH POLDER

As Figure 7.1 shows, in 2017, two years after the 2015 Paris Agreement was adopted, the Netherlands emitted 191 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (MMT CO₂e) of greenhouse gases (GHGs). Compared with 1990 levels of 220 MMT CO₂e, that reduction amounted to 1.1 MMT CO₂e per year.¹ Dutch industry made the largest contribution to this relatively modest decline in emissions, which include a significant decrease in non-CO₂ emissions.² The years from 2019 to 2021 would see a more sudden drop in emissions.³ This was partly a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, however. In addition, the decline provides a distorted view of the impact of the Netherlands' CO₂ reduction efforts because GHG emissions connected to shipping, aviation, and other types of transportation are not included. This sector is especially relevant for a historically mercantile country like the Netherlands, with its large seaports in Rotterdam and Amsterdam and a major hub-oriented airport (Schiphol). Just as in other Western European nations, moreover, the Netherlands' emissions

Netherlands Greenhouse Gas Emissions

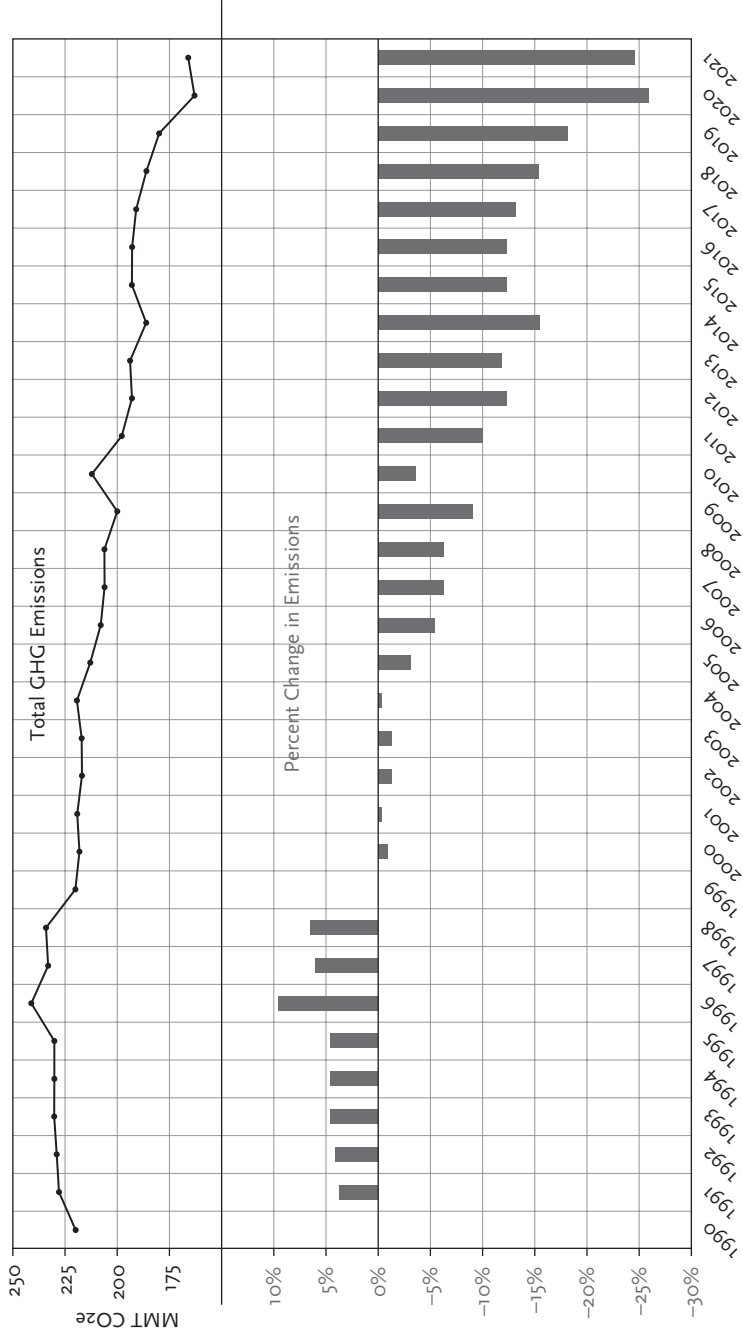


Figure 7.1 Total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (in MMT CO₂e) and percentage change in emissions in the Netherlands between 1990 and 2021, inclusive.

Source: Total GHG emissions based on data provided by Gütschow and Pflüger (2023) for Kyoto Six Greenhouse Gas Totals.

have been exported to the Global South over the past three decades as production has increasingly been outsourced.⁴

In short, emissions in the Netherlands may have decreased on paper, but the Dutch economy and society are not only still largely structured around fossil fuels but also behind in building alternatives. The country 'has been a slow adopter of renewable energy (RE), currently [2017] ranking 2nd last in the European Union'.⁵ High emitters, such as the chemical industry, have not significantly reduced their emissions since the mid-2010s and currently have no plans for rapid emissions reduction in the near future.⁶

These signs of climate inaction are surprising. Dutch politicians had already begun to focus attention on the climate issue in the 1980s, as part of a growing interest in environmental problems generally. Attention peaked at the end of the decade when Dutch politicians took a leading role in climate politics internationally. At the time, 'environmental minister [Ed] Nijpels [was] . . . , trying to reorient the 1988 Toronto International conference on the Changing Atmosphere in a more political direction'.⁷ The minister supported the conference's closing statement to reduce CO₂ emissions 20% by 2005. He took the lead, too, in organizing an international conference in Noordwijk the following year, where global leaders 'almost agreed upon an international treaty to regulate greenhouse gas emissions'.⁸

The climate inaction is less surprising, however, when we shift our focus from the advocates to the opponents of effective climate policy. It is evident from the historical record that high-emitting industries and state actors deliberately obstructed mitigation regulations through tactics of climate denial, doubt mongering, and lobbying. In the 1990s, the attention on climate policy quickly waned—but the obstruction continued well into the twenty-first century following new waves of attention on climate change triggered by Al Gore's documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), the outcome of a lawsuit against the Dutch government (2015), and the Paris Agreement, which entered into force in 2016.

In addition to the more classical and strategic forms of denialism, doubt, and lobbying, climate obstruction in the Netherlands also springs from strong historical interdependencies between fossil-intensive industries and the Dutch state. These ties go back to colonial times but were cemented after 1959, when the Slochteren gas field, still the largest onshore gas field in Europe, was discovered (Figure 7.2). Over the past sixty years, the Dutch state has earned around €417 billion from natural gas extraction.⁹ These profits provided the energy sector not only with economic leverage but also ensured that the fossil fuel industry became politically powerful and received direct access to the government and ministries.¹⁰ The intersections between industry, politics, and society at large, therefore, run deep, and

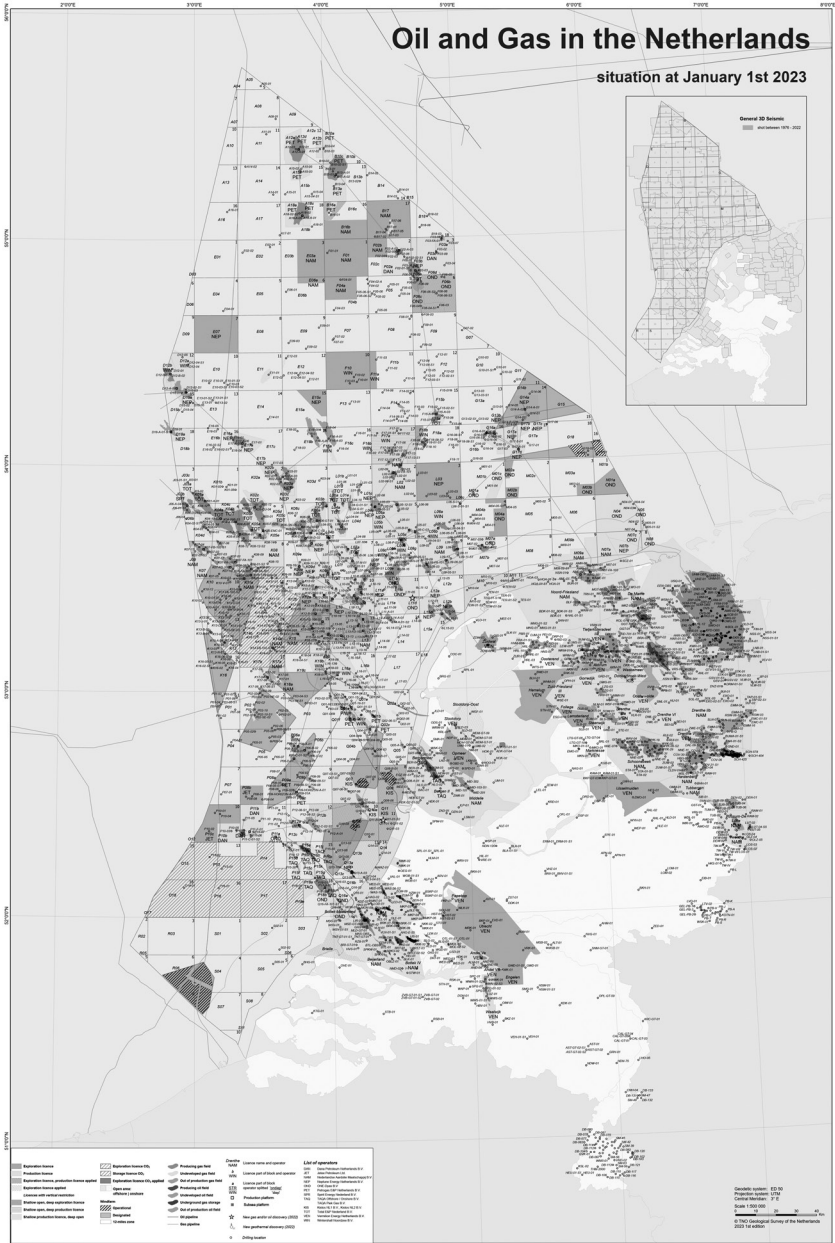


Figure 7.2 Petroleum (gas and oil) deposits in the Netherlands as of 2023. Although new gas fields are being discovered in the North Sea, the easternmost Slochteren field represents one of the largest land-based gas fields in Europe.
 Source: <https://www.nlog.nl/olie-en-gaskaarten-van-nederland>.

industry involvement in decision-making processes has been completely normalized.

To cover both strategic and more systemic obstruction in the Netherlands, we begin with a history of three ‘waves’ of climate change governance. Next, we discuss the key actors responsible for climate obstruction there. We then analyse in depth three strategic forms of climate obstruction: denial and doubt, discursive framings, and lobbying and networking. In the final section, we analyse governance ideologies, fossil interdependencies, and the ‘revolving door’ as forms of systemic obstruction, concluding with suggestions for further research.

CLIMATE CHANGE GOVERNANCE AND ITS OBSTRUCTION: A BRIEF HISTORY

More than sixty years ago, the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI) was already discussing the role of CO₂ in climate change,¹¹ yet research into climate change itself was limited and the phenomenon was not seen as an urgent problem. This pattern changed in the 1980s and peaked during the first climate wave in the latter part of the decade.

The first climate change wave (1987–1989)

During the first climate wave, several national and international events created societal momentum for addressing climate change,¹² including the publication of the influential Brundtland Report on ‘sustainable development’, the Dutch scientific report ‘Concern for Tomorrow’, and a Christmas speech in which the queen claimed that ‘slowly, the earth is dying’. This resulted in the first cabinet that considered climate change a serious problem and aimed to set a clear goal for stabilizing CO₂ emissions.¹³ After a new government was elected, the new minister, the Social Democrat Hans Alders, published another climate report with even more ambitious targets. In 1991, there were discussions and plans within the European Economic Community (EEC) to introduce a regulatory energy tax. Chaired by the Netherlands, the first attempt to introduce such a tax failed.¹⁴

The first wave of climate mitigation ambitions also gave rise to the climate obstructionist actors and their strategies and tactics. At the time of the (almost successful) multilateral Noordwijk climate conference, the ‘godfather’ of Dutch climate scepticism, chemistry professor

Frits Böttcher, began to receive funding from the fossil fuel industry and became a key ‘merchant of doubt’ in the Netherlands. In the early 1990s, climate sceptical arguments also made their appearance in both the House of Representatives (far right) and the Senate (Social Democrats).¹⁵

The first major obstruction of the proposed climate policies sprang from the conflict between the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The latter, very much on the side of industry, feared that the former would become too powerful in ‘determining energy policy via climate policy’.¹⁶ The introduction of an energy tax was successfully resisted by the ministry, the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (then VNO), and the business community. Alluding to scepticism, Alexander Rinnooy Kan, VNO’s chairman, argued that ‘the greenhouse effect is certainly not uncontroversial’.¹⁷ The Ministry of the Environment continued to plead for the energy tax but now faced the CEOs of major chemical and steel industries such as Akzo, DSM, Hoechst, Hoogovens, and Shell¹⁸—who lobbied Prime Minister Lubbers and other ministers not to implement the energy tax. A spokesman for the prime minister said afterward that ‘no firm commitments’ had been made but that ‘the Netherlands will not be a guiding country’ in Europe.¹⁹

The second major obstruction during the first climate wave was a surge of sceptic voices, including the right-wing, populist party leader Pim Fortuyn²⁰ (who got his inspiration from Frits Böttcher), and scientists/researchers Arthur Rörsch, Hans Labohm, and Salomon Kroonenberg. Partly, this surge was set against the backdrop of an ongoing rise of populism in the Netherlands in the early 2000s.²¹ With climate change already ranking low on the political agenda, these voices ‘made policymakers emphasize the importance of finding win-win solutions between the economy and the environment in climate policy’ and push at the European level for a ‘clean, clever, competitive’ storyline of eco-efficiency during the Netherlands’ 2004 EU Council Presidency.²² Although it was not predominantly geared toward obstructing climate change policies, the populist rise can be seen as ‘a sharp turning point in the framing and agenda setting of climate change in the Dutch public debate’.²³ Following the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States and the assassination of Pim Fortuyn in 2002, the rise of Dutch populist parties saw a stronger polarization of society in which environmental issues in general and climate change in particular were portrayed as an ‘elitist concern of the establishment’.²⁴ In the years thereafter, two consecutive right-wing cabinets cut back green ambitions and green budgets, symbolized by the replacement of a minister of the environment by a state secretary.

The second climate change wave (2006–2011)

In Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth*, the Netherlands is pictured as half-flooded after one of the extreme climate scenarios discussed becomes reality. The film played in cinemas across the Netherlands' and triggered the second climate wave. It led Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende (a Christian Democrat) and the British Prime Minister Tony Blair (a Social Democrat) to call on their EU colleagues to address climate change.²⁵ The new Dutch cabinet again included a minister of environment, the Social Democrat Jacqueline Cramer, who presented an 'ambitious climate program aimed at 30% reduction in GHG emissions by 2020'.²⁶

In line with the earlier emphasis on competition and eco-efficiency, this second climate wave was permeated with a 'green growth' ideology that took climate change as an opportunity for Dutch businesses. Besides the government and environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), Dutch business leaders, too, now seemed to be on board in calling for change.²⁷ Their support, however, was reluctant at best. Leading up to the 2006 Dutch elections, the chairman of the VNO called on politicians to adhere less faithfully to the Kyoto Protocol, warning that 'soon we will be the only country that obediently sticks to Kyoto'.²⁸

The ongoing obstruction by the VNO was aided by a sharp shift in the public framing of climate change in 2009. The controversy known today as 'Climategate', which centred on the hacked emails of climate scientists, led to a debate in which sceptical voices rang louder than before.²⁹ Climate scepticism now entered mainstream media, and a new climate sceptic website 'Climategate.nl' was established as a platform for discussing the emails.³⁰ In Dutch politics, political parties on the far right began to call for postponing decision-making on climate policy altogether. The far-right Party for Freedom (PVV) was the strongest denialist voice in parliament and gained real political power after the 2010 elections. A conservative minority coalition, authorized by the PVV, dissolved the Ministry of the Environment and stayed almost completely silent on climate change in the new coalition agreement.³¹

The third climate change wave (2015–2019)

As a result of a lawsuit filed by the Dutch NGO Urgenda, the court in The Hague ruled, in June 2015, that the state must do more to reduce GHG emissions in the Netherlands. Later that year, on 12 December, the

Paris Agreement was adopted,³² ‘requiring countries to come up with increasingly ambitious national climate plans . . . [to limit] the temperature increase to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels’.³³ Later, in 2017, a newly installed Dutch coalition government decided to develop a comprehensive and ambitious policy package to tackle climate change.³⁴ In line with new EU regulations, the overall goal was to reduce GHG emissions by 49% of 1990 levels by 2030.³⁵ To do so, conservative-liberal Minister of Economic Affairs and Climate Eric Wiebes appointed Nijpels, the ‘first wave’ minister of environment, to lead a Climate Assembly. The assembly consisted of a series of ‘sector tables’ on industry, electricity, construction, agriculture, and mobility at which civil servants had to co-design plans with major industrial stakeholders to decarbonize the Dutch economy.³⁶ The fossil fuel industry and the major high emitters were well-represented: Shell, RWE, BP, ExxonMobil, and Gasunie (a transboundary pipeline conglomerate) had a direct seat at the table. All the other high emitters were there, too, from Tata Steel and Yara (producer of fertilizers) to representatives of the ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam.³⁷ After two years of dialogue, a National Climate Agreement was reached in 2019. By the time the Dutch government collapsed in the summer of 2023, however, it was still making mitigation plans with individual companies and industrial sectors.³⁸

A seat at the table and close ties to the Ministry of Economic Affairs enabled the high emitters to lobby against and delay many regulatory policies that could curb emissions more quickly.³⁹ When the government has acted, it favoured ‘positive’ measures appreciated by industry, such as subsidies for more ‘sustainable’ oil refineries through technological solutions, or technofixes, such as carbon capture and storage (CCS).⁴⁰ Until recently, the government refused to abandon fossil subsidies estimated to be between €39.7 and €46.6 billion per year⁴¹ and even sought to speed up the process for obtaining new drilling licenses for gas fields in the North Sea.⁴² There is no indication that it is considering stricter regulations that could enforce a planned phase-out of fossil fuels or sectoral decline of polluting industries.⁴³

The renewed emphasis on climate policymaking also relaunched climate denialism in the Netherlands. A new organization, CLINTEL, was established there in 2019, which operates on both the national and international levels (discussed later). The organization is affiliated with (former) politicians from the right-wing People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) but exerts influence on parties on the far right (PVV, Forum for Democracy).⁴⁴

THE KEY DUTCH CLIMATE OBSTRUCTIONISTS

Over the course of climate governance history, several individuals and organizations became prominent players in directly opposing climate policy or in undermining such policies through misinformation or the promotion of fossil interests in the public sphere. In this section, we discuss the most important actors in Dutch climate obstruction.

The Dutch merchants of doubt

The Dutch merchants of doubt have been active since the first climate wave in the late 1980s.⁴⁵ In terms of size, number of publications and activities, and degree of financialization, they pale in comparison with their American counterparts.⁴⁶ As mentioned, the godfather of the Dutch sceptics was Frits Böttcher, a long-time advisor to Shell.⁴⁷ Böttcher was politically well integrated as a member of the Dutch conservative party (VVD) and government advisory councils.⁴⁸ In the 1990s, Böttcher received more than half a million euros from Shell and other Dutch multinationals⁴⁹ for a 'CO₂ project'. The project ended in 1998.⁵⁰ During that period and thereafter, he wrote climate sceptic reports, books, and opinion pieces and helped to establish a national⁵¹ and international network of climate sceptics that included Fred Singer, the oil-funded deni- alist in the United States.

Böttcher's 'successor', Guus Berkhout, has a strikingly similar profile in the sense that both men 'are scientists, only started promoting climate scepticism after retirement, have a past at Shell, have been active members in the VVD and have never done climate science research'.⁵² Together with journalist Marcel Crok and supported by Hans Labohm, 'Netherlands' most famous climate sceptic',⁵³ Berkhout founded the climate sceptic organization CLINTEL. Funded by two wealthy real estate owners, the organization campaigns against climate legislation. In doing so, they maintain close contacts with the Heartland Institute, the Canadian Friends of Science (an oil-industry-funded think tank), the European Climate Realist Network, and many known climate sceptics.⁵⁴

The Ministry of Economic Affairs

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, formerly known as the Ministry of Economic Affairs, is a powerful ministry in the Dutch

political landscape. It describes itself as a ministry that ‘promotes the Netherlands as a country of enterprise with a strong international competitive position and an eye for sustainability’.⁵⁵ In the history of climate governance, however, the ministry has proven to be a steady climate policy obstructor.⁵⁶ Where the former Ministry of the Environment favoured stricter regulations, the Ministry of Economic Affairs has always actively opposed an energy tax.⁵⁷ As a civil servant at the Ministry of the Environment recalled: ‘[Economic Affairs] blindly assumed what was put forward by Shell and the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers. If industry didn’t want it, the Ministry of Economic affairs didn’t want it’.⁵⁸

The Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers

The Confederation, now known as VNO-NCW, is the largest Dutch employers’ organization and claims to represent ‘the common interests of Dutch business, both at home and abroad’.⁵⁹ Representing the stakes of Dutch multinationals, including many industrial high emitters, ‘successive cabinets have always taken the objections of VNO/NCW and the energy-intensive industry very seriously’.⁶⁰ Translated to the context of climate policy, this has meant that ‘very few climate measures have been taken in the past twenty-five years to which this organisation raised major objections. Thanks in part to their influence, the hefty subsidies on fossil energy have also never been abolished’.⁶¹ Since the first climate wave, and continuing to this day, VNO-NCW has been obstructing regulatory climate policies and measures through its privileged position in the policymaking process.⁶²

Industry lobby groups

In addition to VNO-NCW as an official representative body, there are two important but largely invisible lobby groups in which companies join forces. The lobby group ABDUP—Akzo, Bataafse (Shell), DSM, Unilever, and Philips—is one of the oldest in the Netherlands, with long-standing access to key political players in The Hague. Since the 1980s, they have approached ministries or welcomed top officials to their own meetings and helped to shape ‘the design of long-term visions and associated political agendas, and often provided the chairs of government advisory committees’.⁶³ Once a year, the ‘President’s Consultation’ took place in

luxury hotels, with the CEOs and prominent Dutch politicians such as Prime Minister Mark Rutte.⁶⁴

The second lobby group, PHAUSD—a collaboration between the companies Philips, Hoogovens, Akzo, Unilever, Shell and DSM—was formed in 1978 with the explicit aim of monitoring developments in environmental legislation.⁶⁵ In that capacity, it regularly communicated with high-ranking civil servants in the Minister of Economic Affairs.⁶⁶ PHAUSD's lobbying practices can be characterized as policy 'sabotage', as it tended to mobilize to block new proposals for binding environmental legislation in favour of voluntary covenants between the government and industry.⁶⁷

Shell

Shell presents itself as 'a global group of energy and petrochemical companies' that takes 'an innovative approach to help build a sustainable energy future'.⁶⁸ It is ranked number seven 'in the top 20 companies of carbon dioxide emitters since 1965'.⁶⁹ Formerly known as Royal Dutch Shell, it is not the only fossil company operating in the Netherlands. However, it has a special place in Dutch climate obstruction due to its strong historic links to politics and society. As explained earlier, the company has direct access to high-level politicians⁷⁰ and key ministries and works closely in public–private partnerships in hydrocarbon extraction.⁷¹ Shell also held memberships in lobby groups that campaigned against climate action and undermined European renewable energy targets.⁷²

In addition, Shell is also very visibly present in Dutch society. To protect its so-called licence to operate, Shell engages in advertisement campaigns that highlight its allegedly sustainable profile and sponsorship relations with cultural institutions,⁷³ forest agencies, and major newspapers.⁷⁴ In education, it provides teaching materials to schools, organizes energy festivals for children, serves on university boards, and is heavily involved in academic education and research.⁷⁵

STRATEGIES, TACTICS, AND DISCURSIVE FRAMINGS

In the Netherlands, we can distinguish three main forms of strategic climate obstruction: the use of denial and doubt tactics, discursive framings that favour the interests of the fossil industry, and lobbying and networking campaigns.

Denial and doubt tactics

The Dutch merchants of doubt, introduced earlier, use several arguments and tactics in their campaigns to obstruct climate policies. To make their arguments, they draw predominantly on American sources.⁷⁶ For example, they argue that ‘CO₂ is good for plants’, question whether human activity influences global warming, and promote scientifically disproven alternative explanations for the phenomenon. In addition, they discredit climate scientists, dismissing them as guild-driven alarmists, and characterize the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a politically motivated body.⁷⁷ Since the 1990s, these Dutch merchants of doubt have spread disinformation via opinion pieces in newspapers and through contact with like-minded journalists and powerful political players.⁷⁸ The journal and conferences of the Netherlands’ professional association of engineers, KIVI, played a supportive role for these Dutch climate sceptics.⁷⁹ Currently, denialist voices are still present in Dutch society, presented on self-created websites, a conspiracy-driven public broadcasting network (Ongehoord Nederland), and a large, right-wing newspaper (*De Telegraaf*).

The sceptic voices of CLINTEL are represented in the Dutch Parliament by the populist and right-wing political parties Forum for Democracy (FvD), PVV, and the VVD.⁸⁰ In the 1990s, the merchants of doubt were successful obstructors as their work led to ‘a lack of political support for regulatory measures with regard to CO₂ reduction’.⁸¹ According to Pier Vellinga, a now-retired professor of climate science, Fritz Böttcher was ‘instrumental’ in delaying climate policy in the Netherlands in the 1990s. ‘His publications reached all the way up to the Department of Economic Affairs . . . , [they] never implemented any effective policy concerning CO₂ reduction’.⁸² Although the influence of the Dutch merchants of doubt declined after ‘Climategate’ in 2009, they were still able to influence the VVD’s campaign platform as recently as 2017.⁸³

Discursive framings

With the growing public acceptance of climate change, especially since the third climate wave, many large companies have distanced themselves from climate sceptical discourse. Most now publicly acknowledge climate change and present themselves as part of the solution. The discursive framing tactics used in public debate and marketing campaigns have shifted from denial to delay.⁸⁴ Responsibility for climate action is placed on consumers, far-off technological solutions are promoted, and more structural solutions

such as downscaling production are never discussed. The sustainability agenda of Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM), for instance, mirrors the discourses of climate delay almost perfectly by, for example, ‘overstating the optimism of the technological projections, with reliance on unproven technological advancements’⁸⁵ and redirecting the obligation to mitigate carbon emissions ‘to the consumers, the government, other airlines, and other industries’.⁸⁶

The industries’ discursive framings are particularly visible in what is popularly known as ‘greenwashing’ or, in industry-speak, as preserving their ‘social licence to operate’.⁸⁷ For more than twenty years, for example, Shell has been hiring PR agency Edelman, known for its innovative tactics, to build public trust and keep restrictive legislation at bay.⁸⁸ Edelman developed the concept of a ‘Generation Discover Festival’ for Dutch children.⁸⁹ In this festival, Shell promoted a vision of the future of energy in which natural gas is a solution to climate change.⁹⁰ Discursive framings that lend legitimacy to Shell and its products also spring from their sponsorship of museums. One of the main Dutch science museums, Boerhaave, organized a Shell-sponsored temporary exhibition heralding the company as part of historical progress while downplaying its contemporary environmental impact.⁹¹

Scientific expertise is also enlisted to maintain public support for fossil fuels. After large-scale protests in 2012 in the north of the Netherlands due to heavy earthquakes caused by gas extraction, the fossil industry (Shell, ExxonMobil, and GDF Suez) partnered with the Dutch government and the Rotterdam School of Management in a two-year project that explicitly aimed for ‘broader societal public support for gas as an energy carrier and a broadly supported “licence to operate” for the gas sector’.⁹² The involvement of fossil industries in children’s education, cultural exhibitions, and science enables these industries to frame their past, present, and future in a way that embodies an image of objectivity and positive values more convincingly than direct corporate statements.⁹³

Lobbying and networking

The Dutch climate obstructors also seek to maintain their position in networks of government and universities to create informal opportunities to exchange information and protect their interests. The lobbying group PHAUSD, for example, had real ‘lobby power’ because of its direct relationships with high-level civil servants and ministers at the Ministry of Economic Affairs.⁹⁴ When binding environmental legislation instead of

voluntary covenants was proposed, ‘the reaction of the industry would be to bypass the policy process at the ministries. By using their connections, they would directly pressure the minister or representatives in parliament’.⁹⁵

Companies also actively work to create and maintain networks with governments at different scales. Shell’s Generation Discover children’s festival, for instance, also created openings to cooperate with organizations and local governments, thus giving legitimacy to the company.⁹⁶ And, as some of the most important science funding bodies in the Netherlands, Shell and other corporations are able to maintain close ties with universities, research institutes, and the Dutch Research Council (NWO).⁹⁷ From the 1990s onward, these ties were further institutionalized by creating positions for industry on the management boards of Dutch universities and allowing sponsored professorships.⁹⁸

SYSTEMIC OBSTRUCTION

In the history of Dutch climate governance, one thing is clear: the close ties between the Dutch state and business have been a major factor in obstructing many proposed climate policies.⁹⁹ We call this ‘systemic obstruction’. Whereas the tactics of sowing doubt, using discursive framing, lobbying, and networking can be seen as active, intentional forms of obstruction, systemic obstruction is much more a tacitly understood way of thinking and acting that is engrained in individuals, institutions, and their relationships. Less visible, systematic obstruction is what makes active interventions so much easier—or sometimes even unnecessary when ideas and interests are aligned.

Three forms of systematic obstruction can be identified. The first is a distinctive governance ideology and practice that evolved in the Netherlands. In that so-called *polder model*, various stakeholders—employer organizations and unions, for example—are asked to engage in conversation and negotiations that are handled in extra-parliamentary settings.¹⁰⁰ The ‘Climate Assembly’ installed after the third climate wave is an excellent example. To reduce GHG emissions, the major emitters were invited to discuss sectoral reduction plans because they were expected to know best.

The second form of systemic obstruction is a historically grown interdependency between the Dutch state and particular companies. The history of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines is one example. Despite its environmental burdens, and against economic logic, the growth of aviation has been the main imperative, and taxpayers’ money has been used to save this company from going bankrupt on multiple occasions.¹⁰¹ The strong interdependencies

between Shell and the Dutch state also stand out. Shell was founded in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) when the Shell transporting company and the oil company Royal Dutch merged in 1907.¹⁰² The collaboration between state and oil sector was strengthened in 1923, with the joint venture Dutch-Indian Oil Company (NIAM). This collaboration, in turn, served as a template for the establishment of the Dutch Oil Company (NAM), a joint venture of Shell and Exxon (then Standard Oil), in 1947.

As a recent investigation demonstrated, the interdependencies remain strong to this day: ‘The [Dutch] Government was found to be tightly interwoven with the fossil fuel system, with ownership and financial relations found in all segments of the fossil fuel value chain, from production and exploration to use and R&D, and at the local, regional, as well as national levels of government’.¹⁰³ In 2022, a parliamentary investigation into gas extraction and earthquakes in the province of Groningen showed that the informal networks of the NAM and the Ministry of Economic Affairs led them to prefer economic yields and efficient extraction over citizen safety.¹⁰⁴

The third form of systemic obstruction is the ‘revolving door’. Again, Shell stands out: ‘The “revolving doors” relationship between Shell and the Dutch government began in the early twentieth century and has been “flipping” ever since’.¹⁰⁵ Before he served as prime minister between 1933 and 1938, Hendrikus Colijn fought in the Dutch colonial wars to protect and expand petroleum concessions in Sumatra and was CEO of the Bataafse Petroleum Maatschappij, the Indonesian subsidiary of Shell, between 1914 and 1922.¹⁰⁶ A prominent postwar politician, Frits Bolkenstein worked for Shell from 1960 to 1976 before he became a minister and chair of the VVD and, as we have seen, a climate sceptic. To this list we can add many others.¹⁰⁷ The fact that there used to be a formal secondment for civil servants in which staff was exchanged between the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Shell speaks for itself.¹⁰⁸

CONCLUSION

The Netherlands seemed on its way to develop into a climate leader during its first wave of political attention to climate change. Two more waves followed, but each, unfortunately, were met with episodes of climate obstruction. The Dutch history of climate governance is therefore one of initial ambitions hampered by active doubt- and denial-generating tactics by the Dutch merchants of doubt, the networking and lobbying efforts of industries and lobby groups, and the narratives build on discursive

framings by which companies and the political establishment, sometimes in tandem, have cultivated public support for fossil fuels.

Strategic obstruction has been made easier—or sometimes even unnecessary—by systemic climate obstruction, which aligns the Dutch state and the fossil fuel industry. The historic ties between the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the fossil lobby groups, for example, have enabled industries to gain easy access to the government to obstruct regulatory policies that would curb their emissions. Consequently, the Dutch government has focussed mainly on passing measures preferred by the fossil fuel industry, such as incentives and subsidies for techno-fixes supposedly designed to help it become more sustainable.

This chapter marks the beginning of a belated academic research enterprise focused on climate obstruction in the Netherlands. Apart from a few scientific articles, most of the available research in this area has been conducted by investigative journalists and NGOs. Social scientists can play a distinct yet complementary role in analysing climate obstruction by integrating existing investigations, deepening the existing body of theoretical work, and empirically studying new cases. A climate obstruction research agenda for the Netherlands should focus on both strategic and systemic obstruction as well as the ways in which these obstruction efforts have increasingly been resisted.

First, the field needs an ongoing mapping of the tactics that industries—from the chemical and fossil industries to aviation and ‘Big Agro’—use to protect the status quo and curb stricter government regulation. Second, we need a more thorough analysis of the ways in which other societal actors seek to counteract obstruction tactics. For example, the protests in the northeast of the Netherlands after the gas-related earthquakes eventually led the government to stop gas extraction there. Similarly, many citizen initiatives are challenging the taken-for-granted ties between the fossil industry and their political, cultural, or scientific institutions. Although strategic and systemic obstruction of climate polices will not be gone overnight, it is now met by equally strategic attempts to obstruct obstruction.

NOTES

1. Or an average annual reduction rate of 0.49% over a twenty-seven-year period.
2. There were significantly less methane emissions in waste facilities and fluorinated gases in the 1990s because of a government ban and less nitrous oxide emissions in the production of nitric acid. See *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* (2022, March), ‘Uitstoot broeikasgassen 2,1 procent hoger in 2021’.

- <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2022/11/uitstoot-broeikasgassen-2-1-proc-ent-hoger-in-2021.>)
3. To 163 MMT (2020) and 166 MMT (2021)
 4. P. Lucas, T. Maas, and M. Kok (2020), *Insights from Global Environmental Assessments: Lessons for the Netherlands*. The Hague: PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency.
 5. According to a report by Eurostat from 2017, cited in Sem Oxenaar and Rick Bosman (2020), 'Managing the Decline of Fossil Fuels in a Fossil Fuel Intensive Economy: The Case of the Netherlands'. In: Wood, Geoffrey, and Keith Baker (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Managing Fossil Fuels and Energy Transitions*, p. 140. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan
 6. Luuk Sengers and Evert de Vos (2023, April), 'De danse macabre van industrie en overheid', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/de-danse-macabre-van-industrie-en-overhei>.
 7. Art Dewulf, Daan Boezeman, and Martinus Vink (2017), 'Climate Change Communication in the Netherlands'. In: Art Dewulf, Daan Boezeman, and Martinus Vink (eds.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Climate Science*, p. 7. New York: Oxford University Press, doi:10.1093/acrefore/9780190228620.013.455., p7
 8. Bas van Beek, et al. (2023, September), 'For Nine Years, Multinationals Like Shell and Bayer Funded a Prominent Climate Denier', Follow the Money – Platform voor onderzoeksjournalistiek, <https://www.ftm.nl/dutch-multination-als-funded-climate-sceptic>.
 9. CBS (2019, May), 'Natural Gas Revenues Almost 417 Billion Euros', Statistics Netherlands, <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2019/22/natural-gas-revenues-almost-417-billion-euros>
 10. For a more general picture on the Netherlands and the close ties between actors, see also Willeke Slingerland (2018), *Network Corruption: When Social Capital Becomes Corrupted: Its Meaning and Significance in Corruption and Network Theory and the Consequences for (EU) Policy and Law*. PhD-Thesis Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
 11. Jeroen P. van der Sluijs, Rinie van Est, and Monique Riphagen (2010), *Room for Climate Debate: Perspectives on the Interaction between Climate Politics, Science and the Media*. The Hague, Netherlands: Rathenau Institute.
 12. Dewulf, Boezeman, and Vink, 'Climate Change Communication in the Netherlands', p. 8.
 13. Ibid., p. 7.
 14. Because Britain and the southern member states disagreed. Wijnand Duyvendak (2011), *Het groene optimisme: het drama van 25 jaar klimaatpolitiek* Amsterdam: Bakker, p. 93.
 15. van der Sluijs, van Est, and Riphagen, 'Room for Climate Debate', p. 20. 'The environmental minister responded that scientific uncertainties were an argument to engage in action, following the precautionary principle. However, action would prove tough in the episodes to come' (Dewulf, Boezeman, and Vink, 'Climate Change Communication in the Netherlands', p. 9). Such action, however, would face strong resistance in the years thereafter.
 16. Duyvendak, *Het groene optimisme*, p. 83.
 17. Ibid., p. 93.

18. Shell, in this chapter, refers to the international fossil fuel company formerly known as Royal Dutch Shell PLC, the holding company of the international Shell group, which is currently named Shell PLC.
19. Duyvendak, *Het groene optimisme*, p. 95.
20. Marcel Ham (2009, July), “Ik ben jullie praatjes zat” — Milieudefensie’, Milieudefensie.nl, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090726065135/http://www.milieudefensie.nl/publicaties/magazine/2001/november/fortuyn.htm>.
21. Duyvendak, *Het groene optimisme*, pp. 162, 168–169.
22. Dewulf, Boezeman, and Vink, ‘Climate Change Communication in the Netherlands’, p. 12.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Duyvendak, *Het groene optimisme*, p. 194.
26. ‘[(Base year: 1990), a 20% share of renewable energy by the same year, and an annual energy saving rate of 2%’. See Dewulf, Boezeman, and Vink, ‘Climate Change Communication in the Netherlands’, p. 14.
27. Duyvendak, *Het groene optimisme*, p. 198.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 206. See also Geraadpleegd (2023, 8 September), ‘Klimaatverandering vraagt om nieuwe industriële revolutie – YouTube’, geraadpleegd, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pamff3J3b64.>; Heeft de EC het juiste beleid voor aanpak klimaatprobleem?, 2007, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4APsCCKJaZI>.
29. Maarten A. Hajer (2012), ‘A Media Storm in the World Risk Society: Enacting Scientific Authority in the IPCC Controversy (2009–10)’, *Critical Policy Studies* 6, 4: 452–464.
30. Duyvendak, *Het groene optimisme*, p. 235.
31. Hajer, ‘A Media Storm’.
32. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris (COP 21).
33. Dewulf, Boezeman, and Vink, ‘Climate Change Communication in the Netherlands’, p. 16.
34. Yara van Heugten and Jan Daalder (2023), ‘De afspraken uit het Klimaatakkoord dienen vooral grote bedrijven, blijkt uit nieuw rapport’, Follow the Money – Platform voor onderzoeksjournalistiek, maart, <https://www.ftm.nl/artikelen/tno-klimaatakkoord-niet-geschied-voor-fundamentele-transitie>.
35. Douwe Truijens, et al. (2023, March), ‘Wie schreef het klimaatakkoord?’ TNO, <https://energy.nl/publications/wie-schreef-het-klimaatakkoord/>.
36. The minister also invited several environmental NGOs, but their negotiation power was limited by design. In contrast to the industrial actors, their signature on the final climate agreement was a nice bonus—but not necessary. See Douwe Truijens, et al., ‘Wie schreef’.
37. Heugten and Daalder, ‘De afspraken uit het Klimaatakkoord dienen vooral grote bedrijven, blijkt uit nieuw rapport’.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Platform Authentieke Journalistiek (2019, September), ‘Lobby van multinationals blijkt kind aan huis bij ministeries’, Follow the Money – Platform voor onderzoeksjournalistiek,, <https://www.ftm.nl/artikelen/abdup-lobby-verweven-met-ministeries>.
40. Reyes, Oscar, and Balanyá Belén (2016), ‘Carbon Welfare: How Big Polluters Plan to Profit from EU Emissions Trading Reform’, *Corporate Europe Observatory*

- Report, pp. 22–23; Chris Hensen (2023, August), ‘Geen enkel land dat inzet op CO2-opslag moet zich rijk rekenen’, *NRC*, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2023/08/18/geen-enkel-land-dat-inzet-op-co2-opslag-moet-zich-rijk-rekenen-a4172300>.
41. <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/meeste-fossiele-subsidies-naar-plastic-en-grootverbruikers-elektriciteit-slechts-klein-deel-wordt-afgebouwd~b5662648/> // <https://nltimes.nl/2023/09/04/dutch-govt-spends-eu375-billion-per-year-fossil-fuel-subsidies>.
 42. Alman Metten, ‘Belastingvoordelen voor fossiele brandstoffen nóg veel groter’, *Mejudice*, <https://www.mejudice.nl/artikelen/detail/belastingvoordelen-voor-fossiele-brandstoffen-nog-veel-groter>. Accessed 24 July 2023.
 43. Cf. Holly Jean Buck (2021), *Ending Fossil Fuels: Why Net Zero Is Not Enough*. New York: Verso Books.
 44. Ministerie van Economische Zaken en Klimaat (2023, July), ‘Antwoorden op Kamervragen over fouten in laatste IPCC-rapport – Kamerstuk – Rijksoverheid.nl’, kamerstuk (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken), <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2023/07/03/beantwoording-kamervragen-over-ernstige-fouten-in-het-laatste-ipcc-rapport>. In the juridical domain, CINTEL tried to be accepted as a third party in court cases of Friends of the Earth against Shell. Although that attempt failed, a foundation of ‘Concerned Energy Users’, with similar climate denialist credentials, did manage to get accepted. (Paul Lutikhuis (2023, April), ‘Stichting van “bezorgde energiegebruikers” toegelaten tot rechtszaak Milieudefensie tegen Shell’, *NRC*, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2023/04/25/stichting-van-bezorgde-energiegebruikers-toegelaten-tot-rechtszaak-milieudefensie-tegen-shell-a4163077>.)
 45. van der Sluijs, van Est, and Riphagen, ‘Room for Climate Debate’.
 46. Jan Paul van Soest (2014), *De twijfelbrigade: Waarom de klimaatwetenschap wordt afgewezen en de wereldthermostaat 4 graden hoger gaat*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Mauritsgroen.; Platform Authentieke Journalistiek (2020 March), ‘De boekhouding van “klimaatsepticus” Böttcher’, *Follow the Money – Platform voor onderzoeksjournalistiek*, <https://www.ftm.nl/artikelen/geldstromen-boekhouding-bottcher>.
 47. Platform Authentieke Journalistiek (2020, March), ‘De boekhouding van “klimaatsepticus” Böttcher’, *Follow the Money – Platform voor onderzoeksjournalistiek*, <https://www.ftm.nl/artikelen/geldstromen-boekhouding-bottcher>. See also Alexander Beunder (2020, February), ‘Hoe Frits Böttcher met steun van tientallen bedrijven de basis legde voor de klimaatsepsis in Nederland’, *de Volkskrant*, , sec. Topverhalen vandaag, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/hoe-frits-bottcher-met-steun-van-tientallen-bedrijvende-basis-legde-voor-de-klimaatsepsis-in-nederland~b1acbfaf/>.
 48. He was known to a wide audience as ‘the co-founder and former chair of the Dutch branch of the Club of Rome’ (see Platform Authentieke Journalistiek, ‘De boekhouding van “klimaatsepticus” Böttcher’.)
 49. Like AkzoNobel, Hoogovens, NAM, Gasunie, Texaco, and Schiphol.
 50. Beunder, ‘Hoe Frits Böttcher met steun van tientallen bedrijven de basis legde voor de klimaatsepsis in Nederland’.
 51. Which included journalist Simon Rozendaal, economist Hans Labohm, and VVD politician Hans Wiegel (Pointer (2020, February), ‘Klimaatwijfel zaaien met hulp van oliegeld en populistisch rechts netwerk’, *KRO-NCRV*, <https://pointer.kro-ncrv.nl/klimaatwijfel-zaaien-met-hulp-van-oliegeld-en-populistisch-rechts-netwerk>; van Soest, *De twijfelbrigade*, p. 49.

52. Pointer, 'Klimaattwijfel zaaien met hulp van oliegeld en populistisch rechts netwerk'.
53. According to his Wikipedia page: 'Hans Labohm', Wikipedia, September 2023, https://nl.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hans_Labohm&oldid=65901604.
54. Pointer, 'Klimaattwijfel zaaien met hulp van oliegeld en populistisch rechts netwerk'; Mayte Moreno-Soldevila (2022), 'Androcentrism and Conservatism within Climate Obstructionism. The Case of the Think Tank CLINTEL in The Netherlands', *Ámbitos. Revista Internacional de Comunicación*, 55: 41–57, doi:10.12795/Ambitos.2022.i55.03. See, for example, Frits Bolkestein (2017, January), 'About Intellectuals and Climate Alarmism • Watts Up With That?', <https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/01/20/about-intellecutuals-and-climate-alarmsm/>.
55. Landbouw en Innovatie Ministerie van Economische Zaken (2023, August), 'Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy', organisatie, Government.nl (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken), <https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-economic-affairs-and-climate-policy>.
56. Duyvendak, *Het groene optimisme*.
57. Ibid., pp. 92–96. According to Minister of the Environment, from 1994 to 1998, Margreth de Boer, 'compulsory measures such as a CO₂ tax were on the table every now and then', but there was never enough support for them. . . . It was mainly the Department of Economic Affairs that thwarted such measures' (Platform Authentieke Journalistiek, 'De boekhouding van "klimaatscepticus" Böttcher').
58. Duyvendak, *Het groene optimisme*, p. 83.
59. VNO-NCW (2015, October), 'VNO-NCW in brief', <https://www.vno-ncw.nl/over-vno-ncw/english>.
60. Duyvendak, *Het groene optimisme*, p. 289.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., pp. 226, 331.
63. Platform Authentieke Journalistiek (2019, September), 'Lobby van multinationals blijkt kind aan huis bij ministeries', Follow the Money – Platform voor onderzoeksjournalistiek, <https://www.ftm.nl/artikelen/abdup-lobby-verveven-met-ministeries>.
64. And among others Minister of Economic Affairs Maxime Verhagen, Minister of Finance Jeroen Dijsselbloem and European Commissioner on climate Frans Timmermans (Platform Authentieke Journalistiek.)
65. Platform Authentieke Journalistiek.
66. Duyvendak, *Het groene optimisme*, p. 74.
67. Ibid.
68. Shell (2023, 30 August), 'About Us | Shell Global', geraadpleegd, <https://www.shell.com/about-us.html>.
69. Rhodante Ahlers and Ilona Hartlief (2021), *Still Playing the Shell Game: Four Ways Shell Impedes the Just Transition*. Amsterdam: SOMO; Matthew Taylor and Jonathan Watts (2019, October), 'Revealed: The 20 Firms behind a Third of All Carbon Emissions', *The Guardian*, sec. Environment, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/09/revealed-20-firms-third-carbon-emissions>.
70. Platform Authentieke Journalistiek (2019, September), 'Lobby van multinationals blijkt kind aan huis bij ministeries', Follow the Money – Platform voor onderzoeksjournalistiek, <https://www.ftm.nl/artikelen/abdup-lobby-verveven-met-ministeries>.

71. Joost Jonker and Jan Luiten van Zanden, (2007) 'Van nieuwkomer tot marktlieder, 1890–1939: Geschiedenis van Koninklijke Shell, deel 1', Amsterdam: Boom; The House of Representatives of The Netherlands, et al. (2023, February), 'Groningers before Gas: Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Natural Gas Extraction in Groningen' Den Haag: The House of Representatives of The Netherlands.
72. Jelmer Mommers and Damian Carrington (2017, February), 'If Shell Knew Climate Change Was Dire 25 Years Ago, Why Still Business as Usual Today?', *The Correspondent*, <https://thecorrespondent.com/6286/if-shell-knew-climate-change-was-dire-25-years-ago-why-still-business-as-usual-today/692773774-4d15b476>. From the mid-1970s, Shell was aware of climate change and the contribution of their fossil products; the company 'shaped a series of influential industry-backed publications that downplayed or omitted key risks; emphasized scientific uncertainties; and pushed for more fossil fuels, particularly coal'. Desmog (2023, 30 August), 'Lost Decade: How Shell Downplayed Early Warnings Over Climate Change – DeSmog', <https://www.desmog.com/2023/03/31/lost-decade-how-shell-downplayed-early-warnings-over-climate-change/>.
73. In this way, Shell has also taken over some responsibilities of the neoliberalizing Dutch state since the 1990s. Gertjan Plets en Marin Kuijt (2022, March), 'Gas, Oil and Heritage: Well-Oiled Histories and Corporate Sponsorship in Dutch Museums (1990–2021)', *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review*, 137, 1: 50–77, doi:10.51769/bmgn-lchr.7028.
74. Femke Slegers (2021), 'The Dirty Truth about Shell's Children's Marketing', *Future Beyond Shell* (blog), <https://futurebeyondshell.org/greenwashing-the-dirty-truth/>. See also René Didde (1989), *Als het tij keert: Shell en Nederland, macht & verbeelding*. Amsterdam: Ravijn; Rhodante Ahlers and Ilona Hartlief, 'Still Playing the Shell Game'; Mommers and Carrington, 'If Shell Knew Climate Change Was Dire'; George Monbiot (2019, June), 'Shell Is Not a Green Saviour: It's a Planetary Death Machine', *The Guardian*, sec. Opinion, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/26/shell-not-green-saviour-death-machine-greenwash-oil-gas>.
75. Vatan Hüzeir and Germain Fraser (2017), *A Pipeline of Ideas: How the Rotterdam School of Management Facilitates Climate Change by Collaborating with the Fossil Fuel Industry*. Rotterdam: Changerism; NOS (2023, February), 'Bedrijven betalen salaris 200 hoogleraren, transparantie ontbreekt vaak', <https://nos.nl/artikel/2464193-bedrijven-betalen-salaris-200-hoogleraren-transparantie-ontbreekt-vaak>.
76. van Soest, *De twijfelbrigade*; Dewulf, Boezeman, and Vink, 'Climate Change Communication in the Netherlands'; Böttcher, 'De boekhouding van "klimaatscepticus" Böttcher' – Follow the Money – Platform voor onderzoeksjournalistiek'.
77. van Soest, *De twijfelbrigade*; Dewulf, Boezeman, and Vink, 'Climate Change Communication in the Netherlands'.
78. Böttcher was an often-seen visitor to the Energy Department at the Minister Economic Affairs. We are not aware if his successors were still welcome there. Böttcher, 'De boekhouding van "klimaatscepticus" Böttcher' – Follow the Money – Platform voor onderzoeksjournalistiek'.
79. Pointer, 'Klimaattwijfel zaaien met hulp van oliegeld en populistisch rechts netwerk'.
80. Ibid.

81. Böttcher, 'De boekhouding van "klimaatscepticus" Böttcher – Follow the Money – Platform voor onderzoeksjournalistiek'.
82. Ibid.
83. 'The sentence that climate change leads to "rising sea levels and heavy rainfall" was removed from the text at the insistence of Frisian VVD member Gert-Jaap van Ulzen, also a board member of the climate sceptic think tank Groene rekenkamer'. See Belia Heilbron, Thomas Muntz, and Frank Straver (2017, March), 'VVD schrappt zin over klimaatverandering na kritiek', Trouw, <https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/vvd-schrappt-zin-over-klimaatverandering-na-kritiek~b401a357/>.)
84. William F. Lamb, et al. (2020), 'Discourses of Climate Delay', *Global Sustainability*, 3: 1–5, doi:10.1017/SUS.2020.13.
85. Jimena Natalia Diamint (2023), *In the Clouds or on Solid Ground?: Mapping KLM's Dominant and Counter-Discourses on Aviation and Climate Change*, p. 71. Dissertation Wageningen University, WorldCat.org, <https://edepot.wur.nl/631194>.
86. Ibid., p. 76.
87. Which is one of Shell's top three strategic ambitions stated in its 2019 business strategy report. See Shell (2023, 30 March), 'Our Business Strategy', <https://reports.shell.com/sustainability-report/2019/introduction/our-business-strategy.html>. See also Mike Gaworecki (2016, July), 'Inside Shell's PR Strategy To Position Itself As A "Net-Zero Emissions" Leader', *DeSmog* (blog), <https://www.desmog.com/2016/07/10/inside-shell-s-pr-strategy-position-itself-net-zero-emissions-leader/>.
88. Tobacco Tactics (2023, 30 March), 'Edelman – TobaccoTactics', <https://tobaccotactics.org/wiki/edelman/>.
89. According to the organization, 35,000 people visited the 2020 Rotterdam edition of the festival, 'which included a record number of over 300 school classes with about 13,000 pupils'. See Slegers, 'The Dirty Truth'.
90. Nationaleonderwijsgids (2023, 27 March), 'Fossielvrij Onderwijs tegen misleidende reclame Shell-kinderfestival in beroep', <https://www.nationaleonderwijsgids.nl/cursussen/nieuws/50891-fossielvrij-onderwijs-tegen-misleidende-reclame-shell-kinderfestival-in-beroep.html>. Shell did not promote gas in the last edition because they lost a court case initiated by the Dutch advertising watchdog. See Yamilla van Dijk (2019), 'Shell afgestraft na misleidende reclame: "GTL draagt bij aan beter milieu"', AD.nl, <https://www.ad.nl/den-haag/shell-afgestraft-na-misleidende-reclame-gtl-draagt-bij-aan-beter-milieu~a423a cbd/>.)
91. Plets and Kuijt, 'Gas, Oil and Heritage'.
92. Vatan Hüzeir and Germain Fraser, *A Pipeline of Ideas*, pp. 17–18.
93. Mark W. Rectanus (2002), *Culture Incorporated: Museums, Artists, and Corporate Sponsorships*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
94. Platform Authentieke Journalistiek, 'Lobby van multinationals blijkt kind aan huis bij ministeries'.
95. Gijs A. Diercks (2012), 'Explaining Dutch Failure and German Success in Renewable Energy Policymaking: An Agency/Structure Perspective', Utrecht University, p. 49.
96. 'Employees explaining, they are collaborating with many other parties to organise the festival together. And every year, the festival was opened by a leading executive or public official. Politicians, journalists, scientists, mayors and

- ministers were invited and gave speeches, like the Dutch Prime Minister and the mayor of Rotterdam' (Sleegers, 'The Dirty Truth').
97. A well-studied example is the Rotterdam School of Management (RSM). In 1966, a select group of multinational companies, closely linked to each other through a federation of employers, donated between €300,000 and €1,000,000 each to establish a new graduate school of management. Royal Dutch Shell was one of the founding companies. Many fossil fuel companies, such as Petrobras, Saudi Aramco, Vale, and Shell, are clients of the institute and two of them—Shell and Petrobras—are executive members of its communication network. See Hùizer and Fraser, *A Pipeline of Ideas*.
 98. Jeanne Westerberg (1997 May), 'Universiteit wordt kennisleverancier', *de Volkskrant*, sec. Topverhalen vandaag, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-acht-ergroend/universiteit-wordt-kennisleverancier~b3f0a529/>. Resident-director Jan Slechte of Shell Nederland, for instance, became chairman of the supervisory board of the Technical University of Delft; and Cor Herkstroter, President-Director of Royal Dutch Shell, is appointed chairman of the supervisory board of Erasmus University Rotterdam Nederland and chairman of the supervisory board of the Technical University of Delft. (Ardi Vleugels and Jasper Been (2023, 31 July), 'Voor het eerst in kaart gebracht: wie betalen onze hoogleraren?', FD.nl, <https://fd.nl/samenleving/1459676/voor-het-eerst-in-kaart-gebracht-wie-betalen-onze-hoogleraren>.) For an overview in progress of ties between Dutch Universities and the fossil industry, see Solid Sustainability Research (2023, March), 'Fossiele industrie en de academie: een onderzoek naar banden tussen universiteiten en olie- en gasbedrijven – Solid Sustainability Research', <https://www.solid-sustainability.org/nl/banden-fossiel-universiteiten>. For the ties between Wageningen University and the Fossil industry, see Brigitte W. (2022, June), 'Fossil Fuelled WUR', *The Jester* (blog), <https://www.thejesterwageningen.nl/2022/06/10/fossil-fuelled-wur/>.
 99. Duyvendak, *Het groene optimisme*; Dewulf, Boezeman, and Vink, 'Climate Change Communication in the Netherlands'.
 100. Martijn Duineveld and Guus Dix (2022, July), 'Voor een leefbare planeet moet het poldermodel de prullenbak in', *Beleid en Maatschappij* 49, 3: 246–249, doi:10.5553/BenM/138900692022049003006. See also Florian Kern and Michael Howlett (2009, November), 'Implementing Transition Management as Policy Reforms: A Case Study of the Dutch Energy Sector', *Policy Sciences*, 42, 4: 391–408, doi:10.1007/s11077-009-9099-x.
 101. Ties Joosten (2022), *De blauwe fabel. Waarom we de KLM al een eeuw lang tegen elke prijs in de lucht houden*. Amsterdam: Follow the Money.
 102. Sam Gerrits (2021), *De aarde en het gas een geschiedenis van fossiele brandstoffen, geld en macht*. Groningen: Uitgeverij Passage.
 103. Oxenaar and Bosman, 'Managing the Decline of Fossil Fuels', p. 158.
 104. J. A. Vijlbrief (2023, July), 'Brief van de staatssecretaris Economische Zaken en Klimaat. Tweede Kamer, vergaderjaar 2022–2023', www.tweedekamer.nl%2Fdownloads%2Fdocument%3Fid%3D2023D31720&usg=AOvVaw1B73qZgDykDXfQzZjh8GoE&opi=89978449. The House of Representatives of The Netherlands, et al., 'Groningers before Gas. Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Natural Gas Extraction in Groningen'.
 105. Ahlers and Hartlief, *Still Playing the Shell Game*.
 106. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

107. Such as Wouter Bos (Labor Party), the former Minister of Finance and Vice Minister President; Eric Wiebes (VVD), former Minister of Economic Affairs and Climate; Sigrid Kaag (social liberals), Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation; and Wobke Hoekstra (Christian democrat), Minister of Foreign Affairs and candidate European Commissioner responsible for the European Green Deal.
108. Ahlers and Hartlief, *Still Playing the Shell Game*, p. 44.