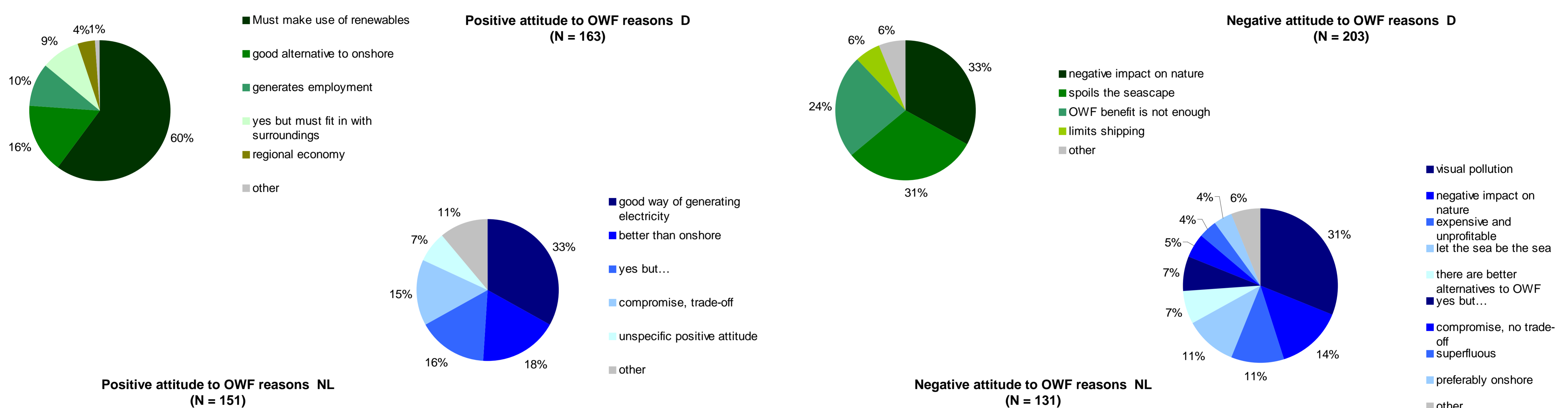


# Acceptance of Offshore Wind Farming: A Question of Sea Values?

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In a comparative study we analyzed the acceptance of potential offshore wind farming in Germany and The Netherlands. Data result from two surveys on the Wadden Sea coast of Schleswig-Holstein (2005, N=387, [1]) and Noord-Holland, Frisia and Groningen (2011, N= 392). Residents were asked about their perception of the North Sea, reasons for appreciating the sea and coast, and how this relates to attitudes to offshore wind farming (OWF).



## The sea as a carrier of multiple values

Answers in both countries showed that the sea is associated with a wide range of material and immaterial values:

- Elements of the physical environment
- Seascape character (wide open horizon)
- Nature/flora/fauna
- Symbolic interpretation of the sea
- Immaterial benefits
- Sense of place

→ **Can work either in support of OWF or in support of nature/landscape**

## Offshore Wind Farming: A contested paradigm?

- Recognition of the material and immaterial benefits of offshore wind
- Strong moral sense that OWF is a good choice because of the renewable energy argument
- Nevertheless, OWF is seen to compete with nature and seascape values/benefits
- Strong moral sense that certain sea uses should not be considered at all ("let the sea be the sea")
- Resistance to giving up immaterial seascape/sea benefits (emotional attachment)
- **Moral dilemma of German and Dutch residents: Support for offshore wind farming based on support for renewable energy, and difficulty of trading this against other intangibles that are rated just as highly.**

## Conclusion

Attitudes to offshore wind farming depend on how residents resolve the conflict between 'old' and 'new' sea values. This conflict is driven by contradictory moral convictions, as indicated by the following quotations:

- "Offshore wind farms upset nature and animals, never mind the visual impacts. The expansive horizon represents the most important capital of this landscape."
- "Fossil fuels are finite and pollute the environment. Much energy is needed to extract them, and nature is destroyed in the process. Wind farms are not exactly pretty, but we need energy, and all other sources have higher risks."

## Reference

[1] Gee, K. (2010): Offshore wind power development as affected by seascape values on the German North Sea coast. Land Use Policy, Vol. 27, 185-194.