FAMILY FARMING FUTURES

HENK OOSTINDIE

Agrarian pathways to multifunctionality: flows of resistance, redesign and resilience

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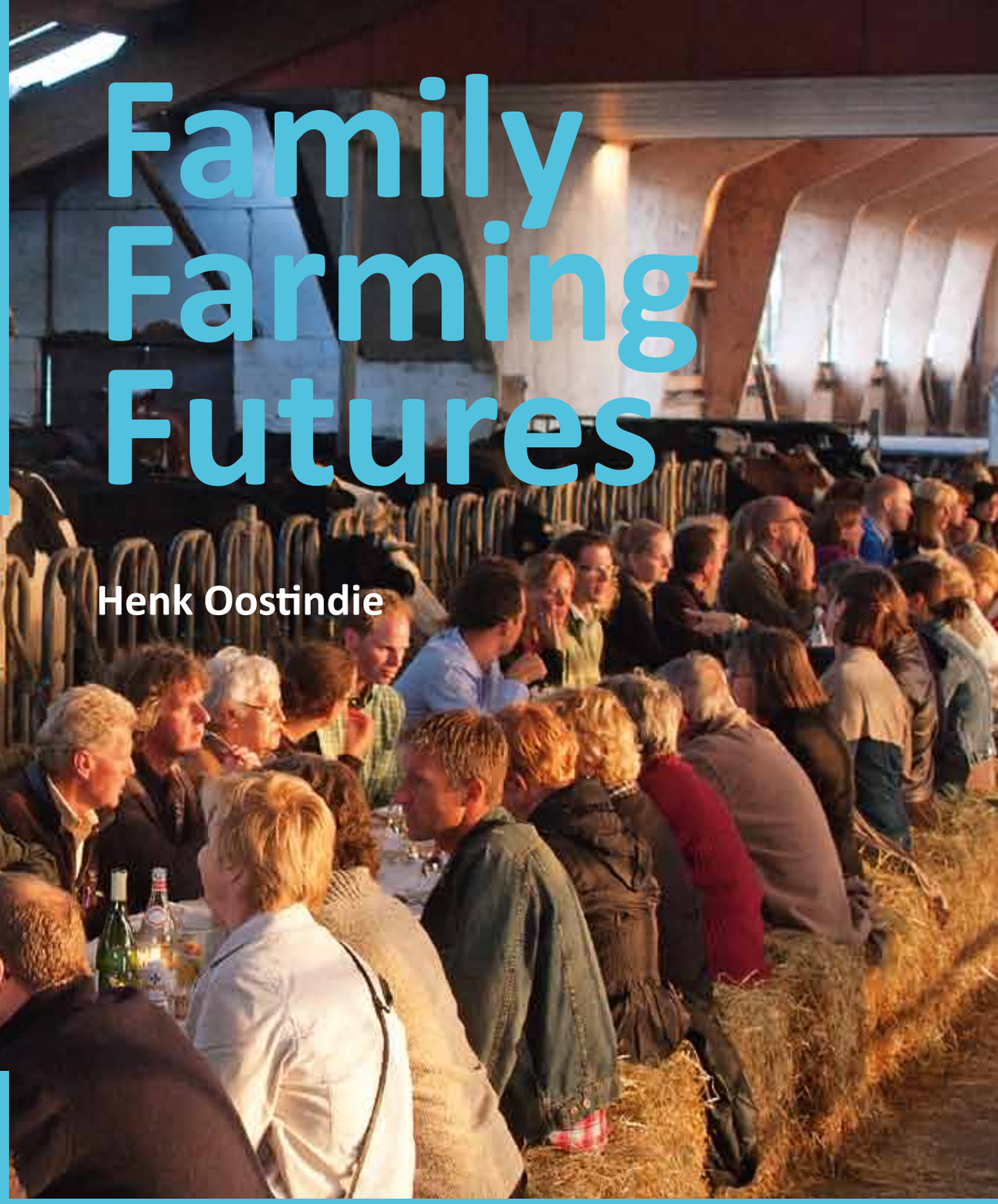

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Thesis

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General introduction

1

1.1 Introduction

This thesis builds upon almost three decades of research engagement as a rural sociologist. During this period I studied agricultural and rural processes of change with a particular interest in family-farms' responses to modernisation and globalisation forces. This particular interest covered a wide variety of research issues such as agri-environmental concerns, new rural development activities, the socio-economic impact of these new activities at different scale levels, sustainable food production, new forms of farmer-led cooperation and rural policy design and delivery systems. Their interlinkages with on-going European policy and scientific debate about agriculture's multifunctionality may be perceived as the common denominator of these different research activities. This thesis builds upon this broad research experience in a national, as well as European, setting and differs as such from more conventional approaches that start from a research question that subsequently is responded to. Instead, it consists of a presentation, interpretation and re-interpretation of earlier research work and hopes to contribute to a more profound theoretical understanding of agriculture's multifunctionality by underpinning its dynamic nature, recognizing its heterogeneity and acknowledging its significance for the future of family-based farming and rurality. Together these have been synthesized into the key argument of this thesis: agrarian pathways to multifunctionality are characterized, shaped and propelled by *flows of resistance, redesign and resilience.* The next sections will briefly introduce the central notions of this key argument and the specific ways this will be further theorized and elaborated on in forthcoming chapters.

1.2 Resistance

In his wider contemplations on contemporary social ordering processes Boutellier (2011) concludes that current network society is imbued with dissatisfaction and resistance, often organised along primary identities such as religion, ethnicity and nationality. More generally he associates societal dissatisfaction and resistance with the ambivalences of the network society in terms of expansion (e.g. the World Wide Web) versus shrinking (e.g. peer groups), colonisation of the private - versus the privatisation of public domains and social inclusion versus exclusion mechanisms. As noticed, these ambivalences do not allow for overly optimistic expectations or cultural pessimism (ibid: 123).

In relation to an appropriate understanding of agricultural development, the relevance of resistance is especially underlined in peasant studies. Scott (1984) beautifully illustrates how '*everyday forms of resistance*' are omnipresent in peasant communities, with the purpose to undermine the effectiveness of domination by superordinates in harsh socio-political conditions, and underlines how peasants' agency may often fall into the category of more covert expressions of resistance. Kerkvliet (2009) emphasizes how these expressions of '*everyday politics',* low profile resistance not always intended as a political act by involved actors, in time may

change the political horizon of rural landscapes. O'Brien (1996) introduces the notion '*rightful resistance*' to stress that peasants actively use persuasive normative language to frame their claims and to deploy existing statuses and commitments when levelling charges against and exploiting divisions among the powerful. Hence, he concludes that '*where Scott's everyday forms of resistance were quiet, disguised and anonymous, rightful resistance is noisy, public and open*' (O'Brien, 2013).

This relevance of more or less overt and intentional farmer-led resistance appears to different degrees in a wide variety of theoretical strands on agriculture's multifunctionality (Carol *et al.*, 2008; Haydinski *et al.*, 2008; Huylenbroeck *et al.*, 2003; Knickel *et al.*, 2004; O'Connor and Dunne, 2009; Noe *et al.*, 2008). This thesis will build especially on rural scholars that associate agriculture's multifunctionality with historically rooted resistance of peasant modes of production systems (see e.g. Ploeg, 2013). First, it enables an understanding of agricultural labour processes as conversions of resources into outputs that only move through commodity circuits partly and that the reproduction of farm resources continues to be, albeit to different degrees, guaranteed through farm internal resource flows and reciprocal processes of exchange (Sabourin, 2011). Secondly, it recognizes that farmer-led resistance against commodity relations creates certain defence lines against the marginalisation tendencies that accompany agricultural modernisation forces, including price-squeeze tendencies (Ploeg, 2008), regulatory treadmills (Marsden & Murdoch, 2006), increasingly prescriptive farm labour processes (Bonnano *et al.*, 1994) and agro-food distantiation processes (Winter, 2003).

Thirdly, it makes it possible to underline that farmer-led resistance opens opportunities for alternative agricultural pathways. Ploeg *et al.* (2013) speak in this respect of '*resistance of the third kind':* the exploration of '*unauthorized paths'* that *modify* the existing distribution of social wealth produced in the countryside and the socio-material characteristics of marketing patterns. This transformative capacity of farmers' resistance is further stressed with the help of the farming style concept by focusing on the heterogeneity in '*cultural repertoires*' that shape and reshape farmers' socio-technical relationships and dependencies in specific ways (Ploeg, 1994). The significance of diversifying farming styles has been demonstrated in relation to a broad spectrum of societal concerns such as agri-environmental performances, preservation of nature- and landscape amenities, rural resource use efficiency, rural employment and the uptake of and interest in new rural development activities (Ploeg and Roep, 1990; Bruin *et al.*, 1991; Bruin, 1993; Ploeg, 1994; Wiskerke, 1995). All these empirical studies underscore the wider societal significance of farmer-led resistance against the agricultural modernization logic as an explanatory factor for the persistence and emergence of alternative, more multifunctional farm development pathways, although mostly without making explicit reference to the notion of multifunctionality.

The relevance of these alternative farm-development pathways will be also reflected in societal perceptions about rurality. Following Mayerfeld Bell *et al.* (2010:11), the

notion of rurality requires a distinction between '*rural power*' and the '*power of the rural*' and '*rural constituencies*' and '*the constituencies of the rural*' to acknowledge the relevance of both the material and symbolic components of rurality. By subsequently defining rurality as '*the continuing fascination for rural life and images among both rural and urban people alike',* these rural scholars stress that it is the outcome of the material ('first rural') and symbolic ('second rural') components that create the '*active rural voice*'. The contested nature of this active rural voice has already for a long time been the subject of rural studies (Mormont, 1987; Hoggart, 1990; Halfacree, 1995; Escobar, 2001; Reed, 2008). Woods (2003) speaks of the '*politics of the rural*' to underline that contemporary '*rural*' may often be the subject of struggle, and conflict between traditional and new social movements that share the defence of rural identity as a '*uniting and mobilising force*' (Woods 2003:317). Others speak of contrasting socio-political rural discourses, defined by Frouws (1998:56) as '*the resources and the products of the discursive actions of the myriad of political, official, administrative, governmental, interest, representational, scientific and other actors participating in the debate on the future of rural areas*'. Frouws concludes that ideas about agriculture's role in rural development strongly divide Dutch society, a conclusion that since then has been confirmed in various other studies (Horlings & Padt, 2011; Hermans *et al.*, 2009; Boonstra, 2006; Boonstra & Frouws, 2005). Mobility scholars emphasize that the contested nature of rurality involves increasingly complex rural spatial dynamics and relations. As argued by Ward and Brown (2009:1241), '*one has to move from a world of binaries and the constant carving up of spaces on maps to a much more complex world of flows, people, goods and mobilities [..] that give shape to rural lives and livelihoods in the twenty first century*'. It associates rurality with issues such as commuting, tourism, leisure, labour migration, urbanization and counter-urbanization tendencies and globalizing food chains. Mayenfeld Bell *et al.* (2010:213) stress both the dynamic and the preservative nature of resistance within these relational perspectives on rural dynamics by arguing that '*it requires as much to hold something in place and to maintain a configuration as to move things around*. *Much of our politics and our physics come about through the organisation of resistances. Indeed, much what stays in place does so only because movements supports its obduracy'.*

This variety of scholarly strands and thoughts underpins, albeit more or less explicitly, the significance of farmer-led resistance in its 1) more overt and covert manifestations; 2) material as well as symbolic representations and consequences and 3) transformative as well as preservative capacity. Together, this set of features is thought to be a first crucial constituting element that one needs to take into account for an appropriate understanding of the preservation, reproduction and expansion of multifunctional agricultural pathways.

This will be in different ways further illustrated throughout this thesis. The analysis of the emergence of the multifunctionality concept in the Netherlands will show how a longer history of wider societal resistance against the negative externalities of the agricultural modernisation model gradually transformed into renewed attention for the prospects, desirability and potential benefits of alternative, more multifunctional agrarian pathways within the Dutch agri-expert system.

The farm-level analysis will depict how resistance continues to play a key role in the dynamics of family-based farming. Additional to the persistence of family-based farming as a specific mode of production, this will be particularly related to underlying drivers that explain the uptake of new rural development activities at professional farm-enterprises in the Netherlands. As will be shown, within a wider set of driving forces discontent about loss of autonomy, loss of labour satisfaction, loss of income opportunities and deteriorating succession opportunities remain of major importance. It makes resistance a crucial element of the widely identified '*wish to farm differently*' and a key driver of emerging multifunctional farm development trajectories.

The analysis of European agri-environmental governance focusses on different expressions of resistance in multi-level governance settings. It underscores the relevance of resistance against the rigidity and prescriptive nature of hierarchical regulatory frameworks, as well as against the prevailing institutional voids in these same settings*:* '*the absence of clear rules and norms according to which politics is to be conducted, policy measures are to be agreed upon and, thus, without generally accepted rules and norms*' (Hajer 2003: p. 175). It enables to underpin how resistance appears in rather different ways in contemporary European governance of agri-environmental services.

The chapter on emerging more '*nested*' rural markets in Europe shifts the attention to societal resistance against hegemonic food market forces that go along with loss of autonomy, loss of food authenticity and identity, loss of trust in food quality and loss of chances to valorise rural capital assets in a broader sense. It points to the relevance of food producer- as well as consumer-driven resistance against the trade-offs of conventional market relations.

Finally, the significance of resistance will be associated with the role of agriculture in rural place making processes. As a multi-dimensional analytical tool to study rural differentiation processes, the rural framework underscores the significance of resistance, particularly by its distinction of the domains '*endogeneity*' (i.e. against the marginalization of locally available resources by modernization and globalization forces), 'social *capital*' (i.e. against its accompanying loss of social cohesion) and '*sustainability*' (i.e. against natural resource depletion tendencies). The same framework further emphasizes that it is especially the interaction patterns between these different expressions of resistance that provide more profound insights into rural competitiveness and the quality of rural life.

1.3 Redesign

In addition to resistance, redesign is thought to be a second key feature of agrarian pathways to multifunctionality. This second notion permits us to underline that these pathways may require a fundamental re-positioning of agriculture's role in

society as part of new ways of social ordering. In his understanding of social ordering processes, Boutellier (2011) makes a distinction between *incidents*, *initiatives* and *centres of gravity.* In this distinction, *incidents* refer to more contingent and ad hoc reactions to (temporary) societal disturbance as crystallization points for social re-ordering. *Initiatives* stress the importance of promising intentional action of individuals and collectives in the guidance of wider network dynamics. *Centres of gravity,* in their turn, are primarily associated with institutional steering and prevention capacity. In line with this distinction, I will discuss redesign more generally as referring to different degrees of intentional reactions to societal disturbance by individuals, collectives and institutional settings.

Earlier attempts to understand the re-positioning of the role of agriculture in society in simple dichotomies such as post-productivism and post-modernism turned out not to be fruitful (Murdoch and Pratt, 1993; Wilson, 2001; Evans *et al.*, 2002; Walford, 2003). Nowadays it is broadly accepted that alternative agricultural pathways involve highly complex transition processes (Kemp et al, 2001; Roep et al, 2003). Transition theory scholars underline how processes of change unfold at multiple levels, starting from the micro-level of 'niches' in which promising novelties may be developed (Wiskerke and Ploeg, 2004). The meso-level of 'regimes' refers to certain technologies and modes of ordering that are already more clearly favoured through regulatory frameworks, fiscal regimes, market conditions, social codes, conventions, etcetera. The macro-level of socio-technical 'landscapes' includes elements such as physical infrastructures, government structures, societal values and beliefs, which only change over longer periods of time. As further stressed, these multi-level processes of change influence each other mutually and may induce, under favourable conditions, far-reaching transformations.

These transition theory insights are in different ways applied to rural development processes. Holmes (2006: 146) speaks of '*a radical re-ordering in the three basic purposes underlying human use of rural space, namely production, consumption and protection [..] as a shift from the formerly dominant production goals towards a more complex, contested, variable mix of production, consumption and protection goals'.* Wilson (2007) introduces a multi-level framework for transition processes bounded by '*productivist and non-productivist action and thought*'. Rural development scholars identify three fundamentally different rural transition processes: 1) *deepening* through the re-creation of farm-based food quality distinctiveness; 2) *broadening* through the uptake of new rural development activities and 3) *re-grounding* of farm resource use through alternative forms of cost-reduction and pluriactivity (Ploeg *et al.*, 2000; Marsden *et al.*, 2002). Although admittedly interwoven with traditional rural livelihood survival strategies and resistance within peasant modes of production systems, it is emphasized that these farm-level transition processes get a new meaning and significance in contemporary rural development (Ray, 1998; Ploeg *et al.*, 2000; Brunori, 2006; Bell & Jayne, 2010). Empirically their relevance has been underpinned by a growing amount of socio-economic impact studies at different scale levels (Oostindie & Parrot, 2002; Ploeg *et al.*, 2002; Roep,

Variety of non-agricultural income activities at professional farms
Contract-work, Bed & Breakfast, Camp-site, Tea- and Coffee shop, Art gallery, Workshop facilities, Farm-shop, Horse-breeding, Horse Riding School, Horse Stable facilities, Handyman services, Formal Construction Firm, Dog Kennels, Brokerage agency, Estate agency, Gardening Advisory and Architecture, Business accommodation, Agricultural extension, Transport services, Wholesale hairdressing equipment, Veterinarian services, Soil and Fodder sampling, Wholesale of herbs and package material, Soil Drill and Demolition, Medicine trading, Rent of shovels, Brick trading, Egg trading, Seed trading, Dumper construction.

Variety of off-farm income sources at professional farms
Office-, Public Health- Retail-, Catering-, Contract-worker, Agricultural employee, Driver, Maintenance engineer, Teacher, Company Director, Veterinarian, Employee of communication company, Fitness centre and Suntan parlour, Delivery company, National Statistical Classification society, Leisure company, Funeral parlour, Water Board, Accountant, Journalist, Quality manager, Doctor, Financial advisor, Inspector of cattle and beef, Staff manager, Computer operator, Designer.

Variety of new economic activities in redundant farm buildings ('hobby-farming')
Horse breeding, training and trading, Rural Estate management, ITC-services, Green Care-provision, Advertisement and Publicity, Waste Water purification Advisory, Advisory service for Rural Estates, Architect's Firm, Dog training Services, Boarding Kennel, Computer Sale and Repair, Green Services, Woodcraft, Artisanal Food Wear, Screen Processing and Printing, Thatching, Cattle trading, Animal Feed trading, Exotic Animals trading, Sperm trading, Wine trading, Construction, Contracting, Facility accommodation, Rural Estate Shop, Catering, Hotel, Golf Course.

Box 1.1 Rural development practices in De Wolden (Source: Oostindie and Broekhuizen, 2005)

2002; Oostindie & Broekhuizen, 2005; Oostindie *et al.*, 2011; Hendrik-Goossens *et al.*, 2012).

Box 1.1 gives an idea of how a re-positioning of the role of agriculture in rural development processes reflects close interrelations between agricultural activity and wider rural/ regional economies. It distinguishes the following farm-based rural development practices: 1) other income activities at professional farm-enterprises; 2) off-farm income activities of farmers; and 3) new rural business activities in former farm-buildings (initiated by farmers as well as newcomers) in the Dutch municipality *De Wolden.* It concerns a rather typical Dutch rural region in terms of local authorities' expectations regarding farming strategies and wider rural economy features. Both were primarily expected to be in line with agricultural modernisation logic. Yet, in-depth empirical research affirmed how the aforementioned rural development practices turned out to be omnipresent and of great significance for family-farm incomes and rural employment in the broader sense. As estimated, about 15-20 per

De Hoeve pork chain	Groene Woud Cooperative
Ecological dimension	
Ecological re-embedding through (selective) improvement of pork meat production sustainable performances versus decades of further ecological dis-embedding of regional conventional pork meat production.	Ecological re-embedding through a return to multifunctionality as the basis for sustainable agricultural activities versus decades of ecological dis-embedding related to the dominance of the agricultural modernization model.
Social dimension	
Social re-embedding through active attempts to establish alternative producer-consumer networks versus the necessity to socially dis-embed from historically strongly present conventional farmers' interest groups and cooperatives.	Social re-embedding through an active search for new rural coalitions and public-private partnerships versus socially dis-embedding from a strong regional tradition of sector based advocacy, increasingly characterized by opposition, confrontation and non-compliance.
Cultural dimension	
Cultural re-embedding through attempts to re-create farm based distinctive pork meat qualities versus strongly (food) cultural dis-embedding forces of decades of agricultural modernization.	Cultural re-embedding through a re-orientation towards the valorisation of endogenous resources, particularly regional nature- and landscape values, versus the dis-embedding from modernization pathways that continues to undermine the cultural distinctiveness of available endogenous resources.
Institutional dimension	
Institutional re-embedding through the need for recognition and the formalization of improved sustainability performances of own stable system versus the institutional dis-embedding from standardized and prescriptive agri-environmental regulations in national intensive husbandry systems and prevailing environmental quality hallmarks.	Institutional re-embedding through new procedures, arrangements and regulations that enable multifunctional agricultural pathways versus the complexities of dis-embedding from regulatory frameworks that primarily align with agricultural modernization and rural function segregation.
Territorial dimension	
Territorial re-embedding through a reduction of the negative externalities of conventional pork meat production systems and the reconstruction of more local food chains versus still clearly present territorial dis-embedding forces from conventional pork meat production systems.	Territorial re-embedding through active attempts to create economies of scope and synergies versus the still powerful territorial dis-embedding forces from conventional agro-industrial food chains.
Cognitive dimension	
Cognitive re-embedding through consultation with alternative knowledge sources versus the need to dis-embed from conventional agri-expertise systems unable / unwilling to actively support farmer driven novelties.	Cognitive re-embedding through active creation of new (inter-) national knowledge networks versus the need to dis-embed from conventional agri-expertise systems with little or no expertise and /or interest in multifunctional agriculture and regional branding.

Box 1.2 Redesign as combined processes of dis-embedding and re-embedding

cent of total farm income is related to traditional and new rural development activities, whereas 30-35 per cent originates from pluri-activity. Moreover, only about 1/3 of total farm-enterprises prefer a future farm development in line with the modernisation model, whereas similar percentages indicate a preference for a multifunctional or a pluri-active farming future.

Theoretically a re-positioning of agriculture's role in rural development is often associated with the notion of '*embeddedness*', especially by scholars with a focus on the emergence and endurance of alternative food systems (Hinrichs, 2002; Winter, 2003; Kirwan, 2004). More recently, the notion of embeddedness has been expanded to include the ecological, cultural and spatial embeddedness of agricultural activity (Penker, 2006; Sonnino, 2007; Higgins, 2008; Weller, 2006). Following Hess's (2004:180) argument that embeddedness needs to be approached '*as a process rather than a spatial or temporal fix*', I will understand redesign for multifunctional pathways further as combined and multi-facetted processes of '*dis-embedding*' and '*re-embedding*' (see also Roep & Wiskerke, 2009; Oostindie *et al.*, 2008; Murdoch, 2000).

Box 1.2 gives an impression of this multi-facetted nature for two farmers' initiatives in the Dutch province of Noord-Brabant, known for its intensity of agricultural land use and its concentration of intensive husbandry systems.

De Hoeve represents a group of regional pork producers that took the challenge to improve their environmental performances in a way that clearly differs from dominant agro-industrial logics. As depicted in Box 1.2, this required serious confrontation with prevailing regulatory frameworks and asked for major efforts to overcome persistent pork chain dependencies. More generally, *De Hoeve* reflects the rather narrow multifunctional transition corridor of Dutch intensive husbandry systems. *De Groene Woud* cooperative, in turn, concerns a regional farmers' initiative aiming for new forms of territory based cooperation, with multifunctionality as the guiding sustainability principle. Again, as summarized in Box 1.2., this initiative faces multi-facetted dis-embedding and re-embedding challenges to put this strategic reorientation into practice.

This significance of redesign will in many ways be further underlined in the following chapters. Especially, the rural development model interlinks multifunctionality with the imperative to redesign the interrelations between agriculture and ecology, between food production and other rural functions, between food producers and food consumers, between rural and urban spaces and between practitioners and institutional settings. In other, narrower definitions of multifunctionality, redesign is primarily associated with interventions in land property rights to the benefit of public goods provision and new markets for agriculture's provision of green service, both assuming a much less fundamental transformation of the agricultural modernisation model. Overall analysis of the emergence of the multifunctionality concept in the Netherlands identifies the co-existence of contrasting ideas about necessary redesign for multifunctional agrarian pathways within the Dutch agri-expert system.

Chapter 3 proves that in unfavourable institutional settings redesign may manifest itself much more prominently and promisingly at farm-level. That is, family-based farming is increasingly dis-embeddded from agricultural modernisation logics and dependencies and actively re-embedded in relationships, as suggested by the rural development model. The analysis will interlink redesign particularly with the ability to re-vitalize family farms, to re-define farm boundaries, to re-create professional identities and to construct novel rural business models, as empirically underpinned by Dutch professional family-farms that succeed in escaping from agricultural modernisation logics through active returns to multifunctional agricultural pathways.

The analysis of European agri-environmental governance draws attention to redesign by means of novel institutional arrangements in multi-level governance settings. Thus, redesign through a redistribution of responsibilities between public, private and civil actors by means of more market-led provision systems for agri-environmental services and new forms of self-regulation, self-organisation and self-governance. This understanding of institutional redesign addresses what Boutellier (2011) calls the imperative of new balances between *hypercontrol versus diffusion of power* within contemporary social ordering processes, what Power (2000) describes as the dysfunctional effects of the '*audit society*' and Hajer (2003) problematizes as *institutional voids* in multi-level governance settings.

In the analysis of nested rural markets redesign appears as alternative governance mechanisms that mediate and reshape hegemonic market forces. It shifts analytical attention to the emergence of new normative and symbolic frameworks that fully recognize that rural markets are embedded in specific social and institutional relations. In contrast with hegemonic food market relations, these alternative governance mechanisms strengthen the '*specificity*' the '*rootedness*' and the '*connectedness*' of food production and consumption systems. This active redesign of market relations through new roles for producers and consumers and new relations between food production and consumption has been further theorized with the help of the notions '*socio-material infrastructures*', new '*boundary organisations*' and new forms of '*common pool resources*' (Ploeg, 2012; Polman *et al.*, 2010). Also, these notions emphasize how alternative modes of rural market governance may reshape hegemonic food market forces, through their embeddedness in the specificities of products, networks and places, as different expressions of redesign that make nested rural markets fundamentally different from conventional market relations.

Finally, the analysis of the role of agriculture in rural place-making approaches the significance of redesign from a spatial perspective. The rural web framework covers the relevance of redesign particularly through its distinction between the domains '*novelty production*', '*new institutional arrangements*' and '*new rural market governance*'. It stresses as such that, similar to resistance, the spatial interaction of different types of redesign will be a crucial co-constituting force of rural competitiveness and quality of rural life.

1.4 Resilience

Resilience is thought to be a third principle feature of agrarian pathways to multi-functionality. From a policy perspective resilience entails a promise that it may be possible to leave a crisis stronger, as part of the ideological debate about the role of the state, civil society and the market in wider social ordering processes (Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling, 2013). To characterize the complexity of these processes, Boutellier (2011:152) uses the metaphor '*improvisation society*'. Similar to the essence of improvisation, social ordering processes are thought to centre on alignment through structure, synchronicity and self-organisation as three key components of resilience building in modern societies (ibid:156).

Bristow (2010:11) explains the growing popularity of resilience building notions in policy circles as follows: '*it appears timely in the context of the triple crunch of economic austerity, climate change and the onset of peak oil'.* Subsequently, it is noticed that this popularity goes along with scientific controversy around its definition, key features and linkages with concepts such as adaptability, vulnerability, resistance and competitiveness. So far, rural scholars have related resilience particularly to sustainability concerns. Dahrnhofer (2010:214), for instance, argues that '*resilience thinking offers a vision of sustainability which is not reduced to unchanging stability*'. Particularly drawing on socio-ecological resilience literature (Franklin *et al.* 2011; King, 2008; Buikstra *et al.*, 2010; Milestad & Dahrnhofer 2008; Cutter *et al.*, 2008; Walker, 2004), this dynamic nature of resilience is subsequently related to shock resilience (the ability to '*bounce back'*) and transformative resilience (the ability to '*bounce forward'*). These two fundamentally different components of resilience building are thought to interact within so-called 'adaptive cycles' of combined strategies of exploitation, absorption, adjustment and transformation (Darnhofer *et al.*, 2010). Within this broader set of components, transformative resilience is especially associated with: 1) learning to live with change and uncertainty; 2) nurturing diversity in its various forms; 3) combining different types of knowledge and learning; and 4) creating opportunities for self-organization and cross-scale linkages.

Wilson (2010) interlinks resilience directly with multifunctionality by concluding that '*multifunctionality enables the emergence of resilient and sustainable rural communities'.* He makes a distinction between resilience as an outcome and as a process '*linked to dynamic changes over time associated with community learning and the willingness of communities to take responsibility for and control of their rural development pathways*' (ibid:365-366). It attributes resilience to rural communities with agricultural activities that co-shape their economic, social and ecological capital assets. Probably not surprisingly, '*super-productivist*' or '*highly-intensive*' agricultural production systems are thought to undermine the resilience of rural communities. Contrastingly, extensive agricultural systems would enhance territorial ecological capital and the valorisation of rural amenities. Yet, Wilson also concludes that the resilience of rural communities might be increasingly divorced from agricultural production, which makes his understanding of the interrelations

between rural resilience and agricultural development somewhat less consistent and coherent.

In this thesis I will approach resilience as the overall outcome of the flows of resistance and redesign as defined before. It acknowledges the historical and still crucial role of resistance in rural development processes (Broekhuizen *et al.,* 2012; Oostindie *et al.*, 2012). Simultaneously, it recognizes that multifunctional agricultural pathways may be driven by complex and prolonged transition processes. It includes Dahrnhofers's distinction between '*bouncing back*' (i.e. the preservation of agriculture's multifunctionality) and '*bouncing forward*' (i.e. the active redesign of its multifunctionality) as two interwoven components of resilience and follows social-ecological system scholars' ideas about resilience as '*the capacity to adapt and transform for persistence*' (Folke *et al.*, 2010). It further echoes scholarly approaches which make a distinction between absorptive coping-, adaptive- and transformative capacity, to underscore that resilience may express itself through differences in intensity of change and transaction costs involved for systems (Mitchels, 2013). Together it makes it possible to understand resilience as the capacity to persist, to adapt and to transform, as specific representations of distinctive and promising alignment of social ordering processes.
The way the multifunctionality concept emerged in the Netherlands illustrates how at national level this may involve what Boutellier (2011) calls the '*politics of improvisation*' along different problem-chance dimensions. His *exclusion versus opening to other networks* appears in the increasingly narrowly defined agricultural sectoral interests within the hegemonic agricultural modernisation model versus the broadening of the core functions of agriculture within the rural development model. The *hypercontrol versus diffusion of power and opportunities* problem-chance dimension is reflected in the strength of agricultural modernisation forces versus the persistence and adaptability of multifunctional farm- development trajectories as defined within the rural development model. Finally, the *fear of chaos versus trust in new ways of normative ordering* especially pops-up in the national co-existence of contrasting sustainability views versus the (partial) rehabilitation of the societal benefits of multifunctional rural resource use. Altogether, Dutch ongoing 'politics of improvisation' reveals a certain persistence and adaptability of multifunctional pathways, as well as a still modest transformative capacity in terms of normative alignment of broader societal views on the core functions of agricultural activity.

In this same national setting, this transformative component of resilience manifests itself much more promisingly at the micro-level. Besides pluri-active and life-style farming, as well-known historical expressions of multifunctional agricultural pathways, the Netherlands knows increasingly robust, novel rural business models, i.e., multifunctional rural business models that complement agricultural income with income generation through specific sets of new rural development activities, which interact positively with further agricultural development and enhance trust in overall business perspectives. As concluded, these robust rural business models are especially grounded in the resilience of family–based farming through its capacity to: 1) create

strong interlinkages between economic and socio-cultural values as integrating forces for productive, as well as consumptive, rural functions; 2) to adapt to changing gender relations with new patterns of labour division and distribution of responsibilities; 3) to develop new professional identities with alternative strategic meanings of agricultural activity; and 4) to preserve a certain flexibility in resource use.

In the analysis of European agri-environmental governance resilience will manifest itself as self-organisation and self-regulation capacity. Additionally to more market-led approaches, this capacity manifest itself in the Netherlands also through policy experiments with alternative remuneration systems, more collective- and territory-based approaches and novel accountability arrangements at the interfaces between different policy levels and between policy actors and practioners. It is, particularly, the multi-level analytical approach that will illustrate how the resilience of multifunctional pathways interacts with institutional transformation and adaptation processes through farmer-led as wel as institutional driven attempts to mobilize experimental space and to create synchronicity, coherence and consistence within increasingly complex institutional settings (see also Renting & van der Ploeg, 2001; Roep *et al.*, 2003; Wiskerke *et al.*, 2003; Stuiver *et al.*, 2003; Stuiver & Wiskerke, 2004).

The analysis of emerging nested rural markets underpins how resilience can also appear as distinctive *market* relations, with multifunctionality as a crucial component of alternative modes of market governance that succeeds in 1) valorising and preserving product-, place- and network specificities; 2) reducing transaction costs for producers and consumers to get access to high quality food markets; 3) forging synergies between traditional and new rural markets at farm and regional levels and 4) creating spaces for co-experimentation that influences consumer behaviour. Resilience grounded in active and distinctive roles for both food producers and food consumers also appears in food studies that speak of increasingly '*reflexive consumer-citizens*' (Spaargaren & Van der Veer, 2011) or the '*moralization*' and '*civilization*' of food economies (Renting *et al.*, 2012).

Finally, the rural web analysis enables us to further depict resilience as the outcome of flows of resistance and redesign. The overall capacity of multifunctional pathways to persist, to adapt and to transform assembles here into mutually enabling, facilitating and re-enforcing interaction patterns, externalities and resource uses that characterize the strong rural web configurations that underlie rural competitiveness and the quality of rural life and that goes along with strong functional ties between rural and urban spaces. This crucial co-constituting role in the place-specific manifestation and precipitation of rural resilience will be empirically illustrated by differentiating rural web dynamics in two Dutch National Landscapes.
This introduction on agrarian pathways to multifunctionality as flows of resistance, redesign and resilience has been summarized in Box 1.3 by presenting the key notions through which these flows will be further scrutinized, analysed and characterized in forthcoming chapters. Before doing so, I will continue with some additional reflections on their temporal aspects.

	Resistance against	Redesign through	Resilience reflected in
Definitions, references and interpretations of the concept of multifunctionality in the Netherlands.	Negative externalities of the agricultural modernisation model, marginalisation of the role of agriculture in rural development.	Re-positioning of agriculture's role in rural development processes.	(Partial) rehabilitation and rediscovery of multifunctionality as a normative guide for sustainable rural and agricultural development.
Understanding the dynamics and robustness of farm-level multifunctionality.	Loss of autonomy; loss of distinctiveness; loss of labour satisfaction; loss of income; loss of professional prestige.	Re-vitalization of family-based farming; re-definition of farm boundaries; re-patterning of labour divisions; re-construction of economies of scope; synergy creation at different levels.	Persistence of alternative farm development pathways and the emergence of new rural business models, all strongly grounded in the specificities of family-based farming.
European governance of agri-environmental services: institutional voids and self-regulation initiatives.	Hypercontrol and rigidity tendencies as well as institutional voids in multi-level governance settings.	Re-distribution of responsibilities between public, private and civil actors; new forms of self- governance and self-regulation; new hybrid remuneration systems; new accountability arrangements between policy actors and practioners.	The ability to mobilize experimental space for self-governance and to create synchronicity and coherence in complex multi-level governance settings.
The central role of nested markets in rural development in Europe.	Loss of identity; loss of specificity; loss of justice; loss of trust; loss of connections; loss of commitment, etc.	Re-patterning of market relations based on the preservation and re-creation of the specificity of product, place and networks.	The appearance of alternative normative and symbolic frameworks that acknowledge agriculture's multifunctionality, with active synergy creation between food and other rural markets at different scales
The role of agriculture in rural place-making: rural web dynamics.	Loss of rural distinctiveness; loss of rural competitiveness and loss of quality of rural life.	Redesign through novelty production, new institutional arrangements and new modes of market governance.	Strong rural web configurations that transform into rural competitiveness and quality of rural life with multifunctional agricultural pathways as crucial co-constituting forces.

Box 1.3 Flows of resistance, redesign and resilience that characterize agrarian pathways to multifunctionality.

1.5 Specific interrelations between the past, present and future of farming

In addition to being characterized and propelled by flows of resistance, redesign and resilience, multifunctional pathways will be further understood as specific interrelations between the past, present and future of farming. Van der Ploeg (2009) argues that in traditional societies agriculture's future was primarily perceived as a repetition of the past '*constituted by what is tried and true*'. In modern societies, available sets of resources were increasingly understood as a series of alternatives driven by agency or '*the ability to realise one's own future projects*' and by '*faith in one's own knowledge and capacity*'. Contrastingly, postmodern society is increasingly characterized by '*disciplining that originates from the future*' and the subordination of present practices to only one possible future. '*Future resources, rather than current ones, become critical*', with expert systems as principle drivers of a '*reduction of a set of future possibilities to one exclusive alternative*'. This echoes earlier references to *hypercontrol* threats as major constraints for multifunctional agricultural pathways. The Dutch national agri-expert system may indeed have operated in the last decades primarily in line with this '*disciplining that originates from the future',* but the Dutch genesis of the multifunctionality concept simultaneously shows, especially by its distinction between co-existing and co-evolving contrasting sustainability paradigms, that a '*subordination to only one possible future*' has lost at least some of its self-evidential nature. A return to the *'multiple images of the future of agriculture'* is also more in line with network and complexity theory inspired ideas about social ordering dynamics (Boutellier, 2011) and agro-ecology scholars' thoughts about the complexity of agricultural change. Darnhofer (2010:187), for instance, stresses that agricultural and rural scholars will have to '*move away from the analytical assumptions of equilibrium thinking, centred on linearity, predictability, optimization, homogeneity and simplification*'.

This non-linear, complex and unpredictable nature of agricultural change is in different ways also confirmed by the farm-level analysis. The driving forces for the uptake of new rural development activities may change over time, which may translate into slower versus more accelerated multifunctional pathways. The recent Dutch emergence of an accelerated trajectory towards strong multifunctionality, for instance, can only be understood as the overall outcome of a highly time specific constellation of '*push*' and '*pull*' factors, covering multiple aspects as increasingly strongly present desires to '*farm differently*', newly emerging rural markets, more restricted opportunities for co-evolutionary farm development trajectories and growing, albeit slowly, institutional support in terms of learning, inspiration and facilitation. The non-linearity of agricultural change will be further related to family farm specific interests in the preservation of a certain flexibility in overall resource use that may serve different purposes such as extra space for future farm succession, the uptake of new activities due to unexpected opportunities 'to relate to others', as well as resilience building against suddenly emerging perturbations and threats.

In the analysis of European governance of agri-environmental services the temporal complexity of agricultural change will appear particularly as a synchronicity problem. The Dutch longstanding tradition of agri-environmental policy may have triggered a steadily growing institutional interest and trust in self-regulation and self-governance initiatives, but so far it turns out to be rather difficult to align these initiatives and their associated policy experiments with European regulatory frameworks. CAP's second pillar, perhaps a symbol of progressive bottom up *rural* policy delivery at the EU level, for that reason, remains in the Dutch policy setting frequently criticized for its lack of experimental space for novel, more territory- and performance-based agri-environmental provision systems, especially with respect to its accountability regulations and requirements.

The analysis of European nested rural markets confirms in other ways the specificity of the temporal aspects of agricultural processes of change. First, it emphasizes that, especially, the capacity to combine traditional and new institutional arrangements may result in distinctive modes of market governance. Secondly, it stresses that the boundaries between conventional and nested markets will be permeable and that the latter, therefore, may especially emerge, unfold and expand during periods characterized by a loss of trust in conventional food markets. It underlines as such that the future prospects of multifunctional agrarian pathways, as crucial co-constitutors of nested markets, will also be dependent on the temporal frequency and continuity of societal distrust in conventional food market actors, including their increasingly active attempts to appropriate the distinctiveness of nested markets through 'local washing' practices.

Finally, the analysis of agriculture's role in rural place making enables us to underscore that the interrelations between the past, present and future of farming will differentiate across space. *Laag-Holland* knows a relatively long history of endogenous resource valorisation, new modes of rural market governance and actively novel production, all increasingly building upon a broadly shared acceptance of multifunctionality as normative guidance for sustainable development. Such mutually re-enforcing relations, tendencies and externalities are still largely lacking in *Rivierengebied*, where a large number of farmers remain strategically dependent upon conventional markets, show clearly less interest in new modes of market governance, see less perspectives in endogenous resource use valorisation and stick to ecological modernisation as the guiding sustainability paradigm. These differences in rural web dynamics confirm that the resilience of multifunctional pathways in the Netherlands manifests itself, especially in rural areas, in early flows of resistance and redesign. In other rural areas, although perhaps with similar highly valued landscape amenities, as exemplified by Rivierengebied, this resilience may still be primarily hidden in '*counter structures*', rather vulnerable alternative web relations that face different types of tensions, conflicts and uncertainties in their interaction patterns with the hegemonic rural web configuration. Nevertheless, these provide opportunities for new '*preferential attachments*', '*competitive links*' and '*tipping points*' as initiators, drivers and accelerators of societal change in line with complexity theory (Boutellier, 2011).

1.6 Thesis Structure

The foregoing leads to the following key proposition of this thesis: 1) *agrarian pathways to multifunctionality result from, are part of and are actively propelled by specific flows of resistance, redesign and resilience;2) these pathways reflect complex, non-linear and place specific interrelations between the past, present and future of farming.*

Figure 1.1 shows how this key proposition will be further elaborated, underpinned and substantiated in forthcoming chapters. It stresses again that resilience will be approached as the overall capacity to persist, to adapt and to transform the negative externalities of modernisation and globalization. This multi-layered capacity may contribute to distinctive and promising alignment of social ordering processes and builds upon specific interrelations between the past, present and future. This central argument builds upon an extensive literature review. Empirically, it is primarily founded on the specificity of the Dutch contextual setting, although the analytical scope of Chapters 4 and 5 will extend to an European perspective on agri-environmental governance dynamics and new modes of rural market governance. Apart from being an interesting case in point, given the intensity of its agricultural modernisation forces and the concomitant intensity of societal responses, this geo-

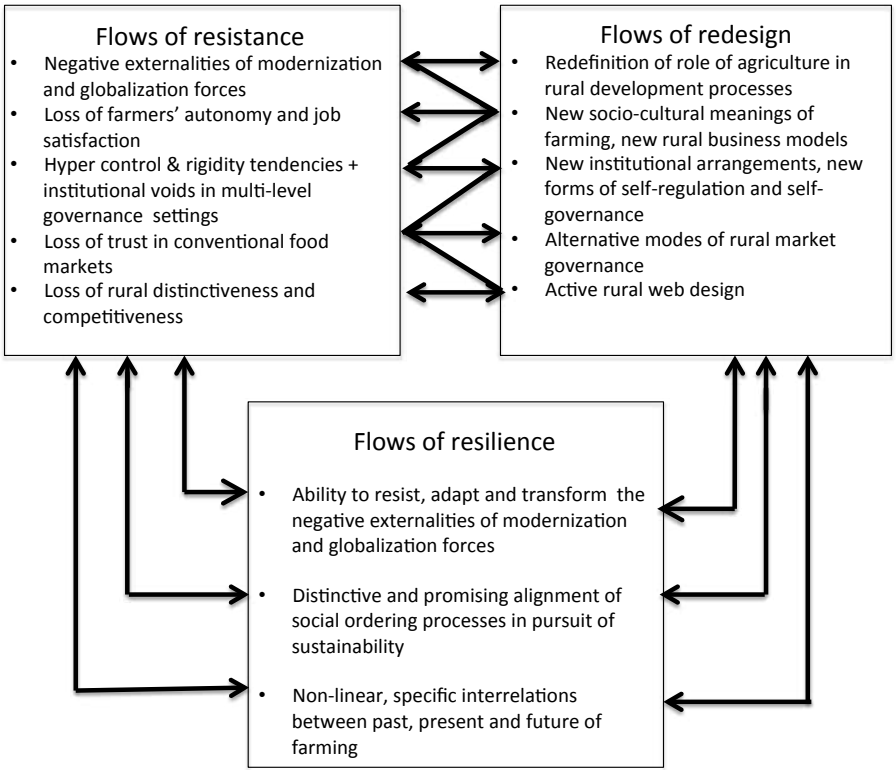

Figure 1.1 Agrarian pathways to multifunctionality as flows of resistance, redesign and resilience

graphical focus also reflects a strong personal commitment to Dutch agricultural and rural development. This same commitment also drives Chapter 7, encompassing a contemplation on the future prospects of multifunctional agrarian pathways in the Netherlands. It starts off with some of the drawbacks and other consequences of the deep and persistent national economic downturn and financial crises since 2008. This will be followed by a wider impression of their longer-term perspectives, based on available research material. In addition, a select number of institutional redesign challenges will be presented that are thought to be of great significance for these future prospects and to characterize the multi-facetted nature and complexity of involved transition processes. Finally, the last section puts the overall ambitions of this thesis into perspective by making some closing remarks on the performativity of the social sciences.

Definitions, references and interpretations of the concept of multifunctionality in The Netherlands

2

2. Definitions, references and interpretations of the concept of multifunctionality in The Netherlands[1]

Abstract

This chapter depicts how the multifunctionality notion has been approached, defined, and conceptualized in the Dutch agri-expert system. Building upon an extensive literature review, it will first reveal that this notion appeared relatively late in the national debate about the future of agriculture and its role in rural development, due to the dominance of interrelated concepts such as integrated and sustainable agriculture. Secondly, it will demonstrate that the Netherlands knows 'narrow' and 'wider' conceptualisations of agriculture's multifunctionality. In line with the OECD approach, narrow definitions focus on agriculture's provision of public goods and its changing and differential capacity to provide such public goods. In wider definitions, multifunctionality is conceptualized as part of a transition from agricultural modernisation, characterized by monofunctionality and trade-offs, towards the rural development model, with a much broader definition of the core functions of agriculture. Thirdly, the literature findings reveal that agriculture's multifunctionality in the Netherlands is clearly contested and difficult to isolate from differentiating ideas about the role of agriculture in sustainable rural and wider societal development. As will be concluded, the current co-existence and co-evolution of contrasting sustainability views makes multifunctionality a strongly normative loaded notion in the Netherlands.

1 **/** This analysis is primarily based on a literature review conducted within the European project '*Capitalisation of the research results on the multifunctionality of agriculture and rural areas*' (Multi-Agri, contract no. 505297). This project ran during the period 2004-2005 and the Dutch outcomes of this project have been earlier, in co-authorship with H. Renting and D. Roep, published in European series on Multifunctionality no. 10, 2006.

2.1 Introduction

Since the early nineties of the 20th century multifunctionality of agriculture and rural space has become a topic of international political and scientific debate. But what about the Netherlands? This chapter presents an overview of Dutch discussions with respect to the actual and future role and functions of agriculture, and how this role has been questioned and (re-) conceptualised in time in different scientific or epistemic communities. More specifically, it will demonstrate how these conceptualisations and research works relate, whether implicitly or explicitly, to the concept of multifunctional agriculture (MFA). It will start with a historical sketch of the Dutch context. The next section tracks down how agriculture and rural space have been perceived within the agricultural expert system (policy and research) and to what extent explicit references are made to the concept of MFA. A fourth section maps the main visions and positions in the Dutch debate with respect to the desirability and potential of multifunctional agriculture. The conclusion synthesizes the main features of this on-going Dutch debate.

2.2 Historical context

The modernization perspective (also referred to as rationalization or productivism and described in terms of industrialization) has dominated Dutch agriculture for decades since the 1950s. Its main aim was the production and marketing of cheap (i.e. internationally competitive) food products of standard quality (so-called bulk products, with relatively low value added) by agro-industry. Within this model, primary agriculture became a supplier of cheap raw materials for agro-industrial purposes. The increase in production volumes (scale enlargement, specialization and intensification of land use) dominated as a strategy to maintain income parity at the farm level (Roep, 2000; Ploeg, 2003a). This perspective was widely shared and advocated as the only viable strategy for farm households. It was enhanced by policy, research, education and extension (Leeuwis and Pyburn, 2002; Ploeg, 2003a; Roep and Wiskerke, 2004). Seen from this narrow perspective, Dutch agriculture has been quite successful, but the growing volume and intensity of production has also created a range of problems. The loss of nature and landscape values, due to massive reconstruction schemes of the countryside for merely productive purposes, was already questioned in the early 1970s. In 1975 this resulted in a national policy scheme for the conservation of nature and landscape on farm land, in designate areas, with acknowledged nature and landscape qualities. Income compensation payments were paid to farmers willing to conserve nature and landscape on their farms. This was referred to as an integration of agricultural production and nature and landscape conservation, as opposed to spatial segregation of functions, creating separate areas for high productive agriculture and nature reserves. Since then, these two basic strategies, integration of agriculture with nature and landscape versus segregation, have dominated the Dutch policy and research agenda, although in changing appearances (Dekker, 2002). However, from the 1980s onward, agricul-

ture was confronted with a variety of problems: environmental pollution, loss of food culture and food quality, food scandals, animal diseases, problems with animal health and animal welfare, and so on. In the meantime, society had changed as well. This was expressed in growing concerns and distrust, as well as different needs and expectations towards food production and rural areas. In the 1980s, this attention to other goals or the non-productive functions of agriculture was conceptualized in concepts like agriculture with a broader objective, integrated agriculture, alternative agriculture, followed by sustainable agriculture and multiple land use in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Modernisation was questioned more and more for its monofunctional, merely productivist perspective towards agriculture and the countryside. Modernisation, thus, increasingly ran counter to its societal limits. The obvious was questioned: agriculture needed a new '*license to produce*' from society (Frouws and Leroy, 2003). The above problems had already provoked a range of interventions, measures and restrictions to avoid or overcome these side effects: introduction of production rights and quota systems, environmental measures and emission reducing techniques, nature and landscape conservation schemes protecting valuable landscapes, animal welfare standards, food safety measures, etc. But this did not solve the problem. On the contrary, these rigid rules and regulations created new problems for agriculture: a growing administrative burden, inflexibility and increasing costs. At the same time, value added generation in the agro-industrial supply chain was under severe pressure due to bulk production, overproduction, changing consumer demands and changing policies as part of world trade negotiations. Agro-industry faced a difficult shift from bulk products for a globalising market to products with more value added. This put pressure on prices for off-farm deliverables (raw material) and, subsequently, on family farm incomes.

So, from the mid-1980s, costs at farm level increased considerably, while revenues stagnated or even decreased. This income squeeze (Ploeg *et al.*, 2000) urged farmers to look for alternative development and income strategies aside from or outside of the agro-industrial value chain. They developed and engaged themselves in several kinds of promising (new or revitalized) activities serving particular consumers or societal needs and functions: on-farm processing and direct sales, marketing of high quality products, management of nature and landscape, farm integrated care activities, organic farming, energy production, and so on. In the 1990s these strategies were conceptualised in terms of rural development activities through broadening, deepening and regrounding processes (Knickel & Renting, 2000; Ploeg & Renting, 2000; Ploeg *et al.*, 2002) and sometimes as green services (Dagevos *et al.*, 2004; Henkens & van Raffe, 2002). To some extent, farmers were encouraged to do so, e.g., by policy schemes stimulating rural innovation and subsidising related investments. However, this also resulted in controversies among farmers, politicians, scientists, agro-industry, nature conservation groups, consumer groups and other stakeholders. It triggered a continuing debate as to whether agriculture could fulfil and meet new rural needs and functions and whether this represented a promising, sustainable way out of the crisis in agriculture (a rural development perspective). Alternatively, producing raw material for the agro-industrial value chain as efficiently

as possible, by means of ongoing scale enlargement and cost price reduction, is advocated as a contrasting strategy to sustain agriculture (Labohm, 2001). This plea comes down to further modernisation that accounts for some basic social demands with respect to the environment, animal welfare and food safety in obtaining a new 'license to produce' from society, a socially responsible agriculture. Thus, it basically concerns a neo-modernisation perspective. Others, in turn, argue that an export orientated, low value added agriculture has no future in the Netherlands because it cannot compete at cost price any longer and because there are other needs and functions at stake in rural areas (e.g. residence, recreation, nature, infrastructure), backed by powerful demands from wealthy citizens, consumers, real estate developers, etc. These diverse, often conflicting spatial claims, have been studied and framed in terms of multiple use of space (Korevaar and Van Loenen, 2003; Korevaar *et al.*, 1999; Vereijken *et al.*, 2000). Although as such implicitly debated in the Netherlands, the concept of multifunctional agriculture appears only for the first time in a study by Dutch Agricultural Research institutes in 1996 (Vereijken *et al.*, 1999a; Vereijken *et al.*, 1999b). Initiated and financed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Fishery, this study follows the EU agenda for CAP adjustments in order to meet demands in world trade negotiations. In a wider context of OECD approaches that define MFA primarily in economic terms and (world) trade negotiation concerns, there are in the Netherlands only a few similar economic theory-based and policy-oriented studies (Vereijken, 2002).

2.3 Building upon interrelated conceptions of agriculture

In the Dutch agri-expert system, cyclical movements of more (70s) and less (80s) interest in the integration of agriculture with other rural functions can be noticed, with renewed attention from the nineties onwards. The first Dutch research programme that refers to multifunctionality in relation to agricultural and rural development starts in the early 90s, when five Dutch Ministries launched the research programme: Sustainable Technological Development ('*Duurzame Technologie Ontwikkeling*', in short DTO). This DTO programme aimed at sustainable technologies that also contributed to a more efficient use of scarce land resources. For that reason, multiple land use (*Meervoudig landgebruik*) was selected as one of the research themes within overall broader research fields. Thus, the concept of multifunctionality in the Netherlands was initially primarily used in relation to land-use that enabled a combination of multiple 'functions' such as nature, landscape, agriculture, tourism, residential use, etc., in a broader public, political and scientific debate about the pros and cons of spatial segregation ('*scheiding*') versus integration ('*verweving*', literally 'interweaving') of rural functions (Bloemen *et al.*, 2002; Deelstra, 2001; Gordijn, 2003, Kuhlman *et al.*, 2003; Habiforum, 2001; Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid, 2002).

The DTO project selected the Winterswijk region, located in the east of the Netherlands, as the research area to experiment with multiple land use. Through its spe-

cific policy status as a Valuable Cultural Landscape ('*Waardevol Cultuur Landschap*') the region had already gained some experience with stakeholder participation in regional policy processes aimed at integrated rural development (Akkerman, 2003). In the period 1996-1998 the DTO-project implemented eight demonstration projects around multiple land use, covering a wide variety of issues such as the integration of nature in grassland and arable farming; drinking water-storage and -management by farmers; mixed farming systems that preserved landscape values; energy and fodder production from organic waste material and new pig stable systems that integrated animal welfare concerns with energy production based on manure processing and the re-use of animal warmth.
Overall project findings showed that involved experts and policy makers valued the new insights around the potential of multiple land use but, simultaneously, noticed that multiple land use was like 'building a cathedral through a step by step approach'. The idea to experiment with drinking water management by farmers, for instance, had been frustrated by the absence of sufficient institutional guarantees for long-term financial compensation. Also, more generally, it was acknowledged that the DTO-projects tended to isolate the technological aspects of multiple land use from necessary accompanying social and institutional innovations.

2.4 Follow-up: an explorative study by the national research institutions

In 1996 a national conglomerate of agricultural research institutes started to show explicit interest in MFA when its board installed a project group to conduct an inventory study around the question: how to improve agricultural research performances in relation to multifunctional agriculture? This project group resulted in an advisory report that stressed that MFA should be conceived of as an extension of already existing, closely interrelated concepts such as Integrated Agriculture, Conservative Farming *('beheerslandbouw*') and Organic Farming, with their specific extensions of conventional farming's more limited interest in function integration (see Figure 2.1)

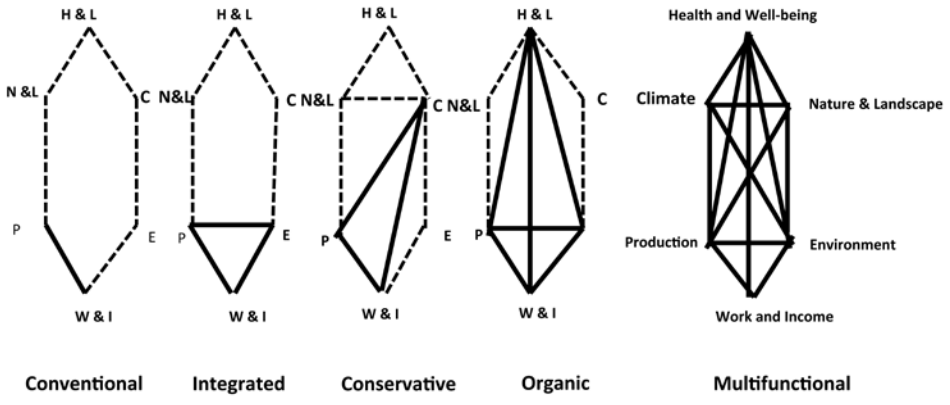

Figure 2.1 Dutch conceptions of agriculture in relation to function integration (source: Vereijken et al., 1999)

It was further concluded that MFA enables the integration of a range of new functions within agriculture through establishing new interlinkages between: 1) food production and management of rural space; 2) rural employment /income generation and the contribution to broader environmental qualities; 3) health and welfare concerns (human as well as animal); 4) rural images and identities; and 5) agriculture and nature management.

Transforming this need for new interlinkages in marketable outputs is seen as the major challenge for the agricultural sector, policy and agricultural expert system, as also expressed in the following definition of MFA: 'agriculture is multifunctional if sustainable farm management builds upon a combination of functions, in addition to food production: attention to marketable contributions to environment, nature, culture, landscape, health and welfare.' Particularly in the vicinity of urban centres, MFA is thought to provide an alternative for farm development, with the management of cultural landscape values as a crucial leverage for other MFA activities. As argued, the role of farmers in these rural regions may shift gradually from users of production space towards the managers – although not the exclusive ones - of production and consumption space. At farm-level the creation of extra value added and the provision of new rural services are identified as two distinctive innovation trajectories towards MFA. Extra value added creation is related to farmers' responses to consumers' concerns with regard to environment, health, animal welfare, as well as a growing consumer demand for regionally specific products of high quality. Nature and landscape management, agri-tourism and care facilities exemplify the provision of new rural services. It is further argued that active responses to these new societal demands will result in multifunctional rural enterprises under the following conditions: 1) the presence of clear market demands; 2) a good organisation of processing and marketing; 3) limited technological and economic risks; 4) limited physical and mental stress; and 5) a perspective for future farm generations.

These conditions illustrate that MFA is not perceived as the only trajectory towards sustainable agriculture. The advisory report indeed stresses that further vertical integration in food chains and further elaboration of high-tech solutions for environmental concerns represent other trajectories towards sustainability, also with differentiating regional potentials. Overall sustainability of MFA is thought to depend primarily on regional capacity to create new markets through new horizontal relationships between farmers, other rural entrepreneurs, rural inhabitants, consumers, interest groups, policy actors, etc. From a national perspective, therefore, MFA should be perceived as a potential for regional/rural development and not as a national policy goal in itself. Although it is acknowledged that national policy support is of relevance, for instance with regard to further development of public markets for nature and landscape management, it is simultaneously stressed that MFA will have to be above all driven by new rural markets at the regional level.

As a specific trajectory towards sustainability, it is further argued that MFA requires adaptations in the field of agricultural research. Adequate support would involve

fundamental and substantial changes in the organisation and orientation of agricultural research. The organisational aspects are summarised in the key words: more interactive, more interdisciplinary, more integrated and more intentional. Necessary re-orientation of agriculture research is especially related to the following list of topics:

Public support and co-operation with local actors;
- Farm-output remuneration, stimulation, marketing;
- Communication, extension, interaction with society;
- Function integration and farm management (organisation, labour input, equipment, administration, technology);
- Rural planning as spatial prerequisite for multifunctionality;
- Valorisation of plant and seed material: from quantity towards quality;
- The role of culture in farm-, nature- and landscape management;
- Integral management of waste material, mineral management, and water systems.

After the publication of this policy advisory report on MFA in 1999, the MFA concept hardly gained popularity in policy circles. This is probably most clearly reflected in the name-giving of subsequent overarching strategic research programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture. Only one these strategic research programmes makes explicit reference to multifunctionality. The programme 'Multifunctional Farming Systems' covers a variety of research activities around issues such as natural grasslands, functional agro-biodiversity, green care provision, agricultural nature, landscape and water management.

2.5 Negative externalities of the agricultural sector

This limited policy interest in actively embracing the MFA concept reveals some of the disputed nature of agriculture's multifunctionality in the Netherlands. In his application of the OECD-framework for MFA, Vereijken (2002) lists the following negative externalities of national agricultural sector:

- Environmental pollution by excessive mineral inputs of manure in feed and cash crops;
- Acidification of natural habitats by ammonia volatilisation;
- Desiccation of natural habitats by excessive drainage of grass and maize land;
- Environmental pollution by pesticide use in feed and cash crops;
- Global warming by greenhouse gases;
- Other environmental disturbances, such as visual landscape deterioration and odour;
- Nuisance of ugly, smelly buildings and light emission from greenhouses;
- Declining animal welfare conditions.

Additionally, and basically also in line with the OECD framework, the following six

positive externalities of agriculture are distinguished:
• Food security;
• Rural employment;
• Agro-historical landscape;
• Recreational environment;
• Natural habitats and biodiversity;
• Ground and surface water management.

These sets of negative and positive externalities are subsequently used to compare the sectoral performances of dairy farming, arable farming, greenhouse horticulture, outdoor horticulture, and pig and poultry farming. It leads to the conclusion that the overall balance in societal benefits (positive externalities) and societal costs (negative externalities) clearly differentiates between these agricultural sectors. Pig and poultry farming and greenhouse horticulture are particularly identified as agricultural activities with negative externalities such as environmental pollution, other environmental disturbances, global warming (in particular greenhouse horticulture), and the decline in animal welfare (in particular pig and poultry farming). Contrastingly, dairy and arable farming, as much more land-based farming systems, are thought to have a more positive balance of societal benefits and costs. It is further argued that not all positive externalities as distinguished by the OECD framework are of relevance for the Netherlands. Rural employment and food security, for instance, are considered as externalities of less importance. As one of the largest net food exporters in the world (export value minus import value), food security is thought to be also a non-issue in the Netherlands, politically as well as socially. As argued, more than 50% of all food products in Dutch supermarkets originate nowadays from abroad: national consumers in general show little concern for food origin. Moreover, agricultural employment only has a modest share in total rural employment, which, only in exceptional cases, exceeds 25%, due to 'autonomous' economic forces and the dominance of policy orientations on non-agricultural rural employment.

The report further expresses doubts about future social benefits of land-based agriculture. It foresees decreasing, marginal benefits in agriculture, as a consequence of liberalisation tendencies, which will lead to a further intensification of agricultural land-use and, therefore, further loss of positive externalities, the more so since Dutch policy clearly favours a non-agricultural provision of such positive externalities, e.g., by the transfer of the ecologically most valuable farm-lands to 'professional' nature conservation agencies. National institutional distrust in joint production by modern agriculture is underpinned by reference to ecological studies that conclude that nature management by professional organisations is more effective than by farmers. Also, national Water Boards (*Waterschappen*), typical Dutch institutions in charge of water resource management, have little confidence in agriculture's ability to counterbalance natural habitat desiccation caused by drainage. Moreover, as concluded by a national water-management commission, in the 21st century at least 60.000 ha of farmland will be needed for flood control measures to combat the progressive degradation and salinization of peat soils, particularly in the western

parts of the Netherlands, through the lowering of ground water levels for intensive agricultural land use and sea level rise caused by global warming. Surprisingly, given the absence of any reference to empirical evidence, it is further noticed that farmers also favour a segregation of rural functions. As argued, this will probably only change when land-based agriculture further loses its competitive strength in globalizing food markets, when national government does not succeed in purchasing sufficient land-resources for non-agricultural functions, or when costs are simply too high for separate production. In these scenarios, particularly, national dairy and arable farmers are thought to have a strong position by owning about 70% of total land-resources in rural areas.

2.6 Changing land property rights

Building on new institutional economic theory, MFA has also been approached as adaptations in land property rights due to changing societal needs (Slangen, 2003; Brouwer, 2004). A growing societal demand for environmental performances, for instance, may be accompanied by an increase of the so-called '*reference level of rural environmental qualities*' and, consequently, induce a tendency to shift land property rights to the public domain. Citizens may consider wildlife and landscape as societal needs, even if located on a farmer's land. Thus, outputs that agriculture in the past supplied for free (positive externalities) become increasingly obligatory deliveries from agriculture to society. These processes towards shifting and incomplete property rights are subsequently interrelated to the occurrence of market failures in price-setting mechanisms through the notions '*non-excludability'* and '*non-rivalry'*. Goods are 'non-rival' when a unit of the good can be consumed by one individual without decreasing, in the slightest way, consumption opportunities for the same unit for other consumers. Non-excludability of goods brings benefits available to all. Together, both concepts are the starting point for a classification of goods and services that could be more or less efficiently provided by MFA. This results in the conclusion that, particularly, societal demand for quasi-public goods and club goods require new institutional arrangements through collective actions of producers and new contracts between agriculture and groups in society. Thus, new institutional arrangements for marketable goods, with attributes that partly lie in the public domain, through the provision of quasi-public goods like wild life, landscape, water storage, etc., contribute to the safeguarding of the specificity of rural capital assets. As emphasized, this will require more territory based associations aiming at the co-ordination and motivation of producers of similar products, the development of countervailing power, the building of market power and the reduction of transaction costs. In addition to references to the national emergence of agri-environmental cooperatives (see below), this significance of new institutional arrangements is further associated with the potential of regional water storage associations with similar purposes, i.e., the creation of new redistribution mechanisms that will have to accompany changing land property rights to come to a more efficient and effective provision of new rural services.

According to these same institutional economists, MFA in the Netherlands would be still in its infancy. Empirical research reveals that farmers' motivations to opt for MFA activities such as agri-tourism, regional quality production, on-farm sales, wildlife and landscape management and pluriactivity are, above all, explained by land property rights limitations through environmental regulations, urban claims and constraining spatial planning procedures, together with additional income needs, as the second most important reason, thus, primarily '*second best*' options. Only a third, less prominently present factor, synthesized as '*socially responsible entrepreneurship'*, reflects positive drivers as the desire to meet new societal demands, to improve the regional rural image and to have closer contacts with citizens. Together this results in the conclusion that the modernisation logic remains highly dominant among the Dutch farming population, as also clearly manifested in on-going concentration tendencies of agricultural production volumes and farmers' strategic preferences for scale enlargement, cost-price reduction and alliances with supplying and processing agribusiness industries. Their rather successful defence of land property rights would be further expressed in rural coalitions such as 'Friends of the Countryside' ('*Vrienden van het Platteland'*) and 'Farmers Citizens Allies ('*Boeren Burgers Bondgenoten*'). Both are primarily perceived as social movements that intend to maintain the status quo of land property rights. It illustrates how MFA is above all understood as defensive reactions against institutionally driven process of change rather than associated with pro-active and positive responses to changing societal demands.

2.7 MFA as the basis for rural development

It is especially the Rural Sociology Group within Wageningen University and Research Centre that has elaborated theoretical approaches and provided empirical research of relevance for MFA. Particularly its publication of 'The Atlas of Rural Renewal', with 200 examples of promising and inspiring farmers-led rural development initiatives (Broekhuizen *et al.*, 1997), generated a lot of policy and wider societal interest. More generally this Rural Sociology Group builds upon a longstanding tradition of national and international research on agriculture's heterogeneity, rooted in theoretical perspectives such as social constructivism, actor-network theory and the farming style approach. Since the late 1980s this also covers in-depth analysis of intra-regional styles in relation to policy relevant issues such as agri-environmental problems, integration of agriculture with nature and landscape management, rural employment, etc. This research criticizes the logic and outcomes of the agricultural modernisation model and introduces an alternative for European and Dutch agricultural systems and the countryside with specific attention to:

- The changing interrelations between agriculture and society;
- The search for and the unfolding of a new development model for the agricultural sector;
- The redefinition of identities, strategies, practices, interrelations and networks at

the level of the farm household;
- New forms and mechanisms for co-ordination and conflict management within the countryside;
- The interrelations between policy and institutions.

Taken together this multi-level, multi-player and multi-faceted nature of rural development is considered to entail a paradigm shift in relation to agricultural modernisation (Ploeg *et al.*, 2002). This paradigm shift includes the transformation of monofunctional farms, characteristic for agricultural modernisation, into multifunctional farm businesses, analytically developing along the three distinctive dimensions of farming, as schematically presented in Figure 2.2. It highlights that, within a MFA setting, agriculture is frequently only one element of farm household activities, and that farm households may apply different patterns of resource use and income generation. This interdependency of income sources and resource use at the farm household level implies that, in practice, pluriactivity and multifunctionality may be closely interwoven and only distinguishable at the conceptual level. Pluriactivity, therefore, is also perceived as a crucial component of rural development, as nicely expressed in the following: '*once an expression of poverty and deficient agriculture, pluriactivity is re-defining the relationship between the countryside and towns in an entirely new way. Pluriactivity becomes more and more an expression of wealth, and as such is increasingly associated with the transfer of resources from the urban to the rural*' (Ploeg *et al.*, 2002).

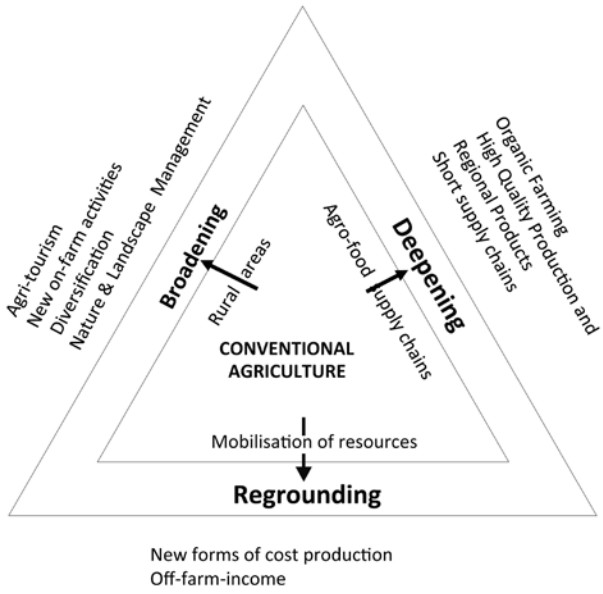

Figure 2.2 Three dimensions of rural development (source: Ploeg et al., 2002).

New forms of cost reduction represent similar reconfigurations of resource use and mobilisation within the rural development model, in the sense that these enable withdrawal from modernisation logics that prescribe and sanction an increased dependency on external inputs, expensive technologies and a reconfiguration of the farm to accommodate the newest technologies.
As observed, increasingly farmers perceive this modernisation 'script' as a driver of self-marginalisation and entrapment and, therefore, opt for alternative strategies based on low external input agriculture, e.g., as expressed in the 'farming economically' style. This strategy is founded in the multiple use and valorisation of internal farm resources and, therefore, is considered as a defence line against declining economic margins, as more ecologically sustainable, and as a promising starting point for the simultaneous development of new rural development practices. Both pluriactivity and new forms of cost reduction may become, therefore, mechanisms to reground the resource use within farming in ways that contribute to rural development.

The rural development paradigm has been underpinned with a broad spectrum of empirical research, including socio-economic impact studies at the European scale level (see e.g. Ploeg *et al.*, 2002; Oostindie & Parrot, 2002). These studies demonstrate how a large number of European farm households are indeed actively involved in deepening, broadening and regrounding activities. The same studies reveal that Dutch farm enterprises generate, particularly, additional farm income through regrounding activities. National socio-economic impact of deepening and broadening is relatively low compared to other EU member states such as Germany, Italy and France. It reflects the strength of agricultural modernisation forces and, therefore, less favourable institutional and policy settings. Dutch farmers, indeed, consider the latter to be major hindrances for further development of their MFA activities, which would be primarily driven by 1) new market opportunities; 2) personal skills and interests; and 3) income needs (Oostindie *et al.*, 2002).

The socio-economic impact of MFA, as defined within the rural development paradigm, has been analysed at different scale levels (Ploeg, 1999; Ploeg, 2000; Ham, 2001; Ham, 1999), as well as for specific MFA expressions (Ecorys, 2009; Vogelzang *et al.*, 2004; Leneman & Graveland, 2004; Beveren *et al.*, 2003; Boer *et al.*, 2003; Meeuwsen *et al.*, 2000; Minnesma & Hisschemoller, 2003; Vlieger *et al.*, 1999; Oostindie & Peters, 1994). These studies frequently refer to the significance of synergy construction as a success factor for MFA and rural development. Whilst modernisation accentuates the segregation of agriculture from other rural activities, MFA as defined within the rural development model, highlights the ability to create mutual benefits and win-win situations between different rural activities. For instance, the uptake of processing and direct marketing may induce a re-orientation towards high quality food. Involvement in nature and landscape management may trigger a later conversion to organic farming, followed by direct marketing and/or on-farm processing. Agri-tourism may be in time combined with direct marketing, etc. Beyond the farm-level, this ability to create synergies requires new coalitions between farmers

and other rural entrepreneurs, nature and landscape organisations, rural dwellers, urban residents, etc. (Knickel *et al.*, 2002; Brunori *et al.*, 2002).

Rural development scholars underline in different ways the importance of new, more territory based forms of cooperation. In the Netherlands this is particularly articulated by emerging agri-environmental co-operatives, broadly defined as '*innovative associations of farmers based at local or regional level, which promote and organise activities related to sustainable agriculture and rural development in their locale*' (Renting *et al.*, 2001). Their crucial role in terms of new policy-practice interfaces and new learning communities has been emphasized from multiple theoretical perspectives (Joldersma *et al.*, 2009; Polman and Slangen, 2003; Huylenbroeck and Slangen, 2003; Ham, 2002; Oerlemans *et al.*, 2001; Polman and Slangen, 2001; Guldemond and Terwan, 2001; Hansman *et al.*, 1999). As new institutional arrangements facilitating returns to MFA, these farmers-led initiatives are to different degrees supported by more territory based rural governance experiments (see e.g. Boonstra *et al.*, 2004; Hajer *et al.*, 2004; Frouws, 2001; Frouws and Tatenhove, 2001; Huylenbroeck and Slangen, 2003; Frouws and Leroy 2003; Raad voor het Landelijk Gebied, 1999; Raad voor het Landelijk Gebied, 2004; Ploeg *et al.*, 2002; Nederlands Instituut voor Zorg en Welzijn, 2003). This body of literature points to a growing institutional acknowledgement of the need for rural function integration, albeit to different degrees, operationalized in line with the rural development perspective.

2.8. Green services

The Dutch MFA debate is further articulated in discussions about agriculture's provision of green services (Vreke, 2006; Bommel *et al.*, 2003; Dagevos *et al.*, 2004; Kloen *et al.*, 2001; Stichting Natuur en Milieu, 2002; Terwan *et al.*, 2003). This debate centres on following key questions: what kind of green services can agriculture provide and how to remunerate these services? Again, this debate is also characterized by a wide spectrum of ideas and opinions (Janssen, 2002; Hofsink & Borgstein, 2001; Corporaal, 2002 and 2003; Diederen *et al*, 2002; Hansman *et al*, 1999; Hollander, 2000; Leneman *et al*, 2004; Leneman & Graveland, 2004; Opdam & Geertsema, 2002; Overbeek & Selnes, 2002; Overbeek *et al*, 2002; Padt *et al*, 2002; Ploeg, 2000; Raad van het Landelijk Gebied, 1999, 2000 and 2003; Reik, 2003; Stortelder *et al*, 2001; Verschuur *et al*, 2002; Elbersen *et al*, 2001). All these studies explore the opportunities and limitations of new policy instruments for agriculture's provision of green services, including the potentials of compensation mechanisms between economically stronger (dwelling, tourism, leisure, etc.) and weaker rural functions (nature, landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage, etc.). These so-called Red for Green constructions condition regulatory space for rural economic activity ('the red') to a certain willingness to invest in the preservation and strengthening of nature and landscape values ('the green'). It exemplifies the wider exploration of new-public-private partnerships around rural function integration (Bommel *et al.*, 2003; Diederen *et al.*,

2002; Raad voor het Landelijk Gebied, 2004; Vogelzang *et al.*, 2004; Verschuur *et al.*, 2003; Wagemans, 2004). In practice, their implementation, however, turns out to be all but simple, due to multi-level governance complexities (Evers *et al.*, 2003). So far, promising new remuneration mechanisms for agri-environmental services continue to be scarce, although, certainly, interesting experiments can be witnessed (see Chapter 4). Scenario studies with the ambition to forecast the long term future of the Dutch agricultural sector interlink the provision of green services with the following wider transition processes: 1) future farm structures ('*will family farms survive*?'); 2) new producer positions in food supply chains ('*will farmers become franchisers and stockholders of agri-food-businesses*?') and 3) relationships between farmers and the wider society ('*will regional consumer groups become stockholders of farms*?'). These studies further emphasize that MFA is intrinsically related to new arrangements between institutional settings, agriculture and society at large (Weijde & Verschuur, 2001; Weijde & Hees, 2002).

2.9. Debating multifunctional agriculture: desirability and potential

The foregoing review of the national body of literature shows how MFA in the Netherlands is the subject of debate within broader perspectives regarding the role and functions of agriculture. This debate centres, first, around the following empirical question: *how multifunctional is agriculture*? In the rural development perspective agriculture is conceived as having the intrinsic potential to develop multifunctional activities, due to the specific interlinkages between farming, ecology and society constructed throughout history and as a result of co-production between man and nature (Knickel *et al.* 2000; Marsden *et al.* 2001; Ploeg *et al.* 2000; Ploeg, 2003). Although it is recognised that actual performance of agriculture in providing multiple functions will differentiate between farming types and strategies, there is a strong belief that by responding to new consumer markets and societal demands agriculture's multifunctionality may be reinforced and further expanded, with the new, multifunctional rural development practices taken up by growing categories of farms as the promising expressions of this.

Other parts of the national agricultural expert system focus more on the negative externalities of modern agriculture and its poor performance in the preservation of rural environmental qualities. These stress the absence of adequate market co-ordination and price-setting mechanisms for the agricultural provisioning of (quasi) public goods, or assume that farmers prefer further development along the lines of modernisation (Slangen, 2004; Vereijken *et al.*, 2000; Vereijken *et al.*, 2002). This often results in the conclusion that modern agriculture is basically mono-functional or will increasingly become so in the future. These different positions intersect with a second, normative question: *how multifunctional should agriculture become*? Again, also with regard to this second question, positions clearly diverge (Berendse, 2003; Blok *et al.*, 2003; Dekker, 2002; Wolleswinkel *et al.*, 2004). The rural development perspective holds a strong positive position towards the desirability and po-

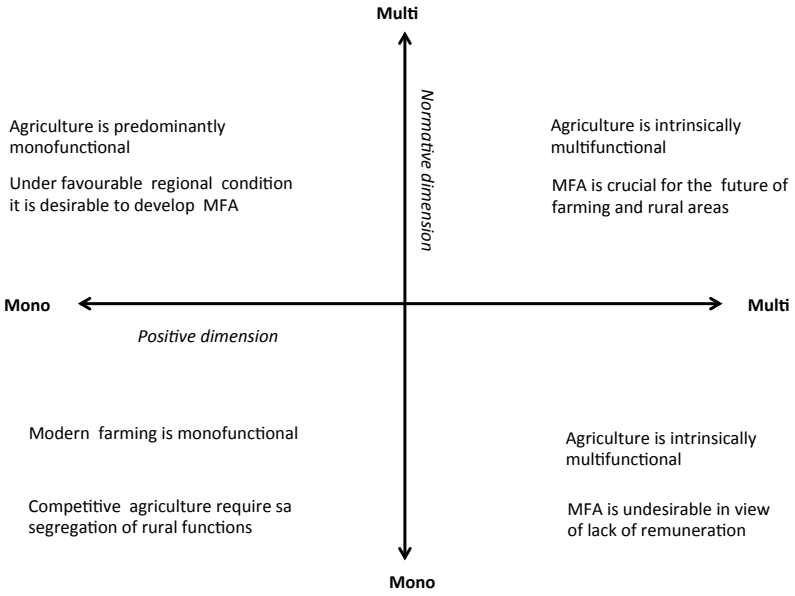

Figure 2.3 Different positions in the debate on MFA in the Netherlands.

tential of MFA. Farm households' cultural, social and human capital are perceived as crucial assets for the maintenance and development of attractive rural areas, and a further strengthening of these is considered to offer great potential, not only for the agricultural sector itself, but also for society at large through the integration and the creation of synergies for other rural land-uses. This perspective is opposed to proponents of a progressive segregation of rural functions. In extreme versions these may hold the opinion that a complete disappearance of agricultural activity may be most beneficial for the provision of new rural functions, such as nature reserves, residential areas and leisure parks. In more moderate views a segregation of rural functions may be advocated by stressing that Dutch agriculture needs sufficient rural space without restrictions that might undermine its competitiveness.

Figure 2.3 schematically visualises the Dutch debate by distinguishing different positions alongside these two dimensions: the positive one (*how multifunctional is agriculture intrinsically?*) and the normative one (*how multifunctional should agriculture be?*). The figure shows, first, the sharply contrasting and divergent positions between the rural development approach (positive on both dimensions) and the agricultural modernisation model (negative on both dimensions). Other positions are less outspoken. In the upper-left quadrant modern agriculture is predominantly characterised as mono-functional, but under specific, favourable regional conditions (e.g. in valuable rural landscapes) it may be socially desirable to stimulate MFA (Ruimtelijk Planbureau, 2005 and 2008). The lower-right quadrant reflects the mirror image of this position. Here agriculture may be seen as intrinsically multifunctional

but simultaneously surrounded by insufficiently attractive and sustainable markets which makes it an undesirable farm development trajectory.

More generally, advocates of the rural development model can be particularly found outside the official agricultural expert system. Its social basis is found amongst the rural population, including the growing number of farmers actively engaged in MFA and newly emerging rural coalitions around nature and landscape management, rural and agri-tourism, regional typical food, care provisions, etc. Additionally, provincial and municipal administrations may show a growing interest in MFA. At the national level, the former advisory Council for Rural Areas of the Ministry of Agriculture, particularly in its first eight years of existence, most prominently supported MFA ideas, while a number of national ecology groups also hold favourable positions. Contrastingly, national agri-businesses, private as well as cooperative, are powerful advocates of further modernisation based on a segregation of rural functions. In their opinion, this is the only way to guarantee the future competitiveness of the Dutch agricultural sector and to defend its position in export markets. The National Farmers Union (LTO) takes a more ambiguous position, although for pragmatic reasons it might mostly opt for segregation scenarios. At the regional level, the position of farmer interest groups is more diverse; regional LTO sections are frequently more in favour of MFA, although they are still probably best classified as 'pessimist' advocates of MFA (lower-right quadrant).
A choice for the segregation of rural functions is frequently justified by representatives of the agricultural expert system that underline the poor environmental performance of modern agriculture. For the same reason, national nature conservation organisations mostly favour rural segregation. Extreme proponents of this scenario may be found among rural estate developers, rural planners and urban economists that favour a complete expropriation of land-based agriculture. These prefer to transform rural areas into consumption spaces for urban dwellers or to use rural space exclusively for nature- and water management.

The National Ministry of Agriculture, since 2010 part of the new Ministry of Economic Affairs, Innovation and Agriculture, holds the position that modern agriculture is predominantly mono-functional but that MFA could be desirable under certain conditions (upper-left quadrant), as above all expressed by the advisory reports of its (formally privatized) research centres. These conditions may include valuable landscapes, urban fringes or rural areas with strong support for MFA among regional stakeholders. Thus, MFA is not thought to be an explicit part of national policy, but only under special conditions to be promoted as part of regional rural development. This puts earlier references to national interest in green rural services in a somewhat different perspective. These are not only an indication of a growing societal awareness for agriculture's intrinsic multifunctionality, but simultaneously reveal national concerns regarding the absence of adequate co-ordination and remuneration mechanisms for agriculture's provision of public goods (lower-right position). In this position particularly farmers can be found with a general distrust of the state apparatus. In their opinion, public goods markets are too vulnerable for policy interven-

tions. Other farmers may motivate for this position by a lack of confidence in extra value added creation through more farm-based distinctive food qualities (organic, regional, better animal welfare performances, etc.).

Together the foregoing may be synthesized by following three fundamentally different positions with respect to the future role of agriculture in the Netherlands:

- The neo-modernisation perspective understands agriculture, both in analytical and normative terms, as a predominantly mono-functional activity driven by globalizing food supply chains and global competitiveness. Mono-functionality and further scale enlargement are unavoidable necessities to increase economic efficiency and to safeguard the global competitiveness of the national agro-industrial sector. Multifunctionality, therefore, has to be organized on a higher scale through a spatial segregation of rural functions that enables undisturbed agricultural growth at the farm level, without the burden to fulfil other rural functions.
- The rural development perspective, in sharp contrast, perceives agriculture as inherently multifunctional. As a technologically mediated interaction between man and nature it co-produces by definition different kinds (known and unknown, intended and unintended, desired and undesired, positive or negative) of social and material effects. It argues that agriculture has intrinsically the potential to integrate multiple rural functions of a diverse nature, including non-food, non-agrarian and non-land-based ones. At the same time, it is acknowledged that agriculture has to deal with price squeeze tendencies, rising costs and a reduction of added value shares in agro-industrial chains. The contribution of agriculture to new societal demands is thus seen as highly relevant to the future of farming and to maintaining and strengthening the attractiveness, distinctiveness and liveability of rural areas. New or revived farm-based rural development activities along the dimensions of broadening, deepening and regrounding are crucial components to sustain farm incomes, to strengthen rural economies and to respond proactively to new societal demands at large (Ploeg *et al.*, 2002).
- A third perspective foresees rural areas without any agricultural activity due to a combination of agro-industrial value chains that are less competitive in globalizing food markets and the presence of powerful urban claims for new rural functions (Vereijken & Agricola, 2004; Pols *et al*, 2005). This perspective emphasizes the urge for fundamental change to respond to changing conditions, as well as the complexity to realize necessary technical and institutional processes of change (Roep & Wiskerke, 2004).

Together the simultaneous presence of these three views, both in theory and practice, translates into manifold uncertainties, including a rather ambiguous institutional setting where neo-modernization forces are prominently present, but contrasting agricultural and rural perspectives may be supported at the same time (see e.g. Chapter 6). Put differently, the national expert system '*sits on the fence, runs with the hare and hunts with the hounds*'. This confusing situation goes along with differentiating rural spaces. Some rural areas may face a concentration of agricultural

modernization tendencies (thus practically monofunctional); others may increasingly succeed in integrating agricultural activity with other rural functions (see Chapter 6); whereas, in a third category of rural areas, there may be hardly any place for professional agricultural activity at all.

2.10 Conclusion

The MFA concept in the Netherlands has to be positioned within broader debates on the contribution of agriculture to rural development and its relation to society at large. Within the Dutch agricultural expert system scientific discourses on the future of farming and rural areas have been dominated by - more or less interrelated - concepts such as sustainable agriculture, rural development, the deepening, broadening and regrounding of farm activities, rural entrepreneurship and green services. The MFA concept is especially associated with the potential of public and private markets as responses to new societal demands with regard to agriculture and rural areas. Amongst these, especially, nature and landscape management, water management, tourism and leisure, and care provisioning receive a lot of attention.

That the multiple functions and uses of rural spaces have been predominantly analysed with alternative concepts, reflects the manifold Dutch claims about scarce land resources, severe agri-environmental concerns, as well as the co-existence of contrasting perspectives on sustainable agricultural and rural development. Actual and potential benefits of rural function integration have been perceived rather differently and this explains why the MFA concept in the Netherlands gets a more explicit and prominent place in national rural policy discourse only from 2008. At that time, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality took the decision to launch a National Task-force for Multifunctional Agriculture, a multi-stakeholder platform that aims to join forces between practioners, policy-makers and the national MFA research community. As part of its broader objectives to professionalize and up-scale the national '*MFA sector*', this Task-force targets doubling the national turnover of this MFA sector in a period of 4 years. For optimists its launching affirms the growing national political influence of MFA practioners and proponents, as well as a growing wider societal awareness of the benefits of MFA. Yet, for pessimists, the same Task-force is a confirmation of the ambiguities within the overall national institutional setting, given its overly ambitious target formulation for a too short time-period, which certainly should not be mistaken for a genuine and deeply rooted policy interest in enhancing national MFA prospects (see also Chapter 7).

Understanding farm-level multifunctionality: multiple pathways and the resilience of family-based farming

3

3. Understanding farm-level multifunctionality: multiple pathways and the resilience of family-based farming[1]

Abstract

Farm-level multifunctionality has been theorized differently in rural studies. Rural development scholars associate multifunctionality with the specificities and resilience of family farms. Transition theory scholars, in turn, underscore the relevance of changing balances in productivist versus non-productivist thinking and acting. The key argument of this article will be that, particularly in combination, these theoretical strands allow a comprehensive understanding of farm-level functionality. After a general introduction to the relevance of different farm-types in relation to agriculture's multifunctionality, this will be further empirically illustrated by Dutch research findings. This empirical material enables a distinction between differentiating farm-level pathways towards multifunctionality as overall outcome of complex interplays between 1) underlying driving forces of new rural development farm activities, 2) the lifespan of new farm activities, 3) farm organizational characteristics and 4) the overall interaction between farm activities. As will be concluded, the outcomes of these interplays translate into more or less robust multifunctional pathways. More recently, the emergence of an accelerated transition trajectory towards strong multifunctionality in the Dutch contextual setting will be understood as a reflection of deteriorating opportunities for more co–evolutionary farm-development trajectories, as well as a clear confirmation of the resilience of Dutch family-farms in terms of capacity to preserve multifunctional pathways.

1 / This chapter integrates a literature review within the European project '*Capitalisation of the research results on the multifunctionality of agriculture and rural areas*' (Multi-Agri, contract no. 505297, 2004-2005) and empirical data collection within the Dutch research programme '*Dynamiek en Robuustheid van Multifunctionele Landbouw*', commissioned by the National Task-Force Multifunctional Agriculture and conducted by the Rural Sociology Chair of Wageningen University in the period 2010-2011.

3.1 Introduction

The rural development paradigm approaches farm-level multifunctionality as a set of traditional and new defence mechanisms against the '*race to the bottom*' and the '*treadmill*' inherent in agricultural modernisation forces. These defence-mechanisms are conceptualized as a re-positioning: '*the redefinition and reconstruction of the interrelations between agricultural production and (output) markets through, e.g., farm diversification and the 're-internalization' of farm tasks and activities increasingly externalized to outside institutions during agricultural modernisation processes*' (Ploeg, 2006: 269). It is through practices of deepening (e.g. farm based distinctive food quality) and broadening (engagement in new rural markets and services) that farmers express a certain capacity to re-position their farming practices vis-à-vis agricultural modernisation forces, through rural development practices grounded in mixed resource bases and multiple uses of single resources. It is especially this multiple use of farm resources that enables opposition to the 'logic of hegemonic food markets' and the 'rigidities of prevailing socio-technical regimes' (Roep, 2000). It makes multifunctionality an alternative ordering principle that translates into a range of farm-level benefits as different types of cost reductions, economies of scope and higher value added per unit of production.

The rural development paradigm stresses as such the significance of diversity. Different from agricultural modernisation theories that start from binary farm-categories such as 'vanguards' and 'laggards' (farmers that will survive and those that sooner or later will have to abandon agriculture), it is emphasized that a wide array of farm-types may contribute to rural development. Figure 3.1 introduces a range of farm categories that deserve a place in the analysis of multifunctional agricultural pathways along the following two dimensions: 1) the centrality of food production versus diversification into activities other than food production (horizontal axis) and 2) the dependence of household members on income generated by farm / firm activities versus the existence of off-firm income from other activities (vertical axis). Together the two dimensions allow for the distinction of a range of relevant farm categories that will be introduced in the following sections.

3.2 Pluri-active farm-enterprises

The combination of agricultural activities with other income activities off the farm appears on the research agenda in the 1970s, and has been studied, especially in the 1980s, under a variety of headings such as part-time farming, pluriactivity and – more recently- the presence of other gainful activities. While initially mainly considered a temporary farm household adjustment, by now pluriactivity is widely accepted as a structural phenomenon that is prevalent throughout Europe (Arkleton Trust, 1989; Fuller, 1990; McKinnon *et al.*, 1991). These studies confirm a great diversity of income strategies amongst farm household and that pluriactivity is often of a stable or at least a persistent nature. Although there are very few empirical studies on the

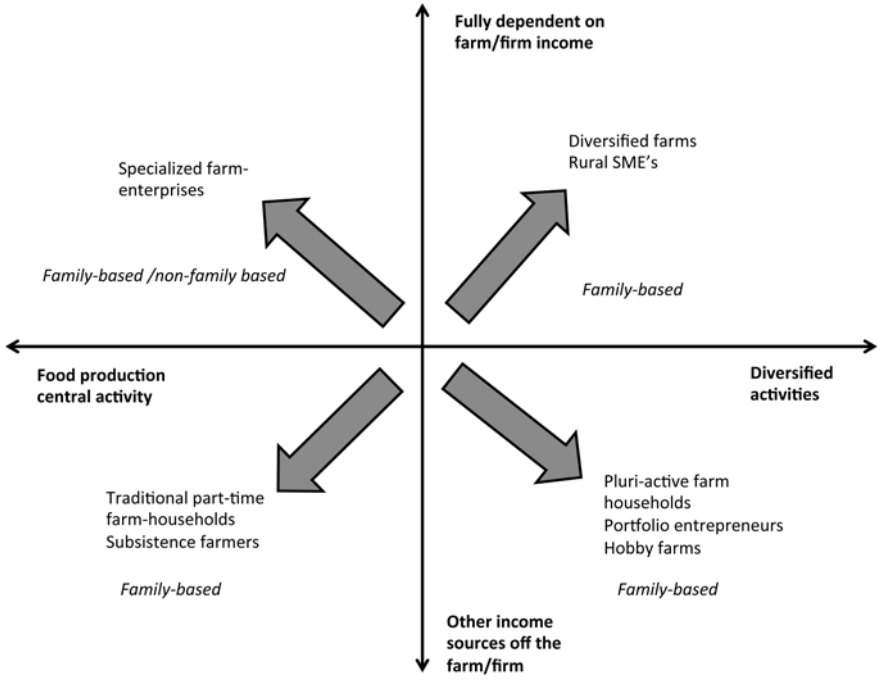

Figure 3.1 Differentiating farm development trajectories

continuity on pluriactive farms (see e.g. Gidarakou, 1990; Jervell, 1999), trends in available statistics leave no doubt that pluriactivity is more than a transitory phenomenon in the movement towards agricultural modernization.

Some studies conclude that the ecological effects of pluriactive household strategies are diverse, and that their (positive / negative) externalities are to be addressed from different points of view. Some suggest a positive relationship between pluriactivity, and nature and landscape quality, due to a supposed decrease in market pressure (Gasson, 1988). Munton *et al*. (1989) demonstrate that the implications of pluriactivity for the landscape might be highly differentiated, ranging from better performances for hedgerow and shrub maintenance on some farms to others where efforts to intensify production led to environmentally hazardous practices. Also, less labour availability on pluriactive farms may result in the neglect of landscape elements that require active management. Primdahl (1999) found that pluriactive farms are more active in changing the landscape than farms fully oriented on food production, indicating that current landscape changes are only partly linked to production functions and that impacts may be of a very diverse (positive / negative) nature. Pluriactive farms might also participate in agri-environmental conservation schemes (De Jong, 2001). Other scholars stress that pluriactivity of individuals and the combination of occupational activities within households may correspond to very different motivations (Laurent *et al*, 1994). For a long time, pluriactivity was

merely an economic adaptation strategy, adopted by households to combat worsening market conditions and, as such, was an expression of poverty and 'insufficient agriculture' (Etxezarreta, 1985). This approach, however, turned out to be increasingly inadequate to explain the perseverance and rationale of pluriactivity. It neglected the significance of socio-cultural motives and part-time farming as the outcome of new rural lifestyles (Barlett, 1986) or new rural identities (Eikeland, 1999; Blanchemanche, 2000), including their importance for understanding differences in landscape management practices (Busck, 2002). Other studies (e.g. Kinsella *et al.*, 2000) conclude that pluriactivity may also strengthen the interrelations between rural and urban areas by stimulating new producer-consumer networks and by improving mutual understanding and appreciation of lifestyles.

3.3 Diversified farms and rural SME's

From the late 1980s farm diversification attracted growing scientific interest as an alternative farm development trajectory that is different from the modernization model. Research under this heading focused on a variety of on-farm activities other than food production, ranging from the cultivation of unconventional crops to the provisioning of services for tourism / leisure purposes (agri-tourism) and the processing and marketing of quality foods. Wider definitions of farm diversification included off-farm non-agricultural income generating activity and, therefore, overlapped with part-time farming / pluriactivity (Meert et *al.*, 2005; Feher and Szepesy, 2003; Evans and Ilbery, 1993). Some studies focused on the situation in Less Favoured Areas and on the potential role of diversification as an alternative strategy for sustaining farm livelihoods and rural economies in disadvantaged regions (Ilbery, 1988). Others analysed the range of factors that impacted on the success or failure of diversification activities, including the nature of institutional frameworks and decision-making processes within the farm household (Benjamin, 1994; Capt, 1993; Giraud, 2001; Winter & Turner, 2003). Several European projects studied farm diversification from a comparative perspective (Layton and Rislund, 2002; Viladomiou and Rosell, 2002; Revel *et al.*, 2002), including its relevance in the context of CEE countries (Chaplin *et al.*, 2004; Davidova and Chaplin, 2004). This research contributed to a better understanding of the driving forces and motivations of farm households to engage in diversification and their capacity to respond to changing socio-economic conditions. It further provided insight into the variety of diversification activities in different contexts across Europe. Yet, relatively little is known about the long term economic sustainability of diversification trajectories as expressed in ongoing debates on the question as to what extent these can survive overall globalisation and market liberalisation tendencies, and to what extent these practices are structurally rooted among European farm populations or, rather, represent a conjunctural phenomenon (Goodman, 2004; Ploeg and Renting, 2004; Walford, 2003; Evans *et al.*, 2004; Wilson, 2001).

Also non-agrarian Small and Medium Enterprises in rural areas may be of impor-

tance for the prospects of multifunctional agricultural pathways. A clear example concerns the role of small scale food processing and marketing firms in alternative food supply chains that generate premium prices in comparison to industrialised supply chains (De Roest, 2000; Borch & Iveland, 1998). The project 'Supply Chains Linking Food SMEs in Europe's Lagging Rural Regions' (SUPPLIERS) provided ample empirical evidence of the positive contribution of food SMEs to multifunctionality and rural development across Europe (Brannigan & Leat, 2003). It concludes that the impact of SMEs varies significantly between regions, and depends on the degree of *territorial embeddedness,* thereby referring to factors like the use of regional imagery for marketing, the integration of SMEs with other actors in regional economic networks, and the redistribution of value added within rural areas (Brannigan, 2005). Another SME related topic concerns the conversion of farm buildings which, e.g., in the Netherlands received considerable attention (Vaart, 1999). These studies point to a growing demand for residence-work locations in rural areas among people with a rural and also, increasingly, an urban background and foresee, on the basis of agricultural scale-enlargement trends, a growing amount of redundant farm buildings in coming decades. Others focus on policy questions as to what types of non-agrarian activities to allow in redundant farm buildings, and how to regulate conversion in spatial planning procedures (Pilkes & Veeneklaas, 2002). These studies suggest that a rigid distinction between agricultural and other economic activities is increasingly at odds with the diversity of rural economies, and advocate alternative, more flexible policy instruments to assess the suitability of agricultural and non-agricultural activities, according to their contribution to wider rural development objectives by means of *'rural proofing'*.

3.4 Specialized farms (family-based and non-family based)

The aforegoing review implicitly assumes that European agriculture is predominantly based on family-based enterprises, with multifunctional agricultural pathways as strategic adjustments of farm households to changing market and policy conditions. However, the evolving structure of European agriculture also calls for explicit attention to the multifunctionality of large scale, non-family based farms. The involvement of large scale farms in diversification activities in many CEE countries appears to be remarkably high (Heinonen & Granberg, 2005). This is partly due to historical factors, since in many countries state enterprises also had functions other than food and fibre production (social welfare, construction, food and non-food processing, etc.). During the transition period diversification has been an important strategy for many large-scale farms to survive in an uncertain economic environment. Thus, multifunctionality is certainly not an exclusive property of family farming. Particularly for new farm based rural development activities, such as on-farm processing and organic farming, scale advantages may be favourable for making critical investments and building networks with downstream supply chain parties (Ohvril, 2005). Another tendency concerns the growing role of large-scale farms in 'old' EU member states due to ongoing processes of scale enlargement and concentration. EUROSTAT data

indicate that in 2003in countries like Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, the UK and France 10-30% of holdings had an economic size of 100 ESU or more. These scale enlargement tendencies have given rise to different perspectives on the role of both family, as well as non-family, based farming in sustainable rural development.

3.5 Traditional part-time farms and subsistence farms

The last category in Figure 3.1 consists of subsistence farms which, especially in CEE countries, play an important role in prevailing farm structures and were extremely important both for rural and urban populations during the 1990s. EUROSTAT data show that small farms are especially important in countries like Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and the Slovak republic, where 59-81% of all holdings have an economic size below 1 ESU. At the same time, these farm units comprise a significant part of the total farm population (up to 52% in Hungary) and together use considerable shares of agricultural land (up to 32% in Latvia). Moreover, small-scale farming is not confined to CEE countries: in Italy, Greece and Portugal holdings below 1 ESU make up more than 20% of all farms. Subsistence farming may play an important socio-economic role in rural development, by providing a buffer against social exclusion and poverty in difficult economic periods. Also, household plots are often owned by urban people and provide an important tie between towns and countryside. Additionally, the considerable share of small-scale farms in total land use raises important questions concerning their potential role in relation to the preservation of rural landscapes and biodiversity.

3.6 Multiple pathways

The foregoing underlines the relevance of different farm-types in relation to agriculture's multifunctionality but provides little insight into how farm-level multifunctionality may evolve in time. Different theoretical strands may be helpful in that respect. The farming style concept draws specific attention to the relevance of '*style-specific trajectories of change*'. As '*strategically constructed patterns of coherence*' farming styles represent '*a coherent set of notions about the way in which farming should be practiced*' (Ploeg, 2003: 101). Building upon specific '*cultural repertoires*', farming styles entail specific modes of ordering which translate into specific sets of interrelations or socio-technical networks (Wiskerke 1997; Roep, 2000). The significance of their inter- and intra-regional heterogeneity has been demonstrated in relation to a variety of societal concerns, such as nature and landscape management, agri-environmental performances, uptake and interest in new rural development activities and the preservation of rural employment (Ploeg and Roep, 1990; Bruin *et al.*, 1991; Roep & Roex, 1992; Bruin, 1993; Wiskerke, 1995). More generally, these studies conclude that farming styles do not change overnight and that their social and natural resources are moulded and combined in specific ways that make abrupt changes

difficult to achieve or even counterproductive. As '*actively organized flows through time*', farming styles imply both continuity and change. Changing cultural repertoires due to wider societal changes such as readjustments in gender relations, for instance, may translate into prominent roles for farm-women in the uptake of new farm based rural development activities (Bock, 1998; Rooy *et al.*, 1995; Rooy, 1992). The farming style theoretical framework permits a more thorough understanding of the specificities of family farm dynamics.

More recently, transition theory inspired scholars to theorize and discuss farm-level dynamics in terms of stronger versus weaker multifunctionality. Wilson (2009) conceptualizes these differences as the overall outcome of farmers' 'shifting decision making balances in productivist versus non-productivist action and thoughts'. He stipulates that this enables the overcoming of less fruitful theoretical debates that approach multifunctionality as modernist-postmodernist dichotomies (Wilson, 2001; Evans *et al.*, 2002; Walford, 2003). He argues that this dichotomy in essence is about struggles between productivist versus non-productivist action and thoughts at different scale levels. Starting from a normative conceptualization of multifunctionality, it is postulated that farm-level multifunctionality is something dynamic and will always be a question of weaker versus stronger expressions. Subsequently, multifunctionality is being associated with a wide array of positive farming attributes such as being environmentally sustainable, locally embedded, and leading to distinctive food quality, more diversified farm activities, a reduced dependency on globalizing food markets, a revaluation of farm-household knowledge, open-minded farming, etc. Together this set of positive attributes represent a societal ideal about 'good farm practices', involving non-linear transition processes characterized by manifold contingencies and with 'transition corridors' that set the boundaries for multifunctional pathways. These boundaries are associated with factors such as farm histories, professional identities, property rights and resource richness as structuring components that, together, will translate into farm-specific opportunities and limitations for multifunctional pathways (Wilson, 2009).

The following analysis of empirical material from the Netherlands will combine insights from farming style and transition theory with the objective to come to a more profound understanding of farm-level multifunctionality dynamics. Whereas insights from farming style theory allow taking into account family farm specificities, transition theory enables the distinction between weaker versus stronger expressions of multifunctionality. The analysis focusses on Dutch professional farm-enterprises, thus, farms with agricultural activities that significantly contribute to overall family income. As such it intends to feed national debate about the prospects of multifunctional agricultural pathways with empirical evidence around some of its most controversial issues. Proponents of the agricultural modernisation model, especially, frequently argue that the uptake of new farm based rural development activities may be at the best an interesting temporary solution to generate additional farm-income, but certainly should not be mistaken for a solid long term contribution to sustainable *agricultural* development. As visualized in Figure 3.2, in this opinion a

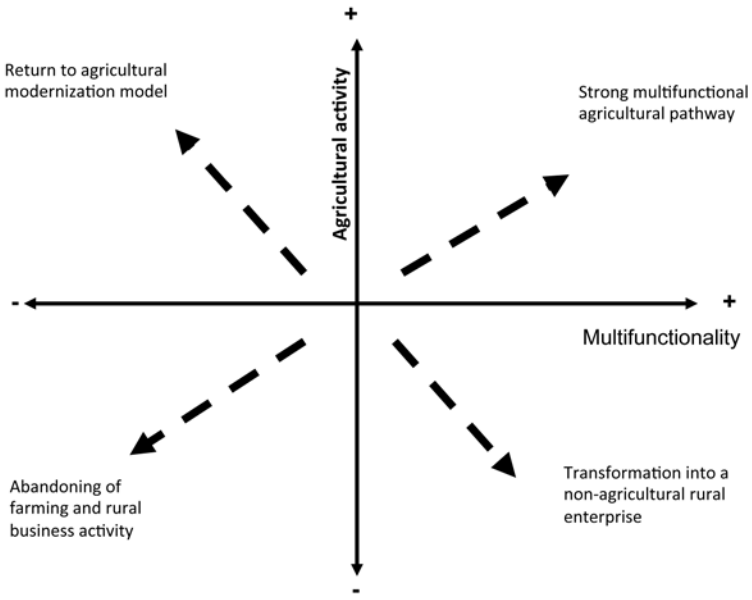

Figure 3.2 Potential farm-level multifunctional pathways as perceived in modernisation theory

choice of multifunctional pathways will sooner or later translate into: 1) the abandoning of farming activities; 2) the transformation into a non-agricultural rural business; or 3) a return to agricultural modernisation. The fourth pattern distinguished in Figure 3.2, the gradual strengthening of multifunctionality in combination with further agricultural development, remains largely unimaginable in this agricultural modernisation discourse.

3.7 Background and characteristics of empirical research

In this wider Dutch setting, the launching of a Taskforce Multifunctional Agriculture in 2008 aimed to professionalize and upscale the national 'multifunctionality sector' through a more intensive cooperation between stakeholders. The Taskforce delineation of multifunctionality nicely illustrates how this remains an issue of debate and negotiation. Farm-based energy production, for instance, was not included to avoid sensitivities regarding its consequences for rural landscapes by the adversaries of windmills, often framed in terms of 'horizon pollution'. For similar reasons, equestrian related activities were excluded. Neither are more conventional expressions of multifunctionality (e.g. contract-work, trading activities, green services facilities, etc.) are taken into consideration. Instead, the Taskforce decides to concentrate on the following activities: 1) agri-environmental services; 2) farm sales and regional typical produce; 3) agri-tourism; 4) care provision; 5) child-care; and 6) educational activities.

As part of its wider research, dissemination and communication purposes, the Taskforce commissioned the Rural Sociology Chair of Wageningen University to conduct the research project 'Dynamics and Robustness of multifunctional farm enterprises' (Oostindie et al., 2011; Seuneke, 2014). This research project included a national survey among 120 multifunctional farm-enterprises in 6 rural regions to cover relevant differences in contextual factors such as proximity to urban centres, intensity of agricultural production, history of new farm-based rural development activities and the presence of new forms of territory based cooperation. The multifunctional farm-enterprises in these rural regions were subsequently selected by combining different methods, including addresses mobilized within earlier research projects, website consultation and the 'snowball method'. Although the national absence of reliable data-sources for multifunctional farm enterprises may make 'rock-hard' claims on the overall representativeness of these combined selection methods impossible, there are no indications for the opposite. Also, the overall high response suggests a representative picture of Dutch farm-enterprises engaged in the rural development activities introduced before, with the exception of farm enterprises with agri-environmental services as a single rural development activity, since their impact has already been studied intensively from different angles (Oostindie & Broekhuizen, 1997; Renting & Broekhuizen, 2002; Berendse *et al.*, 2002; Klein *et al.*; 2001). It is further relevant to mention that overall data collection involved interviews with male as well as female farm-family members, mostly on an individual basis but, incidentally, through pairwise interviews, in accordance with farm internal labour division characteristics. Finally, the survey entails a combination of quantitative and qualitative components.

3.8 General picture of multifunctional farm-enterprises in the Netherlands

3.8.1 Broad spectrum of drivers

The uptake of new farm-based rural development activities in the Netherlands knows a broad spectrum of drivers (see Table 3.1). Factors that may be synthesized as a strong desire to '*farm differently*', i.e., a wish to regain influence on overall farm development and product marketing and to re-establish more direct relationships with consumers, citizens and society at large, turn out to be important. Other important drivers, such as the need for additional income, reflect specific responses to agricultural price-squeeze tendencies. A third group of driving forces underlines the significance of family-farm specificities. This goes especially for the 'wish for an own income activity by a partner', 'enlargement of farm succession opportunities' and 'presence of farm internal labour surplus'. A fourth group concerns different types of 'pull factors'. More generally, these suggest that new farm activities in the Netherlands are more often driven by newly emerging market opportunities than by active support from institutional settings. Finally, the driving force 'logical additional activity after earlier MFA activities' points to the relevance of what has been defined

as 'event-like properties': '*a metaphorical gateway to a diverse range of subsequent experiences and existential awakenings, of which many were not anticipated or predicted*' (Halfacree & Rivera, 2011).

3.8.2 Combinations of new activities

A second key overall empirical finding concerns the frequency of *combinations* of new rural development activities, as expressed in an average of almost three extra farm activities in the total research sample. On-farm sales, agri-tourism and agri-environmental services have frequently been starting activities that, in time, are followed with other new activities such as care-provision, child-care and educational services, all with a more recent tradition in the Netherlands. Later we will return in detail to the characteristics and specificities of farm development trajectories in time. At this stage, it is important to conclude that Dutch farm-families often actively search for synergy-effects between different types of new farm activities. Just to give an example: the start of agri-tourism facilities attracts people, which makes it interesting to opt for on-farm sales, which might be supported by creating an attractive farm environment through engagement in agri-environmental services, etc. In many variants interviewees expressed that '*the one brings the other*' and that it is, particularly, overall sets of activities that contribute to overall farm-income.

3.8.3 Significant and growing contribution to total farm-family income in time

Providing information on farm-income levels remains a sensitive issue among Dutch farmers. For that reason it was decided to opt for more indirect indications of the economic significance of the new farm activities, such as overall turnover, also in comparison to agricultural turnover, and the relative contribution of new income sources to total farm-family income. Table 3.1 shows that the average turnover of overall set of new activities in 2009 is estimated at close to 200.000 euros. This figure is considerably lower than the average agricultural turnover, but certainly of major importance within total business activities, as further manifested in an average estimation of an almost 40% contribution to the total farm-family income. Moreover, a large majority of the overall survey population indicate that this contribution to total farm-income did increase significantly in importance since the uptake of the first new activities.

3.8.4 Supportive to further agricultural development

Given the relatively low agricultural prices in the Netherlands in the survey period 2009-2010, overall farm-income satisfaction among representatives of multifunctional farm enterprises is remarkably high. Interviewees certainly did complain about agricultural prices, but simultaneously often concluded that total farm-income through the presence of new farm activities should be classified as (more than) satisfactory. Table 3.1 points in other ways to positive interrelations between new farms activities and further agricultural development. Almost half of the total farm-enterprises had enlarged agricultural turnover and land use since the uptake of their first new farm activity. About one third increased its total labour input for agricultural activities, whereas only a minor percentage decreased its land use and

agricultural activities. These are all clear indications that the uptake of and engagement in new rural development activities positively contributes to further agricultural development.

3.8.5 Predominantly cautious farm investment attitudes

Farm investment behaviour gives another impression of the interaction between agricultural and new farm activities. Building upon a distinction between realized investments in agricultural as well as new activities on the one hand and foreseen investment plans for the coming 5-10 years on the other, different investment attitudes have been distinguished. Farmers have been classified as '*High Investors'* if the total (estimated) investments realized since the start of the first new farm activity plus foreseen investments for the coming 5-10 years exceed an annual average of 50.000 euros. '*Cautious Investors*' estimate their annual investments (plans) between 15.000 and 50.000 euros. For '*Low Investors*' this amounts to less than 15.000 euros. Table 3.1 shows that multifunctional farm enterprises belong predominantly to the '*Cautious Investors*' categories. However, overall investment behaviour shows a significant variety. Almost one third of the survey population consists of '*High Agricultural Investors*' in combination with a more cautious investment attitude with regard to the new rural development activities. A similar percentage is characterized by its mirror image of '*High Investors*' in new activities and more cautious agricultural investments. Yet, it is particularly the small group of '*High Investors*' in both agricultural and new farm activities that suggests that Dutch multifunctional pathways may be partly also the outcome of primarily entrepreneurial perspectives on farming (see also Seuneke, 2014).

3.8.6 Multifunctionality: guiding the future

Overall survey findings identified significant differences in perceptions about future farm development. The large majority of respondents fully agrees that the further development of new farm activities is only possible in combination with agricultural activities. However, a significantly lower percentage agrees that overall farm activities are strongly interwoven (see again Table 3.1). Thus, the new farm activities may be financially of importance for further agricultural development. However, this does not automatically imply that these are also perceived as part of a farming strategy that fundamentally differs from conventional farming, as also reflected in the relatively large percentage of respondents that opposes the idea that conventional growth is no longer a realistic option for further farm development. Together these outcomes demonstrate that engagement in new rural development activities does not always involve a clear distantiation from agricultural modernisation logic, as sometimes assumed by rural development scholars (see e.g. Ploeg, 2008). The specific backgrounds of more diversified attitudes towards multifunctionality as a guiding principle for future farm development will be scrutinized in detail in the followings sections.

3.9 Factors of importance for future farm-development

The survey probed respondents' ideas about the relevant factors for further farm development. Table 3.1 summarizes that public administrations are thought to be of most importance, often accompanied by complaints about the rigidity of prevailing policy frameworks. The fact that municipal administrations particularly are felt to be of importance confirms their prominent role in rural planning regulations and the current complexity to get spatial planning permission for function integration at the farm-level. Indirectly, this complexity also pops up with '*approval of neighbours*' and '*potential tensions with conventional farm businesses in the direct vicinity*' as other important factors. Interestingly, future farm development opportunities are more strongly associated with regional rather than global market opportunities. That multifunctional farming often will be accompanied by a re-orientation towards agricultural output markets is more indirectly reflected in the value attached to new forms of territory based cooperation. It points to a certain awareness that these new rural markets will have to be actively constructed. Indeed, in practice many respondents already participate, albeit more or less actively, in new forms of territory based collective action around the provision of agri-environmental services, agri- and rural-tourism, care and educational activities, local and farm-based food quality, region branding etc.

3.10 Different farm-level pathways

In-depth analysis of overall survey material further allowed the identification of different farm-level pathways based on the overall diversity in lifespans of the first new rural development activity and the total number of new farm activities in 2011. Figure 3.3 visualizes this diversity along both dimensions.

Starting from the premise that this number of rural development activities is a meaningful proxy indicator to assess farm-level multifunctionality in terms of stronger versus weaker, this enables the distinction between four trajectories with specific interrelations between lifespan (more recent versus longer) and strength of multifunctional agricultural pathways (stronger versus weaker). Again, in the following sections, these will be briefly described with a summary of underlying figures and percentages in Table 3.1.

3.10.1 Recent-weaker

A first group of farm-enterprises combines a more recent uptake, that is to say, less than the overall survey average of almost 11 years, with a lower total number of new rural development activities (less than the overall average of almost three activities). It concerns a group of relatively large farms, particularly in agricultural turnover, where the economic importance of new farm activities is still somewhat lower, both in turnover as well as in percentage of total farm-family income. Except for a more outspoken wish for closer contact with consumers and citizens, the overall set

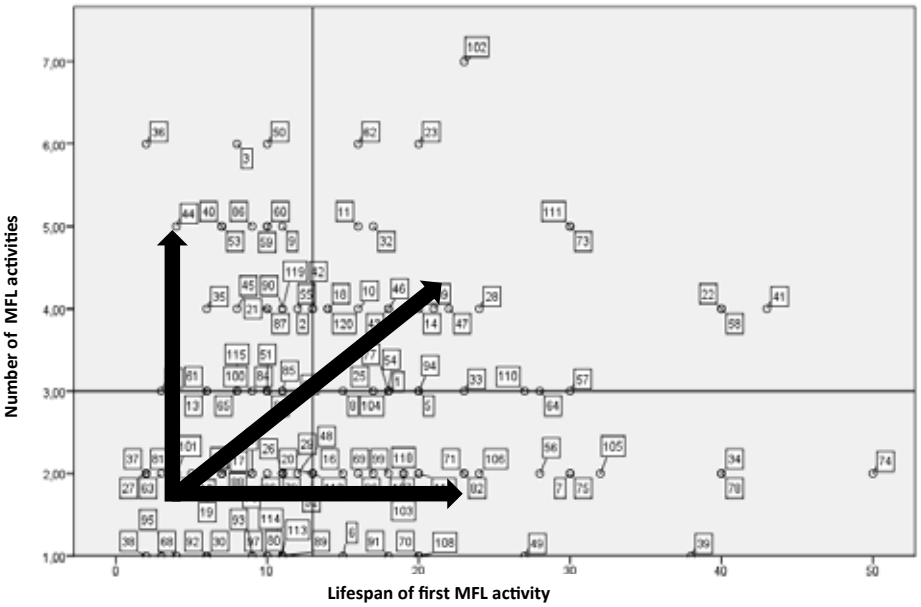

Figure 3.3 Diversity in Dutch multifunctional agricultural pathways

of drivers to engage in new farm activities differs little from the overall picture as presented before. Only '*inspiring examples in the direct vicinity*' are somewhat more frequently mentioned, which suggests a growing presence and acceptance of new farm activities in farming and rural communities. This group of farmers continues to identify itself mostly with conventional farming and the agricultural growth-model corresponds with transition theory ideas about gradual changes in productivist action and thoughts and the relevance of transition boundaries. The higher percentage of farms that have reduced agricultural labour input and land use since the uptake of new activities, in combination with a somewhat lower confidence in farm succession suggest still relatively weakly developed interrelations between agricultural and new farm activities. The vulnerability of this pathway further appears in the perceptions about future farm development prospects. More frequently than hereafter presented pathways these are thought to depend on factors such as '*approval of neighbours*', '*potential tensions with other farms in the vicinity*' and '*cooperation with other farmers and /or rural entrepreneurs*'.

3.10.2 Longer-weaker

A second group of multifunctional farm-enterprises combines a beyond average longer history of engagement in new activities with a below average number of new activities. In transition theory vocabulary, the balance between non-productivist

versus productivist action and thoughts shows relatively little change in time. An overall feature of this group of farm enterprises is that the uptake of new activities is more frequently motivated by family farm specific concerns such as '*the wish for an own income by partner*' and '*enlargement of farm succession opportunities*'. It is also this pathway that most frequently combines additional income generation by new farm activities with off-farm income. Other family farm specificities appear in the importance attached to earlier work experience outside agriculture in relation to the uptake of new farm activities. As such, it is particularly this pathway that illuminates the role of farmwomen. It is often their former professional experience, particularly in the health and educational sectors, that induces new farm activities during family life-cycle periods when off-farm income generation is more complicated (younger children) or during periods with relatively abundant available family labour (pre-succession periods). In addition to a relatively strong involvement in traditional activities such as agri-tourism and processing (e.g. cheese-making), this is also reflected in the frequency of care- provision and educational services, as more typical contemporary expressions of rural development activities with leading roles for farmwomen.

Another characteristic of this second pathway is that the longer lifespan of new farm activities on average goes along with greater financial significance, both in terms of turnover as well as contribution to family income. Compared to the foregoing pathway, this is accompanied by less confidence in conventional agricultural growth and a stronger conviction that own farming practices indeed differ fundamentally from conventional farming. In certain ways it confirms the importance of the time dimension in relation to alternative modes of the ordering of farm activity. However, this group of respondents also believes more frequently that overall farm activities are relatively weakly interwoven and certainly do not entail a clear rupture with conventional agricultural development. The new farm activities seem to be primarily driven by the wish to create an own labour domain among farm-women. This specific family-farm feature goes along with less intention to expand the number of new farm activities, a more agriculturally oriented investment attitude, a stronger focus on global food markets and a less outspoken conviction that overall farm activities may enhance future farm succession opportunities. In short, the more prolonged engagement in new farm activities of this second group of farm-enterprises did not translate into a strong internalization of multifunctionality principles.

3.10.3 Longer-stronger

A third pathway combines a longer lifespan with a gradual expansion of total new farm activities in time. With an average of 4 new activities in 2010, this group may be indeed classified as strong multifunctional farm-enterprises. '*Risk spreading*', '*more influence on own business development'* and '*logical additional activity since the start of new activities*' appear as relatively important drivers within this pathway. It is particularly in this third group where respondents refer to the contingencies in their business development. As emphasized in all kinds of ways, this development is certainly not strictly planned and should be perceived more as the unforeseen

outcomes of meeting with new people, of confrontations with new ideas and/or of the participation in new networks after starting the first new farm activity. Table 3.1 demonstrates that this resulted in, on average, large farm-holdings in terms of agricultural turnover and land use, the latter also by establishing lease constructions with professional nature organizations for extensive management in nature areas. More than within previous pathways, this coincides with a strong belief in multi-functionality, as expressed in ideas about the interdependencies of overall business activities, the distinctiveness in comparison to conventional farming, the significance of agricultural activity for overall business activities and the most outspoken rejection of the agricultural growth model. The relatively large scale of the different business activities appears also in overall farm employment, including a stronger dependency on external labour mobilisation. With an average of 5 fulltime labour equivalents, about 25% of this labour force originates from outside the family. Another indicator for the gradual transformation of typical family farm logic concerns the strong conviction that farm continuity will require new organizational models to surpass the limitations and problems of inter-generational succession. It may be one of the reasons why, especially within this group, '*support of public administrations*' is thought to be of crucial importance for future farm development.

3.10.4 Recent-stronger

The fourth and last pathway combines a more recent start with an already larger number of new activities, partly through a more frequent combined uptake of different new farm activities. Especially compared to the foregoing pathway, it concerns on average smaller agricultural holdings. Their already stronger multifunctionality is driven by '*pulling new rural markets*', '*additional income needs*' and - although in absolute terms still of little importance - '*active institutional support*' and '*interesting subsidies*'. Thus, a specific combination of prominently present 'push' and 'pull' factors transforms into an accelerated transition pathway towards strong multifunctionality. This focus on multifunctionality is also clearly expressed in ideas about the interwovenness of overall farm activities, the significance of agricultural activity for overall business development opportunities and relatively little trust in the agricultural growth model. The qualitative survey material reveals that this has often been accompanied by an extensification of agricultural activity through, e.g., a shift from intensive animal husbandry production to extensive cattle breeding, sometimes partly also motivated as providing opportunities to mobilise financial resources for investments in new farm activities through the sale of production or pollution rights. This specific way of mobilising farm-internal financial resources resonates with a more cautious overall farm investment attitude, although this may sometimes also be explained by the reluctance of financial institutions to finance new farm activities. In any case, it is this fourth pathway that mostly clearly reflects a fundamental re-positioning of the role of agricultural activity in overall business strategy. That is: agricultural activity is often primarily perceived as a crucial instrument to create attractive environments for and to enlarge the distinctiveness of other business activities. This re-positioning relatively often builds upon previous work experience outside agriculture by family members and goes along with little concerns regarding the

impact of globalizing food markets on further business development opportunities.

Surprisingly, representatives of this trajectory are less convinced about the importance of new forms of territory based cooperation to strengthen their farm development potentials. Again, available qualitative material suggests that this may be explained by a relative strong reliance on the complementarity of overall farm-household internal skills and competences. Although it is admitted that cooperation with other farmers or rural enterprises is certainly of relevance, this, at the same time, is often seen as difficult to realize in practice and time consuming. Involved farm-families, therefore, seem to trust primarily own resources in the creation of new activities, skills, relationships and networks. In addition, the specific features of their new activities may explain their somewhat more reluctant attitude towards collective action. New activities such as care-provision and educational services are strongly overrepresented, whereas particularly these activities require new institutional arrangements with public actors regarding issues such as quality control and monitoring systems, price agreements, etc. Hence, it may be especially this group of multifunctional farms that simultaneously experiences the need for as well as the difficulties of new forms of collective action. Finally, overall survey material suggests that assumed degrees of formalization of new forms of cooperation may have been interpreted differently by respondents, which requires a more cautious interpretation of the figures in Table 3.1.

3.11 Understanding farm-level multifunctionality dynamics

The foregoing empirical material showed that farm-level multifunctionality in the Netherlands is closely interwoven with: 1) the variety of underlying driving forces of new farm activities; 2) their lifespan; 3) the specificities of family-based farming and 4) the interconnectedness of overall farm-activities. Especially, the wish to '*farm differently*' drives Dutch agrarian pathways to multifunctionality. In general, the lifespan of new farm activities enlarges their socio-economic significance, which is also due to the frequency of the uptake of additional new activities. Yet, as shown, multifunctional pathways are not to be perceived as unilineair processes of change. Specific reasons for family farms to engage in new farm activities go to different degrees along with substantial changes in terms of mobilisation, allocation and valorisation of labour and capital resources and their interrelated capacities to create synergy-effects based on multifunctional resource use.

Figure 3.4 stresses that it is the overall outcome of complex interaction patterns that explains the robustness of multifunctional agricultural pathways. A strong desire to '*farm differently*' may initiate a process that results in a steady expansion of new farm activities that, in time, increasingly induces synergy-effects through multifunctional resource use. In some cases, the uptake of new farm activities is primarily driven by the wish for an own income activity among family members, which sets the boundaries in terms of labour input, expansion and professionalization ambi-

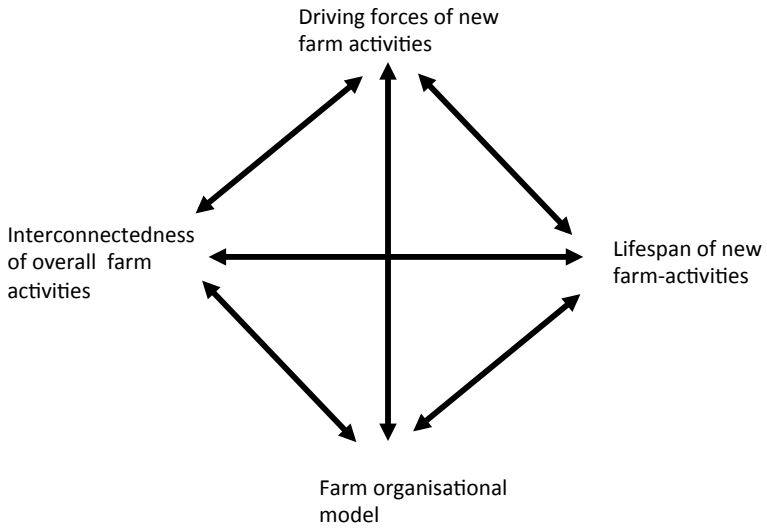

Figure 3.4 Agrarian pathways to multifunctionality as complex interaction patterns

tions, strategic meaning, etc. The new farm activities may be connected with agriculture through financial flows but do not influence with the farming activities substantially. These continue to be primarily structured according to the logic of global food markets, which brings fewer benefits in terms of mutual re-enforcing network configurations, multiple resource use, etc. The more co-evolutionary nature of this type of farm-level dynamics may be further reflected in relatively strongly present beliefs that conventional growth remains a serious option for further farm development and that own farming practices do not differ fundamentally from conventional farming. In line with transition theory thinking, farm-level multifunctionality appears here as a more gradual changing of the balance between productivist and non-productivist action and thoughts. Figure 3.4 underlines that the temporal aspects of such changing balances may have rather different explanations.

This can be further illustrated by some of the key features of the 'longer-stronger' pathway. Particularly this group of farm enterprises combines the desire to '*farm differently*' with a gradual expansion of the number of new farm activities, a steadily growing significance of these activities in terms of turnover and income generation and positive interrelations with further agricultural development. It results in increasingly robust multifunctional rural business models, including the capacity to surpass traditional gender-based labour divisions and more reluctant attitudes towards external labour mobilisation to fully explore and unlock the potentials of multifunctionality.

The more recent emergence of an accelerated trajectory towards strong multifunc-

tionality, in turn, suggests that both 'push' and 'pull' factors seem to have gained importance in the Netherlands. Dutch family-farms may increasingly have to face agricultural marginalization tendencies but are simultaneously surrounded by newly emerging rural market opportunities and - albeit still to a lesser degree - a facilitating institutional environment. That this farm-development trajectory is relatively often accompanied by an extensification and/or downscaling of agricultural activity further suggests that multifunctional pathways in the Netherlands may be increasingly the outcome of a more radical transformation of the role of agricultural activity in overall farming strategy.

Figure 3.4 further underscores that family-farms often search for a certain flexibility in overall farm management. Frequently, interviewees stress that the future of their new activities remains uncertain and that different scenarios are imaginable. Yet, these uncertainties are not so much perceived as problematic than as something that enables the preservation of a certain flexibility with regard to the unknown, a flexibility that would be lacking in the case of a strategic choice for further agricultural expansion. The uptake of new rural development activities gives potential successors a certain space to develop their own professional preferences, to reduce the financial burden of farm-succession and to incorporate the unknown professional skills and preferences of future partners. The latter, particularly, applies with regard to the future of traditionally typical female domains such as agri-tourism and the provision of care and education facilities. The importance attached to the preservation of a certain flexibility may further appear in relation to the organisation of future farm-succession. As noticed, representatives of stronger multifunctional pathways, especially, assess future farm succession as problematic. Hence, it is particularly these farmers that most actively search for novel ways to facilitate farm-succession, which may include the breakdown of overall activities into a number of formally independent 'micro-enterprises'. In addition to other objectives, such as the transcendence of conventional employer-employee relationships, this clearly also facilitates a more flexible, tailor made and step-by-step farm-succession of closely cooperating business units that accept their mutual interdepencies and their overarching multifunctional rural resource use principles.

3.12 Conclusions

This chapter started with an impression of the broad spectrum of relevant farm types that needs to be taken into account in the analysis of agriculture's multifunctionality as defined within the rural development model. Subsequently, the analytical focus shifted to the dynamics of multifunctional pathways among professional farm-enterprises in the Netherlands. Overall, the presented empirical material identified a broad spectrum of drivers that explains the uptake of new rural development by professional farm-enterprises. As further concluded, especially through specific sets of combinations, these new rural development activities contribute significantly to overall farm-income generation. Their positive interaction with further

agricultural development clearly contradicts the dominant and persistent perception among Dutch agricultural modernisation advocates that multifunctional agricultural pathways lack longer term perspectives.

This general picture has been complemented by an in-depth analysis of differentiating farm-level pathways which underscores the complex interrelations between 1) the driving forces of new rural development activities; 2) the lifespan of new activities; 3) farm organisational features; and 4) the interconnectedness of overall farm activities. In accordance with transition theory, overall outcomes of these interrelations reflect to different degrees co-evolutionary farm-development pathways. Farming style theory enables to interlink these pathways to following specificities of family-based farming: 1) multiple drivers for the uptake of new rural development activities; 2) differences in internalisation of multifunctionality as a guiding principle for farm-development; 3) differences in attention for the creation of synergy-effects between agricultural and non-agricultural activities and 4) differences in attitudes towards external labour mobilisation and internal labour distribution. Particularly this integration of insights from transition theory and farming style approaches resulted in a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics in farm-level multifunctionality and its specific features, strengths and vulnerabilities.

Finally, the presented Dutch empirical findings point in this respect to some interesting recent dynamics. The national emergence of an accelerated trajectory towards strong multifunctionality may be related to a variety of factors, such as loss of space for co-evolutionary pathways in a setting already for decades characterized by dominant agricultural modernisation forces, newly emerging rural markets as a consequence of changing societal demands in this same setting and a growing necessity to make unambiguous strategic choices in contemporary agriculture. In any case, this trajectory underpins Dutch family-farms' resistance against marginalization tendencies and their openness, willingness and capacity to adapt and transform their farming strategies. As such it is particularly this trajectory that symbolizes Dutch family farms' resilience as the outcome of resistance (the wish to 'farm differently') and the active redesign of multifunctional agricultural pathways through 1) strong interlinkages between economic and socio-cultural values as integrating forces for productive, as well as consumptive, rural functions; 2) changing gender relations that go along with new patterns of labour division and distribution of responsibilities; 3) new professional identities with alternative strategic meanings of agricultural activity; and 4) the preservation of a certain flexibility in overall resource use.

	Total (N=120)	Recent-weaker (N=35)	Recent-stronger (N=32)	Longer-stronger (N=28)	Longer weaker (N=24)
1. General business characteristics					
Average start first MFA activity	1995	2002	2001	1987	1985
Average age respondent	49	46	47	51	52
Average land use (ha)	60	46	40	108	45
Average agricultural turnover (euro)	325.000	360.000	250.000	370.000	330.000
Average turnover MFA activities (euro)	195.000	115.000	120.000	465.000	105.000
Average total Business Labour input (FTE's)	3,7	2,7	3,5	5,0	3,7
Average % non-family labour	20	15	23	25	17
2. MFA engagement					
Agri-tourism	66	57	78	62	67
Agri-environmental measures	53	31	68	73	42
On-farm sales	51	23	68	73	42
Care provision	35	29	63	31	13
Regional typical produce	32	3	52	67	4
Educational activities	30	9	50	59	4
Child care activities	7	11	6	3	4
Average number of MFA activities	2,9	1,7	4,0	4,0	1,8
3. MFA starting activities					
Agri-tourism	25	37	13	10	42
Combination of activities	25	14	53	21	8
On-farm sales / regional produce	22	14	6	35	38
Care / education	10	23	3	10	0
Agri-environmental measures	18	11	25	24	13

Table 3.1 General and path-specific features of Dutch multifunctional farm-enterprises.

	Total (N=120)	Recent-weaker (N=35)	Recent-stronger (N=32)	Longer-stronger (N=28)	Longer weaker (N=24)
4. Driving forces of MFA activities					
Closer contact with agricultural sector citizens (% = (highly) important driver)	72	73	75	75	58
Closer contact with consumers / citizens (ibid)	62	63	55	62	63
Additional income	59	49	66	62	63
Risk spreading	52	49	44	61	56
Farm internal labour surplus	43	49	34	48	42
Wish for more influence in own business development	43	31	33	61	46
Wish for own income activity by partner	40	37	40	34	48
Logical additional activity after earlier MFA activities	39	26	37	58	35
'Pulling' newly emerging rural markets	33	22	46	19	23
More influence in own product marketing	32	15	29	51	35
Enlargement of succession opportunities	29	14	28	41	37
Inspiring examples in direct vicinity	23	26	28	14	25
Active institutional support	22	20	31	17	17
Interesting subsidies	18	20	33	17	13
5. Agricultural dynamics since start of MFA activities					
% of Farms with land use expansion	47	44	28	56	63
% of Farms with growth in agricultural turnover	47	41	35	52	63
% of Farms with growth in agricultural labour input	33	32	29	38	38
% of Farms with decreasing agricultural labour input	18	21	19	17	13
% of Farms with land use reduction	14	21	13	17	4

	Total **(N=120)**	Recent-weaker **(N=35)**	Recent-stronger **(N=32)**	Longer-stronger **(N=28)**	Longer weaker **(N=24)**
6. Income					
Income contribution of MFA activities (% of total business income)	33	22	40	45	28
Growing MFA income importance since start (%)	80	76	87	67	86
% of respondents (highly) satisfied about agricultural business income	46	51	44	45	42
% of respondents (highly) satisfied about business income out of MFA activities	87	88	86	86	88
% of respondents ((highly) satisfied about total family income	86	85	97	83	87
Off-farm income (% total family income)	10	11	11	4	14
Growing off-farm income importance since start MFA activities (%)	10	8	6	4	27
7. Business succession perceptions					
Multifunctionality own farm business enlarges succession opportunities (% = partly + fully agrees)	35	26	36	48	29
Farm succession more complex due to current combinations of business activities (ibid)	24	16	17	32	33
Farm succession requires new business organizational models (ibid)	29	23	31	41	22

Table 3.1 General and path-specific features of Dutch multifunctional farm-enterprises.

	Total (N=120)	Recent-weaker (N=35)	Recent-stronger (N=32)	Longer-stronger (N=28)	Longer weaker (N=24)
8. Multifunctionality perceptions					
Development of MFA activities only possible in combination with agricultural activities (ibid)	81	85	77	90	67
Own agricultural activities not fundamentally different from conventional farming (ibid)	64	80	65	53	58
Agricultural and new business activities are strongly interwoven (ibid)	62	59	69	69	50
Particularly current business combinations make it possible to continue farming (ibid)	61	39	66	77	67
Conventional agricultural growth model no longer possible for own farm (ibid)	40	20	48	53	42
High investor in agricultural activities / cautious investor in new business activities (% of total)	26	29	23	23	29
High investor in new business activities / more cautious investor in agricultural activities (ibid)	17	17	23	17	8
High investor in agricultural and new business activities (ibid)	18	11	16	23	21
9. Learning skills for MFA activities					
Previous work experiences outside agriculture (highly) important (% = (partly + fully agrees)	28	31	36	13	32
Professional education (highly) important (ibid)	19	11	29	13	25
10. Factors of importance for further business development					
Cooperation from public administration (% = significantly + strongly important)	90	90	93	96	85
Regional rural market developments (ibid)	76	76	74	72	81
Approval of neighbours (ibid)	73	81	77	83	58
Regional cooperation with other rural entrepreneurs (ibid)	50	61	41	38	62
International food market developments (ibid)	38	39	26	38	52
Potential tensions with conventional farm businesses in direct vicinity (ibid)	33	43	32	35	20

European governance of agri-environmental services: institutional voids, interfaces and self-regulation challenges

4

4. European governance of agri-environmental services: institutional voids, interfaces and self-regulation challenges[1]

Abstract

Governance increasingly involves complex sets of institutions and actors, blurred boundaries in terms of distribution of responsibilities between public, private and civil actors for tackling social and economic issues and new tools and techniques to steer and guide. This article approaches agriculture's provision of agri-environmental services from such a governance perspective, starting with a brief introduction to changing balances between state-led versus market-led approaches in Europe. This will be followed by an overview of the specificities of Dutch agri-environmental governance, with especial attention paid to emerging self-governance initiatives, including experiments with new forms of farmers-led and territory based collective action, new, more hybrid remuneration systems, and new, more performance based accountability arrangements. Overall, multi-level analysis further underscores the relevance of different types of institutional voids in European governance of agri-environmental services. As concluded, these institutional voids, which particularly emerge at the interfaces between policy levels and between policy and practice, represent both opportunities and limitations for the development of new institutional arrangements that may enhance self-governance and self-regulation capacity. Both are thought to be crucial components of the 'meta-governance' challenges that accompany contemporary European governance of agri-environmental services.

1 / The Dutch empirical material in this chapter partly originates from case-study analysis of the European project '*Assessing the impact of rural policies (incl. LEADER)*' (RUDI, FP 7 Project no. 21304, 2008-2010). For the wider outcomes of this project see e.g. COPUS, 2010; Schiller, 2010; Dax *et al*, 2012; and Mantino *et al*, 2009.

4.1 Introduction

Governance involves a complex set of institutions and actors drawn from and beyond government, which goes along with the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues. It requires new tools and techniques to steer and guide relatively autonomous self-governing networks of action. Governance perspectives challenge conventional assumptions that approach government as if it were a 'stand-alone' institution divorced from wider societal forces (Stoker, 1998). Hajer (2003) speaks of a weakening of the state that goes hand in hand with the international growth of civil society, the emergence of new citizen actors and new forms of mobilization. The same author postulates that governance settings are increasingly characterized by *institutional voids,* defined as *'the absence of clear rules and norms according to which politics is to be conducted, policy measures are to be agreed upon and, thus, without generally accepted rules and norms*' (Hajer 2003: p. 175). This distinction of institutional voids explains why governance is closely related to the making of new institutional rules, new conceptions of legitimate political interventions and the (re-) negotiation of the institutional rules of the game. The concept aims for a better understanding of the discrepancies between existing institutional order and the actual practice of policy-making. It makes a distinction between classical modernist political institutions and new political spaces characterized as '*the ensemble of mostly unstable practices that emerge in the struggle to address problems that the established institutions - for different reasons - are unable to resolve in a manner that is perceived to be both legitimate and effective*'(Hajer, 2003). Institutional voids are thought to manifest themselves especially in relatively new policy fields, such as environmental policies, and in multi-level governance settings. Other governance scholars speak of '*backstage*' and '*front stage*' policies to illuminate the differences between formal and informal policy making processes in EU's multi-level environmental governance and to characterize the interplay between formal and informal policy practices (Tatenhove, 2003, Tatenhove *et al.*, 2006).

This terminology emphasizes that governance differs from the hierarchical control by the state in terms of its negotiation rationality as opposed to the substantial rationality of state rules. Consequently, compliance is ensured through trust based relations that, to different degrees, are sustained by self-constituted rules and norms, rather than by legal sanctions (Sorensen and Torfing, 2005). The latter also involves changing ideas about policy accountability. Bovens (2005:460), distinguishing broader versus more narrow definitions of accountability, concludes that governance goes along with a growing importance of '*horizontal accountability*', defined as '*giving account to various stakeholders in society on a voluntary basis with no intervention of a principal and usually primarily moral in nature*'. Erkkila (2004) argues that a shift from governing towards governance coincides with a growing attention to more '*deliberate*' and '*performance based*' accountability arrangements. Sorensen and Torfing (2005) highlight the need for alternative ways to evaluate and monitor the '*democratic anchoring*' of governance networks and to assess their operational effectiveness as part of 'metagovernance' needs. The latter notion is defined as

'*higher order governance transcending the concrete forms of governance through which social and economic life is shaped, regulated and transformed*' (Sorensen and Torfing, 2005: 245). The same authors argue that '*metagovernance is a reflexive and responsive process through which a range of legitimate and resourceful actors aim to combine, facilitate, shape and direct particular forms of governance in accordance with specific rules, procedures and standards embodying the hegemonic conception of what constitutes Good Governance'* (ibid:245). The key challenge for public authorities, as the meta-governors of networks and private actors at different scale levels, would be, therefore, '*to avoid regulating governance networks in ways that eliminate their capacity for self-regulating*' (ibid: 246).
In this chapter I will relate governance and accountability perspectives to the dynamics of European agri-environmental policy. After a brief introduction to wider European dynamics in this policy field, I focus on Dutch agri-environmental governance, with special attention to its emerging self-governance initiatives and search for alternative, more hybrid remuneration approaches. Overall, applied multi-level analysis will demonstrate that institutional voids are indeed omnipresent in the contemporary governance of agri-environmental services, emerging particularly at the interfaces between policy levels and between policy and practice. As will be concluded, these voids represent both opportunities and limitations for interesting and promising Dutch self-governance initiatives in terms of contributions to the more efficient, effective and stimulating provision of agri-environmental services. The final section will return to some of the meta-governance challenges that accompany these self-governance and self-regulation potentials.

4.2 Agri-environmental policy dynamics in the EU

Buller and Morris (2004) characterize European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) historically as a *'state-led–market-led balancing act'* around its central objectives of increasing agricultural productivity while retaining farmers on the land: a balancing act that is also manifested in the contradictory and dualistic relations between agricultural modernisation forces and policy attention for agri-environmental stewardship. After a set of earlier mandatory agri-environmental measures, CAP, since 1985, has adopted voluntary agri-environmental measures, obligatory to be applied for all MS since 1992, and since 2000 formally belonging to CAP pillar 2 Rural Development Programmes (Lohmann and Hodge, 2003). Initial concerns of these state-led approaches to provide agri-environmental services are clearly reflected in the early body of literature on agri-environmental measures (AEM) in Europe. It covers, especially, issues as differences in uptake between MS (Wilson *et al.*, 1999), efficiency and effectiveness of agri-environmental measures (Primdahl *et al.*, 2003), availability of indicators to assess their impact (Halberg *et al.*, 2004), opportunities and limitations for contract based delivery systems for AEM (Hodge, 2001) and farmers' differentiating attitudes to AEM (Burton *et al.*, 2008; Boonstra *et al.*, 2011). It is, in short, a body of literature that is especially concerned about how to understand, assess and improve state-led agri-environmental measures.

In the last decades these state-led approaches have been increasingly confronted with the exigencies of free-market liberalism and the rules of its principal defender and regulator, the World Trade Organisation. Agri-environmental and other policy interventions are discussed, disputed, negotiated and re-negotiated in terms of Green, Blue and Amber boxes as symbols of institutional voids at the macro-level (Blandford & Josling, 2007; NFO briefing paper, 2005).

These worldwide neoliberal forces coincide with growing attention to the market-driven provision of agri-environmental services. Building on empirical evidence from the EU and US, Buller & Morris (2003) suggest making a distinction between the following market-led remuneration approaches: '*market-oriented initiatives for environmentally sustainable food production*' (MOIs), '*traditional production systems'*, '*new production systems*' and '*territorial commodification*'. The first type represents more traditional and, therefore, mostly extensive agricultural production systems that result in distinctive food qualities and territory specific environmental benefits, protected against standardization and expropriation forces through origin labels such as PDOs and PDIs. The second category consists of new, alternative production techniques, with organic agriculture as the most widely recognized example, but with a wide array of other expressions under denominators such as 'integrated crop and pest management' or 'integrated farming systems'. The third category covers initiatives that combine food marketing with the valorisation of particular territories through components such as local identity, valuable landscapes, local culture, etc., that contribute to regional tourism profiles and heritage-oriented policies. As emphasized, these different types of MOIs *'contain requirements for production procedures that are usually stricter than the legal requirements under public policy*' (Buller & Morris, 2003:1076). Particularly their specific combination of intrinsic (product related) and extrinsic values (environmental, sociocultural, etc.) are thought to explain the success of MOIs that '*form a set of values and benefits that deliver a range of public and private goods to consumers*' (ibid: 1077).

Overall characteristics, potentials and limitations of these market-led provisions of agri-environmental services have been analysed from multiple perspectives in EU projects such as *Dolphin* (Food origin labels), *Suppliers* (the role of SME's in alternative food networks), *Suschain* (sustaining food networks) and *Cofami* (the role of new collective farmers' initiatives). More generally, the rich empirical material from these projects shows how new food markets may be initiated and explored by farmers, small scale processors, other rural SME's, consumers, retailers, NGO's, and administrations, with the more or less active involvement of public bodies. It further reveals how these new food initiatives build time and again upon place-specific social, cultural, symbolic and environmental capital assets (Ray, 2002; Brunori, 2006; Renting & Oostindie, 2008; Swagemakers, 2011).

The following section goes into more detail about Dutch governance of agri-environmental services. As a MS with a longstanding tradition of agricultural modernisation, intensive land use systems, strongly export dependent agro-industrial food chains, the Netherlands has a variety of interesting self-governance initiatives, including experiments with more territory-based approaches, more performance based accountability arrangements and more hybrid remuneration systems. Together these

provide an interesting case in point to further illustrate the meaning and significance of institutional voids in multi-level governance settings.

4.3 Agri-environmental governance in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has a long history of agri-environmental policy measures which, especially in intensive animal production systems, sometimes went along with severe farmers' resistance (Frouws, 1998). In addition to mandatory regulations with respect to nitrogen leaching, ammonia emission, chemical inputs, etc., national agri-environmental policy started to introduce voluntary stewardship regulations in 1975 (Ministerie van VROM, 1975) relatively early, in comparison to other MS, due to growing tensions between nature organisations and farmers organisations in the design and implementation of regional land consolidation schemes (Broekhuizen, 1980; Schröder, 1980).

Nowadays, about 13,600 Dutch farmers, especially active in land-based sectors such as dairy and arable farming, participate in voluntary agri-environmental contracts covering a total of 62,000 hectares (LEI, 2012), a participation that may have different strategic meanings (Oostindie & Broekhuizen, 1995) and function to different degrees as a catalyst of further strategic returns to more multifunctional pathways (Oostindie *et al*, 2011; Oostindie & Parrot, 2002). At the same time, it is important to notice that agri-environmental contracts remain disputed, due to the national co-existence of different socio-political rural discourses with contrasting ideas about agriculture's ability to provide nature and landscape values (Hermans *et al.*, 2009; Rijk, 2003; Frouws 1998). This goes along with a relatively weakly developed market-led provision of agri-environmental services. Decades of agricultural modernisation and its accompanying processes of intensification, specialization and standardization, made the traditional food systems, as distinguished by Buller & Morris, almost completely disappear. The Netherlands has only a handful of PDI registrations, all with limited production volumes (Meulen, 1998b). It also lacks an institutional setting that actively guides and supports the rapidly growing amount of national farmers' initiatives with claims on regional specificity. Consequently, regional typical remains a somewhat fuzzy notion in the Netherlands, certainly increasingly re-explored by food producers but not always with substantial claims on distinctiveness (Brandsma and Oostindie, 2009; Bruin *et al.*, 2005; Wiskerke, 2004; Roep, 2002).

For similar reasons the '*new production systems*' of Buller and Morris are not an already well-established category of market-led provision of agri-environmental services. National sustainable food consumption may have known rather spectacular growth-rates, even during the on-going period of economic downturn, but remains rather marginal in terms of market shares (Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving, 2014; Ministerie EL&I, 2012; Prins & Smit, 2003; Klawer *et al.*, 2002). Notwithstanding National Taskforce Organic Agriculture, a multi-stakeholder platform of chain actors, research institutions and policy actors that operated during the period 2000-2007,

overall political and institutional willingness to facilitate organic agriculture is surrounded by ambiguities. Dutch compensation payments to farmers for conversion periods, for instance, are relatively low in comparison to EU-15 levels, which clearly contrast with the intensity of national land use (Eurostat, 2010). Moreover, national agri-business and retail actors are rather reluctant to promote organic food qualities as superior to conventional food quality standards. These often continue to advocate the high-tech adaptation of conventional production methods as a more viable sustainability trajectory, which also reflects the almost complete disappearance of small-scale food processors in the Netherlands, often perceived as crucial strategic partners for organic food produce or other expressions of '*new production systems*' (Brannigan, 2005). Together with a mostly limited investment capacity among collective regional typical produce initiatives (Bruin *et al.*, 2005), it explains why examples of new production systems with significant socio-economic impact, such as the Waddengroup, continue to be scarce in the Netherlands (Roep, 2001).

'*Territorial commodification'* is still in its infancy in the Netherlands*,* notwithstanding a clearly noticeable growing attention in the last decade to rural and regional branding. Although promising early life-cycle initiatives can be witnessed (Donkers & Immink, 2008), robust initiatives in the sense of generating extra financial resources for agri-environmental services are still lacking. These on-going initiatives reflect a growing awareness and acknowledgement of the economic value of nature and landscape through its positive spin-off with regard to residential preferences, rural estate prices, tax revenues, tourism and leisure spending, etc. (Berends *et al.*, 2003; Soest & Blom, 2003; Ruijgrok *et al.*, 2004; Ministerie van LNV, 2006; Westerink *et al.*, 2013). At the national level this growing awareness was most spectacularly illustrated by an initiative of the '*Dutch Cultural Landscape Association*' (Vereniging Nederlands Cultuurlandschap). In 2007 it started a campaign which targeted an overall investment of 12 billion euros to maintain, preserve and restore rural landscapes. As foreseen, this investment would enable the creation of a fund that generated sufficient interest revenue for a self-sustainable, market-conforming remuneration system for the provision of landscape and nature values (Nederlandse Vereniging voor Cultuurlandschap, 2007). According to the campaign leaders, such a financial impulse would be economically feasible due to its positive effects on rural economies, as supported by the outcomes of scientific scenario studies. Notwithstanding a lot of media attention and support from a wide variety of social movements, the overall financial commitment of public and private actors turned out to be rather disappointing. This is partly to be explained by rather unfortunate timing, given the forthcoming financial crisis in 2008. Campaign-leaders further admit that their unambiguous choice of farmers and other private landowners as key players in future nature and landscape management has been another important reason. It echoes, again, national controversies around the costs and benefits of agri-environmental policy instruments (Jongeneel *et al.*, 2012; Kleijn *et al.*, 2001a, 2001b; Berendse 2001, 2003; Terwan & Guldemond, 2001; Kleijn, 2013; Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, 2011).

This debate interlinks in many ways with emerging self-governance initiatives. In the last two decades more than 150 agri-environmental cooperatives have emerged in the Netherlands (Joldersma *et al.*, 2009). These new farmers' collectives increasingly function as intermediary organizations between public administrations and individual farmers in the provision of nature and landscape values. Their intermediary function may cover different aspects, such as a better territory-based coordination of agri-environmental measures, a closer collaboration with professional nature organizations and – more generally- re-establishing trust-based relationships between farmers and policy-actors (Wiskerke *et al.*, 2003; Joldersma *et al.*, 2009; Swagemakers, 2008; Stuiver, 2008; Eshuis, 2006). Although certainly not always broadly accepted and embraced, these agri-environmental cooperatives attract growing policy interest as self-governance initiatives, the more so if they also show an interest in market-led approaches. Frequently, agri-environmental cooperatives get involved in '*new production systems*' and '*territorial commodification*', as distinguished by Buller and Morris (see e.g. www.duinboeren.nl; www.denhaneker.nl; www.waddengoud.nl; www.vechtdalproducten.nl, www.groenewoud.nl).

These farmer-led self-governance initiatives are more generally associated with the provision of agri-environmental services. Initially, they were exclusively within the National Ecological Main Structure (NEM), a policy framework that aims to create more robust corridors between scattered nature areas to improve overall nature policy performances. When provincial administrations start to look for additional opportunities to remunerate agri-environmental services outside these NEM areas (PLUREL, 2008a and 2008b), this goes along with different ways to mobilize extra funding. It involves experiments with so-called 'landscape auctions' that intend to generate interest among rural and urban dwellers for the 'adoption' of landscape elements for certain periods and to contribute, in that way, more directly to their maintenance and preservation by farmers and other landowners (www.landschapsveiling.nl). Some provinces develop Landscape Funds with interest bonus systems sponsored by private companies as another way to mobilize direct commitment to nature and landscape management (www.GroeneWoud.nl.). Policy administrations further explore the opportunities of '*Green for Red'* constructions, compensation payments for nature and landscape management in the case of urban expansion and large scale rural infrastructural works. A similar 'skimming off' principle underlies the experiments with '*New Rural Estates*', a novel policy instrument that conditions extra regulatory space for rural construction to private willingness to invest in nature and landscape values. As such, it is expected that *New Rural Estates* may contribute in similar ways to rural '*architectural allure*', as Dutch traditional rural estates with roots in the aristocracy and early industrial revolution (Commissie Hoeksche Waard, 2005; Provinciale Staten Zuid-Holland, 2005). Although less ambitious, provincial administrations experiment, for similar purposes, with policy tools that condition rural business expansion opportunities to the acceptance of beyond the legally required investments in landscape values (Provincie Limburg, 2008). As by far the most important landowners in the Netherlands, farmers demonstrate a clear interest in these novel, hybrid remuneration systems for the provision of nature and landscape values.

Yet, these remain the subject of debate, with strong belief by advocates in the societal benefits of on-going self-governance initiatives and the prospects of new public-private partnerships. Others are more skeptical and associate a growing dependency on private funding primarily with loss of policy interest in the preservation of public goods and the emergence of new exclusion mechanisms where, e.g., the 'better offs' can permit themselves to create their own 'rural idylls'. These controversies around the (re-) distribution of the responsibilities between public, private and civil actors in the governance of agri-environmental services reveal the absence of widely accepted rules and norms. As demonstrated in the next sections, there are other indicators for institutional voids that become especially manifest at the interfaces between policy levels and between policy and practice.

4.4 Interfaces with EU's Rural Development Program

In 1992 the EU passed its Agri-Environment Regulation 2078/92. It made it possible to financially compensate farmers for the provision of environmental services. Since then, previously existing Dutch voluntary agri-environmental measures have been incorporated into EU regulations and frameworks. This went along with a significant expansion of agri-environmental policy budgets and eligible rural areas, especially when the EU prohibited allocating the national RDP budget to the purchase of agricultural land with the intention to transfer its management to professional nature organizations. On the initiative of the then National Counsel for Rural Areas, a national lobby succeeded in convincing the EU of its detrimental effect on more farm-based rural development. It decided that Dutch RDP budgets could be solely allocated to agri-environmental management by farmers or other private land owners. For the period 2007-2013 this covered a budget of 145 million euro, about one third of the overall national RDP budget, a relatively high percentage compared to most other EU member states (Copus, 2009). It confirms the financial significance of European co-funding for national agri-environmental policy and gives an idea of the relevance of the following controversies that emerged at the interfaces between RDP regulations and Dutch agri-environmental policy frameworks.

4.4.1. Individual contract partners

RDP accountability regulations assume contracts with individual beneficiaries. For different reasons, this is increasingly perceived as a barrier in the Netherlands. First, there is a growing awareness of the need for territory-based coordination to improve the effectiveness of agri-environmental measures. Secondly, the transaction costs of frameworks with individual beneficiaries are relatively high, another important reason to experiment with more collective delivery systems. Yet, RDP regulations do not allow for contract relationships with agri-environmental cooperatives. As a 'backstage solution' farmers may authorize their environmental cooperative to withdraw a certain percentage of their financial compensation for administrative and other services as territorial targeting and coordination. It only partly meets the national demand for extra experimental space for self-governance approaches.

4.4.2 Rigidity of contract periods

Another issue concerns the length of contract periods of agri-environmental measures. For multiple reasons, the Netherlands is experimenting with longer contract periods (Plurel, 2008). First, it is expected that longer contract periods will contribute positively to farmers' trust in the continuity of public financial support and, as such, enlarge their willingness to participate in agri-environmental schemes. Secondly, it is foreseen that providing longer contract periods will improve the effectiveness of agri-environmental measures, since it acknowledges that the restoration of nature values requires long time periods. Thirdly, longer contract periods may create extra opportunities for multifunctional rural business models that succeed in valorizing their nature and landscape management internally, through their involvement in other rural markets (Broekhuizen *et al*, 2008; see also Chapters 3 and 5). Within wider sets of new farm-based rural development activities, agri-environmental services might become important components in the creation of attractive rural meeting places. The idea to incorporate agri-environmental services in a wider multifunctional rural business model has been actively explored in the national '*Farming for nature*' project. Yet, initial plans to opt for contract periods of thirty years were adapted, due to incompatibility with EU state-support proof requirements (Lubbers, 2009). This shows how the length of contract-periods may become part of institutional voids in multi-level governance settings.

4.4.3 Alternative remuneration systems

RDP regulation 1698/2005 states that '*where appropriate beneficiaries may be selected on the basis of calls for tender, applying criteria of economic and environmental efficiency*' and provides as such opportunities for more market-conforming price settings and more efficient nature and landscape management within the limits of EU state-proof requirements. In 2005 the National Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Fishery started a pilot project with a tender system. Although it has never been officially evaluated, it has been informally communicated that overall pilot results have been positive for the creation of new nature and landscape elements such as hedgerows, ponds, footpaths, ecological management of ditch-sides, water-retention, etc. Not surprisingly, it turns out to be more complicated to work with tender systems in the case of already existing landscape elements due to '*single provider*' problems. The Ministry has decided to stop its tender experiment, although some stakeholders feel that it deserves further exploration. The pilot is illustrative of national institutional interest in alternative remuneration systems that overcome the shortcomings of the '*income foregone principle*' as the basis for agri-environmental payments. This principle is thought to be too general and insufficiently stimulating. Again, this search for alternative remuneration systems involves 'backstage' solutions. The on-going expansion of regional and local experiments with alternative remuneration issues in the Netherlands brought rather lengthy European state-support approval procedures and high administrative costs for involved policy bodies. It made their initiators experience these procedures frequently as discouraging and frustrating (Zwaan and Goverde, 2008). This policy-practice inconvenience induced the development of a '*National Catalogue for Green and Blue Services'* with the

objective to facilitate '*the provision of supra-legal public achievements aimed at the realization of public demands concerning nature, landscape, water management and recreational use*' (LNV and IPO, 2007). Since its official EU approval in 2007, this Catalogue has enlarged national opportunities to implement '*cost recovering compensations*' in accordance with EU state-aid proof conditions. The Catalogue provides a toolbox for tailor made solutions, according to local specificities and wishes. One of its incompatibilities with prevailing RDP regulations concerns the inclusion of extra opportunities to bundle agri-environmental measures in clusters to improve their internal coherence. Such bundling is thought to be of especial importance for meadow bird, field margin and hedgerow management. So far the Catalogue instruments continue to be excluded from RDP co-financing. Analytically, it stresses how institutional voids in multi-level agri-environmental governance may center in the specific Dutch setting especially on the creation of experimental space for more territory based and performance-oriented self-governance initiatives.

4.5 National-provincial policy interfaces

This focus on self-governance may be further illustrated by on-going devolution tendencies in the Netherlands. Since 2010, formal agri-environmental policy responsibility has been largely de-centralized to provincial administrations after a period of negotiation around the following policy ambitions: 1) extra room for region specific and tailor made solutions; 2) more coherence between nature and landscape management and broader rural development challenges; 3) more '*hands off*' steering to reduce policy transaction costs; and 4) extra financial flows for landscape management (Inter Provinciaal Overleg, 2007). Provincial administrations agreed to develop Regional Nature Management programmes to realize these ambitions, covering issues such as financial commitment and responsibilities, and compliance and coherence with National Ecological Main Structure and European (e.g. Natura-2000) frameworks. At the same time, it is emphasized that provincial administrations will stay at a distance from the practicalities of nature and landscape management. The latter is thought to be primarily the responsibility of professional nature organizations, agri-environmental cooperatives and other private landowners. These actors are expected to cooperate intensively at the territorial level to increase the overall consistency and coherence of nature and landscape management. A certification system will guarantee sufficient internal quality control mechanisms through the mandatory participation of individual and collective providers. Professional nature organizations and agri-environmental cooperatives will have to apply for the status of '*certified provider*' (www.natuurbeheersubsidie.nl).

These provincial policy plans are interwoven with the introduction of rural policy performance contracts between national and provincial administrations. This novel rural policy accountability arrangement traces back to 2006, when policy frameworks from different national ministries were merged into the so-called '*Investment Budget Rural Areas*' (IBRA), a decision in line with the National Agenda for a Living

Countryside, a policy framework that aims to stimulate more integrated rural policy delivery approaches. The IBRA framework transfers rural policy responsibility to provincial administrations under specific conditions. Objectives set by national and provincial policy actors become the starting point for mutual negotiations on priority setting, budget allocation and co-financing responsibilities. The policy experiment redefines the role of national government from '*priority setter*' towards '*coordinator of policy objectives*' and '*facilitator of lower level rural policy delivery*' (Kuinder and Selnes, 2008). It gives provincial administrations extra space for more territory based and integrated rural governance. Table 4.1 gives an impression of the national policy agreement with the largest Dutch province, Gelderland, on the performance indicators to be realized in the period 2007-2013.

It shows how performance targets are set for the themes nature, agriculture, leisure and soil and that the Provincial IBRA budget will be primarily spent on the realization of nature objectives. A case-study among provincial stakeholders reveals that these are generally positive about this novel accountability approach (Oostindie, 2010). Besides more space for place-based integration of policy fields, provincial administrators expect to reduce policy transaction costs and to develop more long term partnerships with rural stakeholders, through covenants with those stakeholders that agree to actively contribute to the fulfillment of IBRA targets through their social capital, networks, and expertise and co-financing resources. The covenant with the Provincial Landscape Organization, for instance, refers to its 43,000 members, 650 volunteers and 150 business relations that may contribute to the realization of performance targets as agreed upon. Provincial administrative focus on covenant-

Theme	Performance	Unit	Number
Nature	Purchase of 'new nature'	Hectare	182
	Design of 'new nature'	Hectare	2264
	Construction of 'robust' ecological linkages	Hectare	870
	Design and implementation of robust linkages	Hectare	1267
	New nature through exchange of land resources	Hectare	4026
	Reduction of nature ' bottlenecks'	Number	6
Agriculture	Improvement of spatial structure	Hectare	15351
	Improvement of soil structure	Hectare	553
Leisure	Purchase of land resources for 'leisure in urban vicinity'	Hectare	206
	Facilitation through exchange of land resources	Hectare	119
	Design and implementation of 'leisure in urban vicinity'	Hectare	373
	Reduction of bottlenecks for long distance hiking tracks	Kilometer	844
	Reduction of bottlenecks for long distance cycling tracks	Kilometer	431
	Reduction of bottlenecks for water sport facilities	Kilometer	131
Soil	Provincial policy vision on sustainable soil use	Number	1
	Provincial policy programme for soil decontamination	Number	1

Table 4.1 IBRA rural policy performance indicators for Gelderland (source; Vital Gelderland, 2007).

based partnerships may be further illustrated by the following figures: 520 million of its total 700 million rural policy budget for 2007-2013 has been allocated to covenant-partners such as Water Boards, Nature and Landscape Organizations and Municipalities that commit themselves to specific sub-targets and co-investments in line with overall provincial IBRA targets (Gedeputeerde Staten Gelderland and Staatsbosbeheer 2008; Gedeputeerde Staten Gelderland and Gelders Landschap 2008).

Again, these experiments with novel accountability arrangements between rural policy actors and rural stakeholders are imbued with institutional voids. First, alignment problems with EU regulatory frameworks appear again. The seven-year contract-period between national and provincial administrations exceeds the accountability periods of RDP measures. The Provincial RDP budget in Gelderland amounts to a total of about 60 million euro for the period 2006-2013, about 10% of the total provincial rural policy budget in this period. This resulted in the decision to disconnect the RDP-budget completely from the IBRA framework and to use RDP money exclusively for projects initiated by stakeholders that are not already part of covenants and, thus, continue to depend on other public (co-) funding opportunities.
Secondly, and less simple to resolve by similar 'backstage solutions', potential non-compliance consequences remain largely obscure for stakeholders. National IBRA evaluation and monitoring studies conclude that this closely relates to the presence of contrasting ideas about the steering philosophy of performance contracts. From a governance perspective these are primarily perceived as a novel instrument that may facilitate collective learning, negotiation and the creation of shared views, ideas, opinions and beliefs. Eventual non-compliance, therefore, will be the subject of debate, learning and negotiation. Contrastingly, from a 'governing' perspective performance, contracts are associated with 'rock hard' agreements that may have severe consequences in the case of non-compliance. As argued, national IBRA discourse often reflects a mixture of both steering perspectives (Kuindersma and Selnes, 2008; Boonstra *et al.*, 2007).

In Gelderland this institutional controversy goes along with new types of exclusion mechanisms. So far, agri-environmental cooperatives have applied unsuccessfully for covenant status and continue to depend on project-based support, associated with more bureaucracy, more uncertainty and less continuity in their relations with public administrations. Provincial administrators agree that co-financing ability is an important criterion in the selection of covenant partners and, thus, for the exclusion of relatively resource poor agri-environmental cooperatives. More generally, it is noticed that performance contracts made provincial policy makers reluctant to support participatory and bottom up initiatives without straightforward interlinkages to IBRA performance targets. This is in line with evaluation studies that conclude that performance contracts have been interpreted and used rather differently by provincial politicians in the Netherlands (Kuindersma & Boonstra, 2010; Kamphorst & Selners, 2007).

4.6 Conclusions

The changing balance between state-led versus market-led agri-environmental delivery systems in Europe, manifests itself in specific ways in the Netherlands. In addition to more market-led approaches, the Netherlands knows a growing variety of other expressions of self-governance and self-regulation initiatives that intend to overcome the rigidity of hierarchical agri-environmental regulatory frameworks. The novelty of these new institutional arrangements resides, especially, in more collective and territorial approaches, more performance based accountability arrangements and more hybrid remuneration systems. These further confirm that a market- versus state-led dichotomy may be increasingly inadequate to capture the current redistribution of responsibilities between public, private and civil actors in European agri-environmental delivery systems. As emphasized, the more complex and fuzzy characteristics of these redistribution processes go along with different types of institutional voids: the absence of transparent and widely accepted rules, the need to (re-) negotiate institutional rules and norms of appropriate behaviour and the imperative of new conceptions of legitimate political interventions. These institutional voids have been particularly identified at the interfaces between policy levels and between policy actors and practitioners. Especially at these interfaces, rules and regulations become the subject of debate and are being re-interpreted. Disagreements may be resolved by '*backstage solutions'* such as the Dutch National Catalogue of Green and Blue Services, which enlarged national opportunities to remunerate agri-environmental services in novel ways, although so far without RDP co-financing opportunities. Other Dutch self-governance initiatives that aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of agri-environmental governance continue to be surrounded by uncertainties and controversies and represent, as such, more persistent institutional voids in terms of the co-existence of differentiating ideas, beliefs and expectations and the absence of coherence, consistence and synchronicity in multi-level governance settings.

In this respect Dutch agri-environmental cooperatives may derive hope from the EU's intention to support more actively collective approaches in the forthcoming third RDP programme period as formulated in circulating drafts: '*In many situations the synergies resulting from a commitment undertaken jointly by a group of farmers multiplies the environmental benefit*' (European Commission, 2011). This suggests that backstage solutions may trickle down to the front stage by their incorporation into new rules that provide extra opportunities to contract farmers' collectives and compensate these more appropriately for their different types of services. Other RDP dynamics stem less optimistic. The new Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, for instance, is criticised for overly strict and less meaningful accountability rules (Dwyer, 2010; Mantino, 2009), whereas other RDP evaluation studies express their concerns about the future of LEADER. Dax *et al*. (2012) conclude that '*the principles of innovative, area-based local strategies as guiding the LEADER programme are in danger of becoming buzzwords'*. Simultaneously, it is admitted that it is often all but clear as to whom to blame for these rural policy tendencies. Often

stakeholders are uncertain about '*whether more restrictive sets of operating rules are a reflection of the requirements in the original European programme regulations or whether they reflect national/departmental interpretations*' (ibid:18). This recalls the significance of institutional voids and confirms meta-governance scholars' ideas about the need for new institutional arrangements that '*devolve political competence and decision making power to governance networks*' (Sorensen & Torfing, 2009:246) through new balances between '*hands-off*' and '*hands-on'* steering, to overcome the '*wicked*' problems of multi-level governance. The '*wickedness*' of these problems did appear in various ways in this analysis of European agri-environmental governance, with specific attention to farmer-led and policy actors' driven attempts to come to new institutional arrangements in the Dutch contextual setting. As concluded, the future of these newly emerging self-governance and self-regulation initiatives is closely interwoven with 1) the provision of (extra) experimental space within complex institutional settings; 2) the ability to create synchronicity, coherence and consistency within multi-level governance networks; and 3) the exploration of 'front-stage and 'backstage' solutions for the manifold institutional voids in the European multi-level governance of agri-environmental services.

The central role of nested markets in European rural development

5

5. The central role of nested markets in European rural development[1]

Abstract

In on-going debate about European rural development there is a lot of attention for alternative food networks and their potentials to sustain food production and consumption systems. This chapter introduces the notion of 'nested markets' with the objective to theorize the significance of alternative market relations from a broader perspective on their impacts on sustainable agricultural and rural development. This notion will be associated with the relevance of distinctive normative frameworks and practices that enable to preserve and redesign the specificity product, place and networks in market relations. After a wider impression of the underlying mechanisms, social forces and socio-economic impacts of unfolding nested rural markets in Europe, the chapter will end with some reflections on their interwovenness with agriculture's multifunctionality.

1 / In co-authorship with Jan Douwe van der Ploeg, Rudolf van Broekhuizen, Flaminia Ventura and Pierluigi Milone this chapter has been earlier published in Revista da Economia Agraria Volume 2, 2010. As a contribution to broader comparative analysis of rural development in Europe, Brazil and China the original document included an alternative, more European policy oriented introduction.

5.1 Introduction

Rural sciences in the last decades have known vivid debate about the distinctiveness, performances and prospects of agri-food initiatives, encompassing broader notions such as *alternative food networks, short food chains* and *local food systems* (Wilson, 2012; Feagan 2007; Dupuis and Goodman 2005; Neilson and Pritchard, 2010). This body of literature scrutinizes from multiple angles and theoretical stands the characteristics and potentials of new responses to a variety of negative social, cultural, environmental and spatial externalities of globalizing food regimes. More generally, it is increasingly widely accepted that this does not allow for simple dichotomies such as local-global and conventional-alternative. These turn out to be hardly fruitful for a thorough understanding of ongoing processes of change in food production and consumption patterns. Often, elements of both globalized as well as re-localized food systems are combined, building upon new production-consumption networks in diverse local food economies (Watts *et al*., 2005), new roles for '*citizen-consumers'* (Spaargaren & Oosterveer, 2012) and new multistakeholder food governance initiatives (Fuchs *et al*., 2011). This wider agri-food literature echoes more or less optimism about the transformative capacity of changing food production and consumption systems in relation to rural processes of change. Rural development scholars, especially, associate food quality differentiation processes with other crucial components of rural restructuring and change (Ploeg *et al*., 2000; Ploeg & Renting 2004; Renting *et al*., 2003). Political economy inspired scholars perceive these same food quality differentiation tendencies more as defence lines against or as part of hegemonic food market forces that should not be mistaken for drivers of fundamental rural change (Goodman 2004; Winter, 2003). Scholars with more intermediary positions underline that food chain hybridization tendencies, emerging at the interfaces between conventional and alternative food markets, are difficult to assess in terms of potential contributions to rural development (Slee and Kirwan, 2008) or make a distinction between multiple transition pathways towards more sustainable food production and consumption patterns, as part of socio-technical network constellations that embody specific promises, expectations and limitations (Roep & Wiskerke, 2011).

This chapter aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the transformative capacity of AFNs in Europe by positioning these in the wider context of the governance of *rural* markets, a perspective that acknowledges the significance of differences in the market engagement of European farm-enterprises as part of renewed strategic preferences for multifunctional farm-development trajectories. This wider perspective enables recognition of the relevance of active synergy construction at different scale levels and the multi-dimensional nature of farm-based food quality construction. These analytically different, although in practice closely interwoven, components of active boundary creation vis-a-vis hegemonic food market forces will be synthesized with the help of the notion '*nested markets*'. This theoretical device integrates traditional and new multi-actor driven coordination mechanisms that oppose, mediate and reshape hegemonic food market forces and confirms Marsden's and Sonnino's (2005:193) definition of sustainable rural devel-

opment which '*redefines nature by re-emphasizing food production and agro-ecology and which re-asserts the socio-environmental role of agriculture as a major agent in sustaining rural areas*'. Reflections on this wider perspective on the role of AFNs within multifunctional agricultural pathways will be preceded by a general characterization of European farm based rural development practices and their interrelations with rural markets.

5.2 Rural development practices in Europe

As has been argued elsewhere, an important and telling feature of rural development as it occurs throughout Europe is that it already unfolded *in practice* before it explicitly became the object of a rural development (RD) policy. Many of the farm-based RD activities we now know date back to before the mid-1990s when the development of RD policies started at regional, national and supranational levels (see e.g. Oostindie and Parrot 2001; Oostindie *et al.*, 2002). This shows that, in Europe, RD is primarily an endogenous process. It stems from grass root level initiatives and is driven by the interests, prospects, innovativeness and sturdiness of the many local actors that are involved in it. This characteristic remains the dominant one – even since the mid-1990s when local RD activities became increasingly supported through RD policies (Rizow, 2005; European Network for Rural Development, 2009).

By the end of the 1990s it was clear that rural development activities had a strong focus on creating new opportunities to generate income and employment. Many RD activities were formulated as a response to the squeeze on agriculture. However, not *all* activities oriented towards generating incomes were considered as rural development. The notion of rural development was, at that time, specifically used to describe (and group together) activities that helped to improve the relations between agriculture and the wider society. In this respect, the concept of rural development became a normative notion. Finally it also became clear that rural development was not an *adieu* to farming. Although it was recognized that the rural economy was far wider than agriculture alone, it was felt, at the same time, that agriculture could be transformed and become again an indispensable (although far from dominant) part of the rural economy.

Thus, different but strongly interrelated elements defined the concept and praxis of rural development. The creation of new connections within society as a whole was a central theme: new goods and new services were to be produced to meet the needs and expectations of today's citizens. This was highlighted in the Declaration of Cork: "European citizens pay growing attention to the quality of life in general, and to questions of quality, health, safety, personal development and leisure in particular, and […] rural areas are in a unique position to respond to these interests, and offer grounds for a genuine, modern development model of quality" (1996:1). Consequently, rural development was defined as "responding to growing requests for more quality, health, safety, personal development and leisure, and improving rural

well-being" (ibid). At the same time it was recognized that such responses could also counter the squeeze on agriculture. Rural development aims, as the Declaration of Cork stressed, 'at reversing rural out-migration, combating poverty, stimulating employment and equality of opportunity' (ibid).

A third element was also stressed: that farming itself was to be transformed. In order to meet new needs and expectations and create additional income and employment, rural development required a reconfiguration of rural resources: agriculture was to be reshaped according to a new rationale (see Ploeg *et al.*, 2000; Marsden, 2003). Multifunctionality, less dependency on external resources, an improved, more sustainable use of internally available resources (notably nature), new ways to mobilize resources and new forms of cooperation, became important expressions of this new rural development rationale.

Since the late 1990s a considerable part of European agriculture has been unfolding along these lines. Although estimates about the percentage of farms engaged in different expressions of the new rural development rationale differ considerably – just as data on their economic relevance are highly contested – it is without doubt that European agriculture increasingly contains a dual structure. On the one hand there is one pole (see A in Figure 1) that groups together multifunctional farms that produce classical commodities alongside a range of new products and services and which try to avoid a high dependency on external inputs and credit. On the other, there is a second pole (see B in Figure 1) of highly specialized farms that are strongly integrated into markets on the input side of the farm (including the capital market). The dynamics of the two poles are increasingly diverging. Whilst on the second pole (B), further scale-enlargement, an accelerated industrialization of the process of production and integration into large 'chains' are the beacons that guide the farm development trajectory,[2,3] on the first one (A), it is quality increases, the ongoing construction of synergy, and the improvement of circuits that link to consumers that provide the main guide-lines. In more economic terms, the duality shown in Figure 1 is one of 'economies of scale' (B) versus 'economies of scope' (A). Although the two poles might very well be defined, at the level of theory, in contrasting and mutually exclusive terms, in practice there will be, and are, considerable overlaps and nuances (as shown in Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 helps to clarify why assessments of the quantitative presence of both types of agriculture differ so much. If line x is used to demarcate the most developed expressions of rural development (i.e. those farms located on the left side of line x: the farms that are highly diversified), then their number will be relatively low. If, however, the average situation (the peak between x and y) is also taken into con-

2 / 3 / On the other hand, it is also possible that highly diversified farm enterprises that derive a small proportion of their income (less than 50%) from strictly defined agrarian activities are excluded from the database. Hence, the most 'multifunctional' farm units disappear out of sight. This is particularly the case with the construction of European statistics (EUROSTAT and RICA).

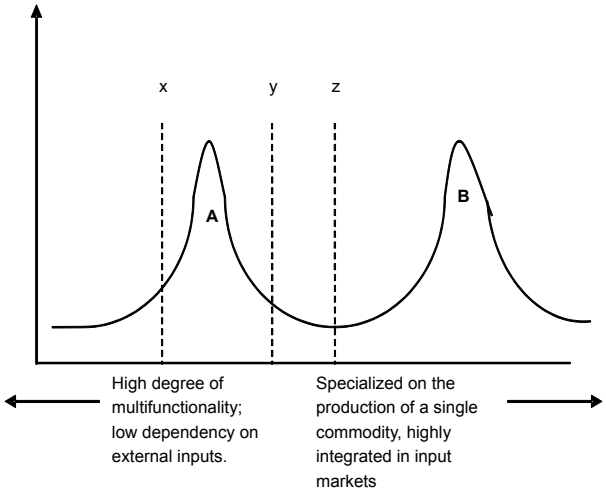

Figure 5.1 A schematic representation of the duality of European agriculture

sideration, the number will be far higher, and the option for line z will render very different results.[4] Beyond that, one has to take the time dimension into consideration. Rural development and the further development of conventional agriculture are dynamic phenomena that are critically affected by a range of politico-economic and cultural conditions. Hence, measurements might render different results in different years.

One comparative analysis of the socio-economic impact of rural development activities (carried out in Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Spain and published in 2002)[5] revealed that 51% of farmers were involved in multifunctional activities, i.e. diversifying their farm operations towards the delivery of new products and services (high quality products, direct marketing, on-farm processing, organic products, regional products, agro-tourism, management of nature and landscape, energy production, care facilities, delivery of other rural services, etc.).[6] Sixty per cent were actively searching for new forms of cost reduction (reducing the use of external inputs, reducing dependency on banking circuits, etc.).

4 / Another problem is that many farmers (7 out of every 20 according to Roest et al., 2010) do not officially declare their involvement in multifunctional activities. The reasons for this can vary. In the Netherlands such registration implies extra financial burdens, which discourages farmers from declaring their involvement in such activities. For a general discussion see van der Ploeg, 2003.

5 / This research included a survey in the six countries (n=3.264) and an extensive analysis of secondary data contained in different databases. The main results are presented in van der Ploeg, Long and Banks (2002)

6 / According to the Dutch Farm Accountancy Network (BIN) 45% of all farms were involved in some form of multifunctionality (Roest et al., 2010, p. 9, Tab. 2.1.), at least when it is assumed that such activities are not combined. On the other hand, the list of activities included is far from exhaustive.

These two categories overlapped to a degree, with 31% of farmers engaged in both forms. Extrapolated to the agricultural sectors of these six countries, these figures suggest that diversification provided an *extra net value added* in total of 5.9 billion Euros per year. New forms of cost reduction contributed another 5.7 billion Euros (for the six countries) to farm family income. This sum (11.6 billion Euros/year) can be compared to the total farming income per year in the six countries (41.4 billion). This implies that at the start of the decade rural development activities were contributing to overall agricultural incomes, by roughly 25%. For the *farms* that are *de facto* involved in RD activities this contribution is, on average, higher. It increases significantly when a farm increases the *number* of RD activities in which it is involved (Oostindie *et al.*, 2002). This highlights the importance of synergy, which we will return to later. If the extra income generated through pluriactivity is added to the equation, than some 50% of all the income of farming derives from sources other than specialized farming (Ploeg *et al*., 2002, pp. 180-191).

Several other comparable studies have since been undertaken.[7] Some interesting work has been undertaken in France on different 'activity systems' within the agricultural sector. The notion of an activity system is based on the view that the majority of French farm households do not conform to the canonical model of the specialized farm household that came to the fore in the 1960s (i.e. a household associated with a full time farm which provides its sole source of income). The analysis of time series data shows that full time farms associated with households with no 'other gainful activities' (OGA) and no pension, decreased from 31.4% of the total number of farms in 1979 to 20.8% in 2000. On the other hand, the share of farms associated with households benefiting from other gainful activities grew from 39.1% in 1979, to 41.1% in 1989 and to 49.0% in 2000.[8] Most of this increase occurred on full time farms without any pensions. Today, full time farms with OGA outnumber those without OGA. The former occupy 34.8% of the total agricultural area, the latter 31.6% (Laurent and Remy, 1998; Laurent, 2005; Ploeg *et al*., 2009). This implies that the impact of non-traditional activities (OGA or RD activities) is considerable and growing. To put it differently: without RD activities many farms (we should probably say: many rural enterprises) would not be economically viable and total employment and income levels in the countryside would be lower.

Other recent Italian research has focused on the *changing balance* between specialized farming and multi-functional agriculture (Rooij et al, 2013). The research includes a survey (n=1,600) among large and full time farmers receiving more than

7 **/** Aguglia, et al (2009) present a comparative analysis that embraces Italy and the Netherlands, which is based on INEA and LEI data. It shows that (based on our own regrouping) 64% of farms in the Netherlands are involved in new diversification activities, 31% in traditional ones and 47% in pluriactivity. The sum totals more than 100%, a reflection of the tendency of many farms to combine different new activities. For Italy the comparable data are 83%, 34% and 42% respectively.
8 **/** Using the European Network for Farm Accountancy (RICA), Borsotto & Henke (2007) show that the contribution of such 'gainful activities is considerable and significant, both in Italy and in the rest of Europe.


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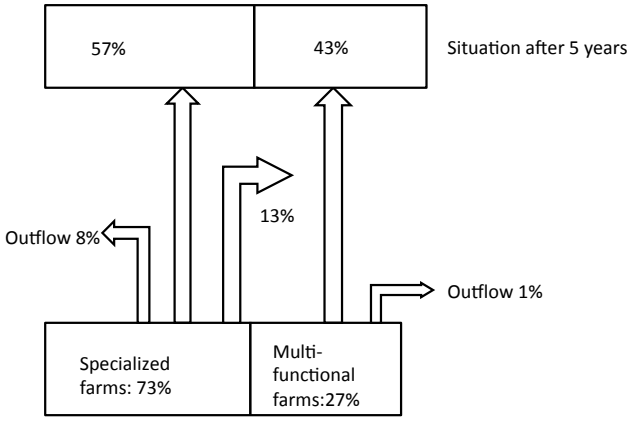

Figure 5.2 Dynamics in Italian agriculture

15,000 Euros per year for direct income support (hence, several aspects of this differ from the IMPACT research and the French research referred to in previous sections). Figure 5.2 contains a summary of some central data. To begin with, in 2008 (the year in which the survey was applied) 27% of the farms of this particular subgroup could be classified (according to the farmers themselves) as multifunctional farms that had adopted new activities alongside 'traditional' farming activities. The remaining 73% of the farms were specialized solely on traditional activities. Eight per cent of this later group expected that the farm would be closed within the next five years. In the multifunctional group this was only 1%. Thirteen per cent of the specialized farmers planned to integrate one of more new RD activities into their farm within the next five years. Together these changes would imply that over the coming 5 years the distribution between specialized and multifunctional farms will change to 57% specialized and 43% multifunctional. When farmers younger than 40 years were considered the distribution shifts to 49 and 51% respectively.[9]

The same research also probed investment patterns. Of the specialized farmers, 16% indicated that they had actively invested in food production during the last five years, less than half the number of multifunctional farmers who had done so (36%). And in the coming five years 27% of the specialized farmers said that they would invest in food production, while 44% of the multifunctional farmers had plans to invest in food production.

This indicates that multifunctional farming definitely does not represent an *adieu* to farming as such. It is rather the other way around. Multifunctionality increasingly supports food production. The earnings obtained from new activities help farmers to continue with, and to invest in, classical agricultural activities. This is especially important in the current epoch in which agriculture is facing the consequences of the general economic crisis.

9 **/** These data reveal how the relative weight of the A and B poles in Figure 3 are changing.

Also, research in the Netherlands[10] shows that there is a positive interrelation between multifunctionality and food production. A positive interrelation tends to become stronger over time as the relevance of new activities in overall farm family income increases. Farmers indicate that they want to enlarge their own enterprises through new activities: that they want to reduce their dependency. Enlarging control over the marketing of their products is equally important. Improving contacts and communication with consumers and non-agrarian people is another driver. Internal farm motives also play an important role: increasing the income, enlarging the possibilities for farm-succession and creating employment opportunities are amongst these "internal" drivers. The research programme captures these different motives in the telling synthesis: the "desire to farm differently" (see Chapter 3).

Within the panorama discussed so far, the combination of farming and energy production highlights many of the main potentials. On-farm energy production allows for decentralized, flexible, robust and sustainable forms of energy production (Knickel, 2002). In specialized dairy farming areas in the north of Italy new installations for the production of bio-gas have been developed that use manure, slurry, silage, corn and/or waste flows from processing industries. This permits the farms involved to continue to cultivate their fields, deciding, according to market relations, whether the products will be used for animal feeding or for energy production. This has helped avoid the deactivation or closure of many animal-breeding enterprises. Similar developments have occurred in the Dutch horticultural district (the Westland). Horticultural enterprises are increasingly using their units to produce electricity which is fed into the national networks, while the associated heat and CO2 are fed into the glasshouses in order to sustain and improve high productivity levels in horticultural production. Currently, several horticultural enterprises earn more money from electricity than with tomatoes or paprikas or whatever. In this area of enterprise, regulatory schemes are decisive: they can permit or even stimulate these new, promising forms of multifunctionality. But they can also be highly adverse, raising barriers to participation. In this respect there is considerable variety throughout Europe.

5.3 The rise of new, 'nested' markets as a key feature of rural development processes in Europe

As argued in the previous section, a considerable part of rural development in Europe is centred upon the production of new products and services that embody and represent new relations between town and countryside, between agriculture and the wider society. These new products and services are built upon, and imply, a reconstitution of rural resources; they are, simultaneously, responses to the squeeze on agriculture. These new products and services, that are pivotal to rural develop-

10 / The research programme on the 'Dynamics and Robustness of Multifunctional Farming', carried out by Wageningen University (Rural Sociology Department) and financed by the Taskforce Multifunctional Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture.

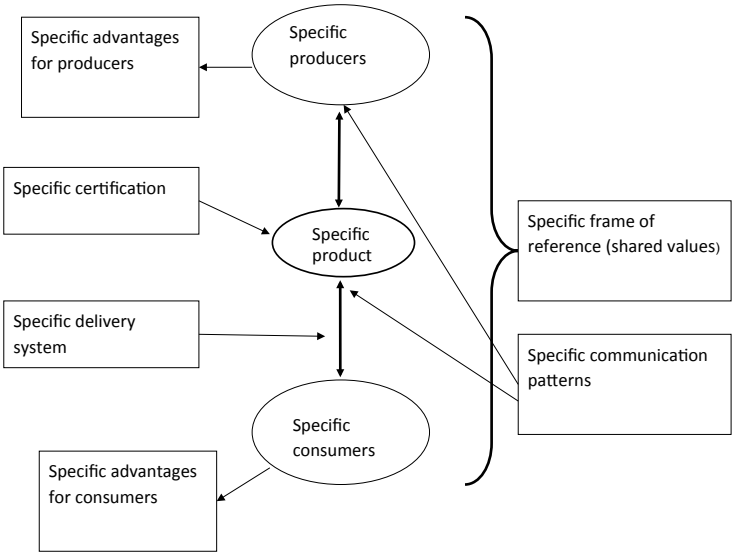

Figure 5.3 The contours of a nested market centred on distinctive products

ment, require markets. More often than not these are new markets that differ from the large agricultural and food markets. The nature, structure and dynamics of these new markets may be described as nested markets. The notion of "nested" markets allows emphasis on the fact that market analysis should not be limited to delivery systems only and that the unfolding of new market segments will be located in and linked to wider markets, but, simultaneously, will be distantiated from these wider markets (Polman et al. 2010). A better understanding of the dynamics, reach and limitations of "alternative food networks", therefore, requires insights into these processes of interlinking and distantiation.[11] This implies that the analysis should focus on (a) concrete transactions, (b) that occur along concrete relations and connections and (c) which imply concrete advantages for concrete persons involved in these transactions. It is equally assumed that (d) these transactions are embedded in a concrete framework. In short, we focus on marketplaces and the patterns in which they are embedded. We will distinguish and discuss three forms: (3.1) markets for distinctive private products and services; (3.2) specific connections between different markets that emerge out of the creation of multifunctionality; and (3.3.) markets for public goods.[12] Throughout this discussion we will pay attention to both the farm enterprise level and the territorial level.

11 **/** Just as the centre of a city is part of the city; however, it is not just any old part but a distinctive part that offers particular features.

12 **/** Direct selling (through on-farm shops, farmers' markets, subscription systems, internet selling, delivery systems etc.) is not discussed here as a separate category. Adequate and theoretically underpinned descriptions can be found in Milone & Ventura (2000) and Brunori *et al.* (2009). The most characteristic features of direct selling are shared with the new markets for distinctive products and services, discussed later in this article.

5.4. New markets for distinctive products and services

A first set of nested markets is associated with, if not rooted in, *distinctive products*. The main examples include high quality products, regional specialties and organic food products and, in terms of services, agro-tourism. These products and services typically are carriers of the "quality" that was central to the Declaration of Cork. Equally, they are carriers of new town-countryside relations. The distinctiveness of these products differentiates them from other products. Several high quality products have a long history. However, in the context of the current process of rural development, both their number and their relevance have increased considerably. The nested markets that centre on these distinctive products (or services) also entail (see Figure 5.3) *specific producers* who are able to construct the distinction embodied in the specific product.

Their capability often translates, in the framework of the nested market, into *reputation.* The nested market also entails *specific consumers,* who are able to distinguish the distinctive qualities of the product or service. These producers and consumers often share a *specific frame of reference* that stipulates the merits of the product and its production and consumption (sustainability might be an important beacon in this frame of reference, or exclusiveness, etc.). In some situations (e.g. the well reported case of Chianina meat: see e.g. Ventura, 2001; Meulen, 2000) there is a *specific and two way flow of communication* that links producers, processors, retailers and consumers and through which notions such as tenderness, colour, preparation, value etc. are continuously (re-) affirmed and, if needed, (re-) adapted. The presence of a shared specific frame of reference goes a considerable way to reducing transaction costs. The same is true of the specific communication patterns that link the involved actors. The same nested market might entail *specific delivery systems* (farmers' markets, on-farm shops, procurement schemes, weekly delivery schemes, short circuits, acquisition groups, etc.). These might by supported by *specific institutional arrangements* (consortia, legal definitions) just as the product qualities might be defended through a *specific certification*. And to make the story complete, there are, at the end of the day, *specific advantages* for the producers and consumers involved (e.g. a premium price)[13] and probably also for third parties (the production of a particular good, for instance, might strengthen the attractiveness of an area as a whole and, thus, support tourism).

The market schematically outlined in Figure 5.3 is part of (i.e. is 'nested' in) a wider market yet at the same time is distinguished from it. Contrast is the keyword here, i.e., the specific contrast between the specific product and the many similar but

13 **/** In an analysis of Italian wine markets, ISMEA (2007) shows that there might be other significant advantages as well, such as the prospect of continuity. They found that the number of farms producing for the general, non-differentiated wine market declined considerably in the 1982-2003 period, while the number of farms producing DOC and DOCG wines (high quality, guaranteed wines with certificates of origin) remained stable (see especially Fig. 4).

standard products available in the wider market. The larger this contrast (in terms of perceived quality, freshness, taste, origin, processing, sustainability, or whatever),[14] the more distinctive the specific product is. Evidently, this is not solely dependent on the characteristics of the specific product itself, but equally on the characteristics of the standard products in the general market. Together they compose the contrast.

The nested market outlined in the diagram might very well be an open one: producers and consumers may flow into and out of it. The boundaries are 'permeable'. Hence, a nested market cannot be equated with a monopoly situation. For instance, certification might be redefined by changing the rules to wider or narrower ranges of characteristics. This process contributes to the permeability.

Generally speaking it might be argued that (a) the further specificity is developed in each domain, (b) the more *all* domains are effectively covered, the stronger the nested market will be and the more it will allow for price and development differentials.[15] Together, the different, socially constructed and actively combined specificities (summarized in Diagram 2) compose a *governance structure,* which implicitly acts as a *boundary organization* (see Franks & McGloin, 2010).

We consider that the concept of 'boundary' is important, complex, multi-dimensional and multi-level. First, a boundary can be composed by the specificity of the product or, more generally, because it is not easy to replicate. This first boundary level might be strengthened if the specificity of the product is associated with the reputation of a particular group of producers. A second level emerges if specific producers and a group of specific consumers share a common frame of reference. In the case of Umbria, *carne nostrala* (our meat) is not only the meat of the Chianina – it is Chianina meat produced by farmers in the area and bought by consumers who know how to prepare and to enjoy it. A third level emerges when the specificity of delivery is taken into account[16]. Using the same example: *carne nostrala* passes from particular farmers, through particular slaughterhouses, to particular butchers and then to their more or less stable group of clients. These butchers are increasingly certified. Certification can be seen as providing yet another level. Thus, boundaries are socially constructed and strengthened. The construction of a boundary also may

14 **/** The specificity often resides in the 'relational' nature of the goods and services. A specific farm-made cheese sold in a farm shop *relates* to the possibility of getting a glimpse of local culture and the artisanal techniques associated with it. It also *relates* to hospitality. Farm care (an increasingly important service) *relates* to the co-production of man and nature and e.g. the implied organization of time (which helps to recompose equilibria). These *relational goods and services* are increasingly in demand in our societies.

15 **/** 16 **/** Of all certified regional products in Italy 22% are sold through direct farm sales; another 22% are sold through traditional shops and 11% directly to restaurants. The remaining 45% is commercialized through the large supermarket chains, sometimes under specific arrangements (Arfine et al., p. 103). When the supermarkets' share increases (as in the case of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese) this can have a negative impact on price levels.

be linked with *space*: a particular location might very well represent a boundary. A specific market place might attract specific consumers– or specific products to be bought. For example, several medium sized enterprises located along the ringways that surround the major cities of Europe have an intranet service, through which their employees can order a range of food products to be delivered to their offices/homes before the end of the same day (a service that is provided by a network of participating farmers in the surrounding area). This saves the employees the time and trouble of making a trip to the shops or supermarket (and finding a parking space), while still guaranteeing them fresh produce. In this case, a new nested market is created that is based around a specific location.

Similar patterns occur in many places and through a variety of strategies. Farm shops that offer a range of fresh, high quality, products can considerably improve the quality of life in rural areas. The maintenance of nature and landscape can have a similar effect (Ventura *et al.*, 2007) and the increased quality might help attract new rural dwellers. Thus the 'nested market', defined by the quality of a particular location is expanded: the farm shop (and the associated network of delivering farms) will have an increased number of clients. This represents synergy at the territorial level.

Nested markets are defined by multi-dimensional and multilevel boundaries. Crossing these borders implies transaction costs (e.g. for those producers who are not, so far, operating in these nested markets), whilst they offer extra benefits to the consumers (more convenience, pleasure, distinction in Bourdieu's sense of this notion, better quality, or whatever). That is, nested markets reduce the transaction costs associated with consumption (such as looking for a parking lot near the supermarket at peak shopping hour or the embarrassment of bad looking meat when guests are coming for dinner).

Nested markets are hybrid forms of governing transactions: they are forms of quasi-organizations that combine the common interests of those who are participating in the specific transactions with a high transparency of all relevant information. This implies that the focus of the transactions is shifting from market efficiency towards the specificities of the product (knowledge, labour, process, culture, territory, etc.) that are intrinsic to the product which, together, are defined as quality. This explains exceptional cases such as the pastoralists of the Abruzzi Mountains (Milone, 2009) who are able to obtain prices for their products that are far higher than for those that are produced with conventional techniques and sold through the large retail chains. The capacity of farmers to build a strong immaterial component into their products (history, locality, terroir) allows them to operate in nested markets, to reduce their risks and to create considerable synergy. The higher cost levels of using conventional markets are avoided by these pastoralist through the creation of extended networks (using ICT) and, also, because marketing and promotion becomes one and the same activity.

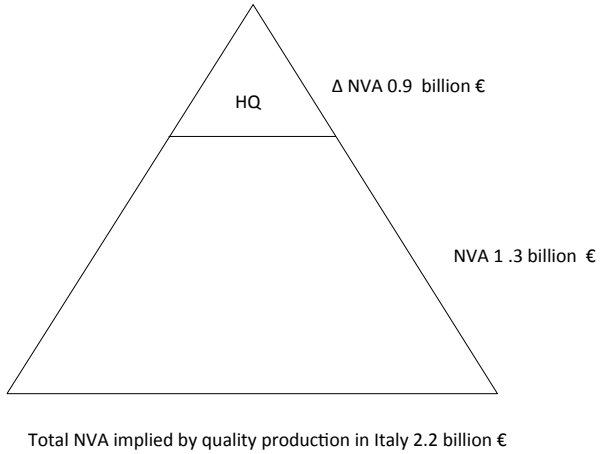

Figure 5.4 Quality production: up-scaling the amount of NVA produced

5.5 Some notes on economic impact

At the beginning of the current decade, Italy had 113 officially recognized PGI and PDO food products, and another 150 in the process of gaining recognition.[17] The total net added value of these products (including wines and spirits) has been estimated to provide an additional 2.2 billion Euro at the level of primary production (Ploeg et al 2002).[18] These figures can be broken down as follows: 0.9 billion Euro can be considered as *delta* NVA, that is the extra NVA that stems directly from producing quality products characterized by premium prices and a somewhat different cost structure. This additional NVA comes on top of the NVA that would have been realized if the raw materials had passed through current "non-quality" channels and had received the current commodity market prices (see Figure 5.4).

Thus, two types of observations are possible. First, by entering into the high quality market segment, a large group of agricultural enterprises is able to raise its NVA by some 70% (from 1.3 to 2.2. billion Euro). Secondly, this quality orientation is precisely what enables these farmers to maintain and sustain their agricultural activities (depicted as the basis of the triangle in Figure 4). Without this upgrading, through quality production, much of this 'basis' would probably completely disappear from the regional rural economy.

17 **/** In 2007 the number of recognized products is 174. There are 97,498 farms active in supplying these products and 7,710 processing firms. The total supply (data from 2007) represents, after processing, but before distribution, a total value of 5.7 billion Euros (Arfini et al., 2010). Beyond this there are some 1,000 Slow Food Products.

18 **/** The total GVP at farm level was some 3.5 billion Euros whilst, after processing and distribution, the same production represented an additional 8 billion or so Euro.

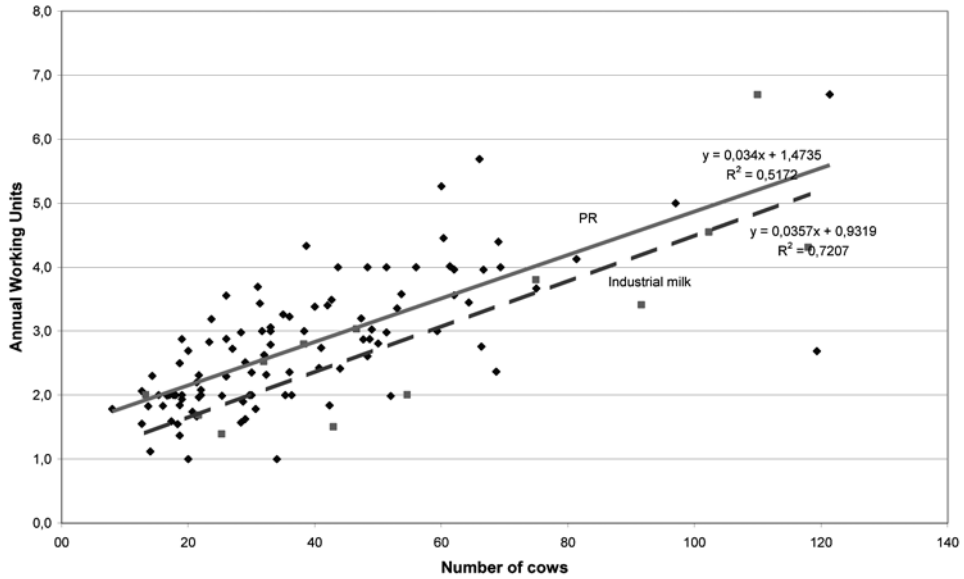

Figure 5.5 Employment rate per cow in industrial and Parmigiano-Reggiano dairy farms. (farms in the plains)

5.6 Specific performances

Because nested markets are structured and embedded in a specific way, they allow for premium prices and different transaction costs. These result in a performance that differs from that of the general market. It is a specific performance that highlights and provides empirical evidence of the relevance of the nested market. We will illustrate this issue by referring to the case of Parmesan cheese. De Roest (2000) compared the socio-economic impact of Parmesan cheese (PR) production with that of conventional dairy farming specialized in the delivery of 'industrial milk'. Figure 5.5 summarizes some of his findings.

Due to the particularities of producing good cheese milk (suitable for transformation into Parmigiano-Reggiano - *PR*), labour input is higher on *PR* farms than on farms producing 'industrial milk'. Making good cheese milk requires more work (other circumstances being equal) than producing 'plain milk'.[19] Taking into account the herd-size distribution, De Roest concludes "that the production of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese is able to double the amount of employment available on the dairy farms" (De Roest, 2000; De Roest & Menghi 2000: 445). Instead of 11,290 AWU, the regional employment in primary dairy production is 21,154 AWU.

19 **/** The more since *PR* is made out of 'raw milk'. It is not pasteurised, as is the case with industrial cheeses.

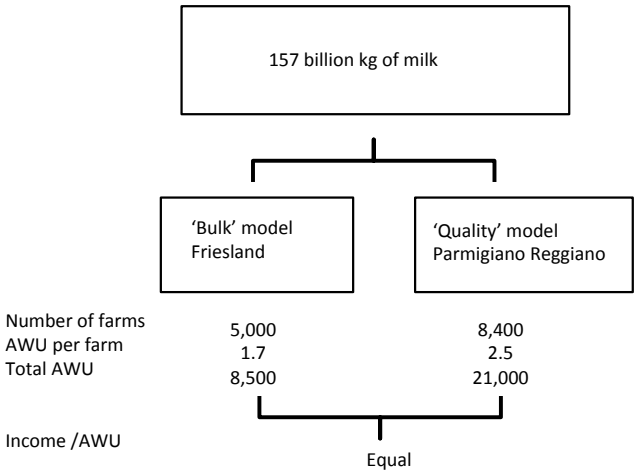

Figure 5.6 Friesland and Emilia Romagna compared

The regional impact of quality production is reaffirmed by a comparison that was made between the province of Friesland in the Netherlands and the *PR* area in Italy. Both areas have a milk quota that is approximately the same. In Friesland this generates a direct employment effect in primary production of 8,500 AWU: in the *PR* area it is 21,154 AWU. Income-levels per AWU are, on average, the same (Broekhuizen & van der Ploeg, 1999).[20]
Figure 5.6 underlines the potential of nested markets. In Europe we have a European wide dairy market (defined, at that time, by Common Agricultural Policy). *Within* this extended market one can distinguish a smaller segment, governed through a different institutional structure: the market for PR cheese. Due to its distantiation from the general dairy market, this nested market could function in a different way and provide, among other benefits, far higher employment levels.

It is important to add that the relevance of quality production to rural development is not just limited to the regional income and employment generated. It also has environmental benefits. "Parmigiano Reggiano farms in the plains show […] a total nitrogen loss of 239 kilograms of nitrogen per hectare [which] compares with 309 kilograms/ha for the industrial dairy farms - a difference in the order of almost 30%" (De Roest & Menghi 2000:445). The dimension of sustainability is also highlighted by Ventura (1995 and 2001) who demonstrates that the "resource use efficiency", notably of energy, in the case of *Chianina* meat production is considerably higher than it is in 'industrialized' animal fattening of the feedlot type.

So far we have looked at the newly emerging nested markets that centre on specific *products*. Needless to say, the same reasoning also applies to specific *services* such

20 **/** Indirect employment is, in the case of *PR*, also considerably higher.

as, e.g., agro-tourism facilities and care provisioning. Here equally interesting markets have emerged. These are, in more or less the same way, constructed around a wider set of specificities (as summarized in Diagram 2) that together compose and sustain their nested nature.

5.7 Connecting different markets: the role of multifunctionality

The empirical studies reveal an additional element in the equation: that specificity very often in practice *extends beyond the reach of the immediate specificities*. As shown in Figure 5.7, based on the outcomes of the European farmer survey discussed earlier (see Oostindie *et al*., 2002), high quality production is increasingly embedded in a wider web of specific activities, such as direct marketing and on-farm processing. It is also increasingly related to nature and landscape management and agro-tourism (Holloway, 2006)**.** Of the 521 producers involved in high quality production, 125 were also involved in the management of nature and landscape. Of these cases, 42% started from high quality production (which subsequently evolved to include the management of nature and landscape), 23% involved a joint start and for 35% involvement in nature and landscape management was followed by the start of high quality production. Similar interrelations emerge between quality production and agro-tourism.

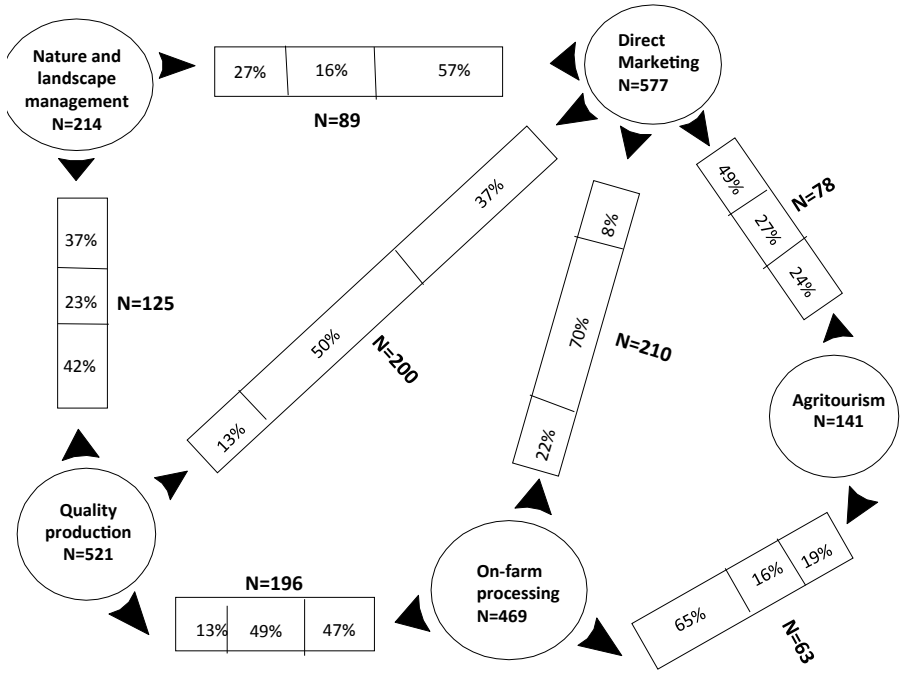

Figure 5.7 Interlinking different types of rural development activities

Figure 5.7 shows that different new nested markets start to 'overlap' and to sustain each other. Thus, an on-farm shop functions as a meeting point that, in turn, triggers agro-tourism. Agro-tourism becomes more attractive since it offers the opportunity to obtain fresh, local, high quality products and, even, the opportunity to observe how they are processed. At the same time, the agro-tourism facility enlarges the sales of the on-farm shop and so on. The points of attraction (related to the specificities involved) are interconnected and start to mutually support and strengthen each other. This occurs both at the level of the markets and also within the participating enterprises, where it takes the form of enlarged multi-functionality. The emerging 'multi-product' enterprises start to use one and the same set of resources to produce a wider range of goods and services, lowering the cost of producing each good and/or service (Saccomandi, 1998). *These synergies foster competitiveness, which in turn facilitates the presence in different markets.*

5.8 Jumping to the territorial level

The creation of synergy is not limited to single farm enterprises. It can equally (and maybe even more so) be created through inter-firm co-operation. Wine-routes (see Brunori *et al.,* 2000) are an expression of this *par excellence.* These territorial synergies give rise to a different type of nested market, summarized in Figure 5.8. Many of the newly emerging rural districts may well be understood as an expression of this model. A strategic feature of both districts and routes is that they bring forward yet another specificity: *le terroir*.
If the term 'client group' is read as 'market' and if more markets are slotted in, the

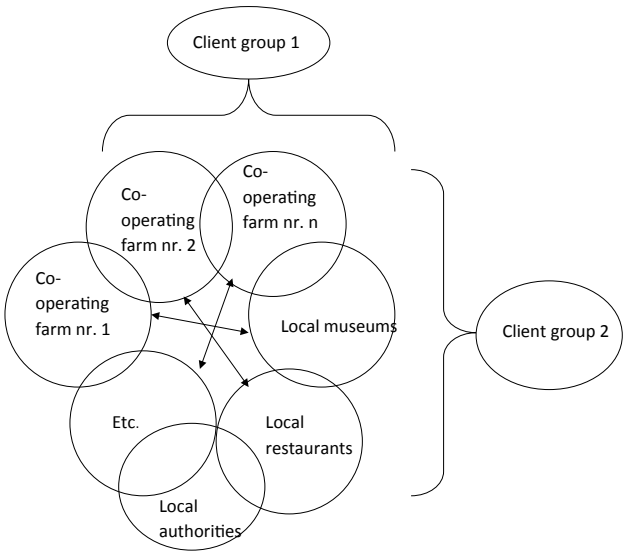

Figure 5.8 A nested market defined by co-operating farms

processes shown in Figure 5.8 can develop into a constellation in which a single *terroir* delivers products and services to a wide range of different, but interlinked, markets.[21] For instance, in the Dutch Laag-Holland area, to the north of Amsterdam, regional farmers created a territorial cooperative and now deliver a wide range of services and products to regional markets (that are often Amsterdam based). In this case it is not only the attractiveness of the area that is marketed directly and indirectly, embodied in special products and services. The territorial cooperative has also developed considerable agency, i.e., the capacity to get things done and is increasingly contracted by, e.g., regional authorities to implement more general programmes (e.g. nature conservation measures) within the area (see also Chapter 6).

5.9 Linking different territories

An interesting feature explored and proposed in several policy proposals (but still far from being realized) concerns building specific connections between different areas or different regional markets. This is often seen as a way of creating lines of defence against the threats posed by liberalization and globalization. An Italian proposal (developed within ISMEA) proposed such a connection between the Romagna area - mainly dedicated to arable agriculture (soya, maize, grain) - and the high quality animal and livestock production systems around the cities of Parma and Reggio Emilia. This proposal suggested a preferential buying of GM-free soya, maize and grain from the Romagna area to provide the fodder for cattle (for the production of milk for *Parmigiano-Reggiano* cheese) and for heavy pigs (needed for *San Daniele* hams). This arrangement would allow the Emilia region to secure its sales and to obtain a premium price, whilst the territorial livestock systems could enlarge their specificity, thereby providing benefits to both districts. This advantage would reside in the actively constructed connection between already existing nested markets (for cheese and ham) and a newly created one (for GMO free feed).

5.10 Markets for agro-environmental services

A third type of nested market is also linked with processes of liberalization, especially where the latter implies a de-monopolization of previous markets. This has been the case with the market for nature and landscape management. Previously, this market was highly monopolized. A few exceptions apart, it only was the state and, in more recent times a few large 'professional' nature organizations that could participate in this 'market' in which the supra-national state represented the demand side and the large nature organizations the supply side of the equation. For several reasons, this market has been de-monopolized. Farmers and farmer associations can now also participate in this market, provide 'green services' and receive payment for this. The same also applies to the 'market' for care-services, especially since the

21 / Specific client groups are implied and sustained through schemes for public procurement: see Morgan & Sonnino, 2008

'clients' now have discretion as to where they spend their private budgets. This has given rise to a boom in care-farms, especially in the Netherlands (Hassink, 2012).

The now liberalized market for nature and landscape management is characterized by an extensive external prescription, a huge administrative burden and far-reaching controls, with the threat of heavy sanctions for non-compliance. This makes it difficult for farmers to participate in this new market: the transaction costs are extremely high (this also applies to the 'demand side': it was estimated that at least 26% of the Dutch Programme for Agrarian Nature Conservation was used for administration and control). In response to this, new 'boundary organizations' have emerged (known in the Netherlands as 'farmers' associations for the management of nature and landscape' or 'environmental co-operatives'). Some of these have developed into true 'territorial co-operatives'. Whatever their specific name, these organizations aim to drive down transaction costs: replacing direct prescription and sanctioning by state agencies with new forms of self-regulation is a strategic aspect of this. In doing so, these boundary organizations are actively creating a new nested market (Franks, McGloin, 2010).

Rural development policies made a strong contribution to the design, functioning and funding of these new markets for public goods such as attractive landscapes, enhanced biodiversity and other environmental qualities. These markets were created to tackle the negative externalities associated with modern farming and, initially, resulted in a pattern that is summarized in Figure 5.9. One principal agent

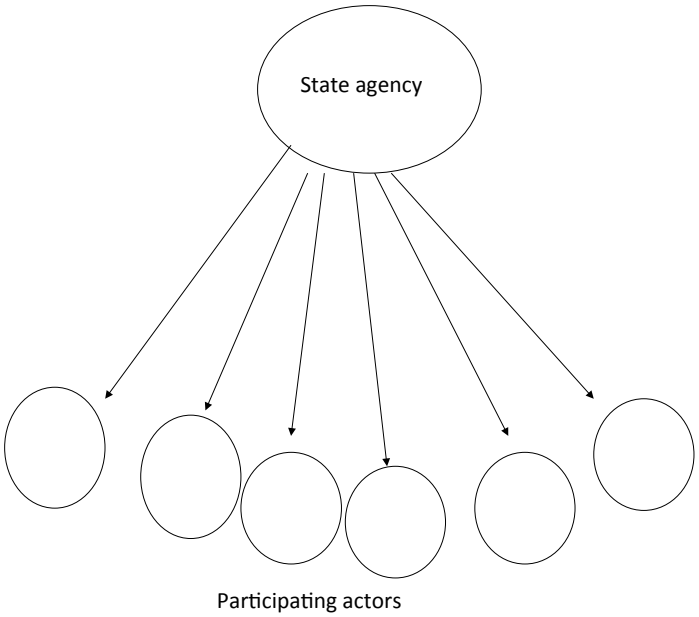

Figure 5.9 The initial market for agro-environmental services

(a state agency) specifies the required agro-environmental services and then contracts other agents (i.e. farmers) to produce and deliver them. Payment is made once compliance has been verified. This pattern implies high transaction costs: many individual contracts, high control costs and many disputes, the more so since the specified services are to be delivered within a wide range of different and sometimes strongly contrasting conditions. It also resembles the classic 'triangle without a base': power relations were very unequal and this hindered any attempts at negotiations and subsequent adaptations and improvements of the schemes.

In many rural areas this initial structure has now been re-patterned. Farmers, rural dwellers and/or local and regional authorities started to create new local associations (known as *Landschaftspflegeverbände* (Germany), *comunitá montane* (Italy), environmental cooperatives (the Netherlands) that brought together different providers of environmental services who started to (re-) negotiate the conditions and modalities of landscape management, nature conservation, water retention, anti-erosion measures, emission reduction, etc. This re-patterning is summarized in Figure 5.10, which shows the emergence of new forms of legally conditioned self-regulation.

These new forms of local self-regulation (in some places evolving into comprehensive territorial cooperatives) function as a new governance structure that creates and delineates *a new local market that is nested in the general*

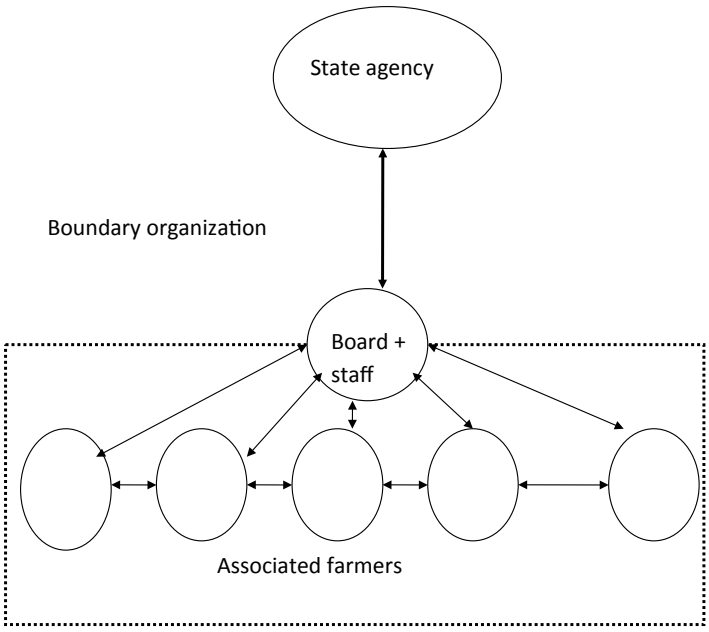

Figure 5.10 The emergence of a new boundary organization

market for agro-environmental services. The specificities of these new local markets are negotiated with the principal agent, through putting in place special and appropriate conditions and reorganizing implementation and control in a more suitable way – processes that ensure that the services provided are of a high standard. As more associations are created, more local markets emerge, each corresponding to the specificities of the local eco-system, the local settlement and farming patterns and landscapes.

The differences between the situations illustrated by these two figures entail some important differences related to performance. The participation of farmers (and others) is generally far higher in the latter instance. Equally, there is far more adaptation to the specificities of the local landscape, nature and biodiversity. Finally, the pattern of localized markets (Fig. 5.10) allows for far more innovativeness (Wiskerke and van der Ploeg, 2004), especially since farmers now have the possibility to look for adequate ways to *integrate* conservation practices into the overall process of production. This often occurs through comprehensive re-balancing processes of production. It may involve many actors, including rural dwellers, small and medium enterprises, specific (albeit highly differentiated) groups of consumers and, after a certain point in time, local and regional authorities.

The principles of (legally conditioned) self-governance and subsidiarity are important elements structuring the relations between these actors. Self-governance is a key factor that defines a particular 'hybrid governance structure' that underpins sustainability (see e.g. Huylenbroeck *et al.*, 2009:181-182; Ménard, 2007). In most, if not all, the nested markets that we have discussed so far, self-governance plays an important role. We also observed that there are many frictions between these actors and that the linkages and interfaces between politics and practices need to be strengthened (see also Chapter 4).

5.11 Conclusion

Throughout this paper it has been argued that nested markets play an important, although so far little-discussed, role in rural development processes in Europe. The notion of nested markets contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the interrelations between rural market governance and the transformative capacity of alternative food networks as part of broader agrarian pathways to multifunctionality. It takes into account and acknowledges the relevance of a variety of potential responses to conventional food market forces and their accompanying standardization and price-squeeze tendencies at the farm-level. As underlined, a return to farm-based specificity, different expressions of boundary construction, synergies by interconnecting different rural markets and self-governance initiatives, are all important co-constituting components of nested rural markets that entail a certain capacity to moderate and re-shape dominant food market forces. Simultaneously, we realize that presented lines of reasoning may give rise to questions such as:

- Which particular features strengthen nested markets?
- Which factors and mechanisms hold back such markets, or contribute to their demise?
- What legislative patterns are required to sustain and promote nested markets?
- How does the persistence and resilience of nested markets relate to those of general commodity markets?
- Is it possible to apply the design principles entailed in nested markets to larger commodity flows?

Discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this introduction on the significance of nested markets. We will limit ourselves here to some final comments on the second question. The ETUDE programme (Ploeg & Marsden, 2008), which aimed to develop a more adequate theoretical understanding of rural development processes, elaborated a model that included the governance of rural markets. In this model, their governance is intertwined with (and partly dependent upon) other important dimensions. Figure 5.11 visualizes these other dimensions and stresses that the governance of markets does not reside solely in the technicalities of administrative arrangements that specify the balance between hierarchy and markets.

If these other factors are present and actively interlinked they will increasingly constitute 'territorial capital' (Ventura *et al*., 2008) that functions, at the level of the territory, as a 'Common Pool Resource' (Ostrom, 1990). This CPR, then, sustains the nested market, whilst the nested market, in turn, renders the benefits that help to maintain and reproduce the CPR (see Polman *et al.,* 2010). The social forces in Figure 5.11 may be further related to the resilience of multifunctional agrarian pathways as theorized more in depth in Chapters 1 and 6. Here we want to stress

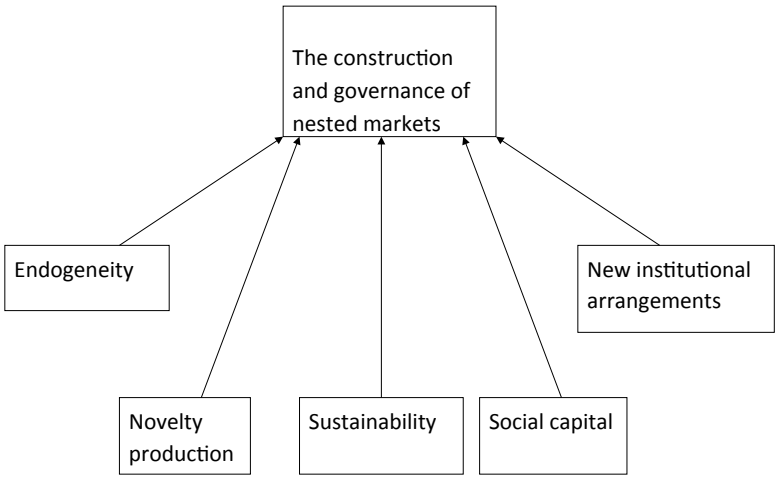

Figure 5.11 Social forces that strengthen the governance of nested market

that, in addition to their significance in relation to the creation of specificity, synergy construction at farm- and territorial level and the reduction of transaction costs that may accompany high quality food markets, multifunctional pathways may also influence the way people think about food. Following Carolan (2013:421-422), it may be argued that the latter may be as difficult as '*moving one's hand against the current of a mighty river in the hopes of getting that river to reverse its course'.* It is rather naive to expect that food systems will change through talks about structures, power, resources or education in the conventional sense. Contrastingly, Carolan stresses that '*to make bodies think differently you have to have them do differently'* by creating a '*space of opportunities*' for '*co-experimentation'* towards a '*knowing around*' rather than a '*knowledge of*'. In our understanding, the unfolding of novel, more nested rural markets in Europe is closely interwoven with multifunctional agricultural pathways as providers of space for co-experimentation that do succeed in making people think and act differently and, in that way, may transform hegemonic food market relations.

The role of agriculture in rural place-making: differentiating rural web dynamics

6

6. The role of agriculture in rural place-making: differentiating rural web dynamics[1]

Abstract

It is increasingly widely accepted by scholars that rural development needs to be theorized as multi-facetted and complex interrelations between local and global and urban and rural spaces. Such relational perspectives underpin that rural places may be territorially defined, but not constrained, and are shaped by specific configurations of connections, networks and flows that transcend territory and scale. The need for relational understandings of socio-spatial dynamics goes along with a growing attention to place-making processes. So far, there has been relatively little scholarly attention to the specific role of agriculture in rural place making processes. This chapter aims to respond to this omission by building upon the multi-dimensional rural web framework to analyse rural differentiation processes. This framework theorizes the role of agriculture in rural place-making as the overall outcome of the interrelations, interaction patterns and mutual interdepencies between six dimensions. The relevance of this framework will be particularly empirically underpinned by presenting and comparing the rural web dynamics in two Dutch National Landscape areas. This comparative analysis enables us to conclude that agriculture's contribution to rural place-making processes is closely interwoven with the place-specific representation and precipitation of its multifunctionality.

1 / This chapter is strongly interwoven with the European project *'Enlarging Theoretical Understanding of Rural Development'* (ETUDE, Project no. FP6-2005-SSP-A-044245, 2007-2009). See also Ploeg & Marsden, 2008; Miloni & Ventura, 2010 and Broekhuizen *et al*, 2007a and 2007b.

6.1 Introduction

Places are meeting points that are territorially defined, but not territorially constrained. Places are dependent on particular configurations of connections, networks and flows that transcend territory and scale ((Healy, 2004). As specific representations of what Jessop (2008) theorized as TSPN (Territory, Scale, Place, Network) frameworks, place-making perspectives underline the shortcomings of territorial approaches. Amin (2003), for instance, points to the significance of '*a new politics of place*' grounded on a non-territorial reading of development that acknowledges the manifold shortcomings of theoretical approaches that insufficiently account for the consequences of globalization. He introduces the notions 'politics of propinquity' and 'politics of connectivity' to analyse the contested nature of geographical spaces and the loss of territory bound identities closely related to globalization forces. Secondly, scholars may emphasize that places are entities that attach meaning and values, embodiments that may translate into 'defence of place' mechanisms that explain spatial differentiation tendencies. Escobar (2001), for instance, argues that it is through place-based values, cultures and social practices that resistance against globalization, modernisation and capitalist forces will manifest itself and may result in '*multiple capitalisms*'. Thirdly, some place-making scholars go beyond 'defence of place' perspectives by arguing that localities are agents in globalization with a certain capacity to act, shaped by their position within wider power-geometries. Massey (2004) speaks in this respect of a '*re-imagination of local positioning*' and emphasizes that localities are not just victims of globalizing forces nor always '*politically defensible redoubts against globalisation*'. Contrastingly, she theorizes the local as the co-constitutor of the global through complex interrelations that do not allow for an '*exoneration of the local'* or a '*blaming of all local discontents on external global forces*' (Massey, 2004:14)

More recently, the notion of '*relational place-making*' attempts to integrate the different TSPN components as distinguished by Jessop (2008). Pierce *et al.* (2010) argue that '*relational place-making draws on scholars and insights about place, politics and networks by explicitly recognising the flexible, multi-scalar and always developing meanings of place: meanings that are produced via socially, politically and economically interconnected interactions among people, institutions and systems*'. This stresses that place-making is the outcome of active construction and communication through social negotiation, including conflict and difference. Its active components are further emphasized by the notion '*place-framing*', which refers particularly to the social and political negotiations that result in a strategic sharing of place. As argued, place-framing is always on-going since '*individuals and institutions may have strong relational ties to multiple communities that allow them to strongly experience and potentially shape competing place-frames simultaneously*' (Pierce *et al*, 2011:60)

This need for relational place-making perspectives is increasingly advocated within rural studies. Woods (2007), based on a broad inventory of major fields of interest

in rural studies, posits that the '*overall mosaic of rural research misses the input of a substantial body of literature on place-based studies that might not only adapt an integrated perspective in examining the impact of different forms of and aspects of globalization in a rural locality, but that might also explore precisely how rural places are remade under globalization*'. To advance more relational rural place-making approaches, he introduces the notion of a '*global country-side',* a *'hypothetical space, corresponding to a condition of the global interconnectivity and interdependency of rural localities'* with the objective to anticipate the characteristics of this imagined space by *'projecting forward existing globalization processes*' (ibid:492).

This global countryside is subsequently related to the following characteristics: 1) elongated yet contingent commodity networks with consumption distanced from production; 2) an increasingly transnational, organized, corporate concentration and integration; 3) rural spaces as both supplier and employer of migrant labour; 4) flows of tourists attracted to sites of rural amenity; 5) high levels of non-national property investments in rural spaces; 6) commodification of nature and commercial exploitation of natural resources; 7) landscapes inscribed with the marks of globalization; 8) an increase in social polarisation; 9) new sites of political authority due to, e.g., global trade agreements; and 10) contested space as a consequence of the tensions that arise between the logics of different aspects of globalization (cultural, social, economic, political).

Again it is emphasized that the way in which these characteristics will manifest themselves in any particular rural locality is not just determined by the degree of penetration of globalization processes, but also by the way in which globalization processes are mediated through and incorporated within local processes. Building on Massey's understanding of relational places, rural place-making is especially associated with processes of negotiation, manipulation and hybridization where '*the ways in which local actors engage with global networks and global forces to produce hybrid outcomes are fundamental to the re-constitution of place in the globalizing countryside and the maintenance of place distinctiveness within the emergent global countryside*' (Woods, 2007: 497). Thus, it requires an understanding of the '*ways in which globalization is experienced by rural localities as a hybrid of economic, social, cultural and political processes'* (ibid: 495).

This relational understanding of rural place-making pays little attention to the specific role of agricultural activity in these specific local-global interaction patterns. Often, this role is just more or less explicitly taken into account. The European EDORA project, for instance, distinguishes three 'meta-narratives' of contemporary rural change: the Agri-Centric narrative, the Rural-Urban narrative and the Globalisation narrative as points of departure for the analysis of the '*extreme complexity of regional and rural development processes, and the partial nature of our understanding of them*' (Copus et al, 2011:122). Its so-called EDORA Cube makes a distinction between following dimensions of rural spatial differentiation processes: 1) Rurality and Accessibility; 2) Rural economic restructuring; and 3) Rural performances. It goes

along with a typology that links agricultural activity to diversifying rural economies (more or less diversified, consumption oriented or still agrarian) and wider contributions to rural performances, understood as a rural resource accumulation-depletion continuum. In addition it is emphasized that rural firms are increasingly participating in complex networks where '*organised proximity*' may be of greater importance than geographical proximity for an appropriate understanding of rural differentiation processes (Copus *et al.* 2011:127).

This distinction between organised versus geographical proximity appears also in the body of literature on alternative food systems. Feagan (2007), scrutinizing the '*emplacement*' of local food system literature, concludes that more clarity is needed regarding how to delineate and understand the local. Wilson and Whitehead (2012) disqualify certain 'local' products as 'relic' spatial strategies, since the underlying provenance of ingredients and labour intersects with the local, regional, national and global. DuPuis and Goodman (2005), in a political economy inspired critique on local food system prospects in Europe and the US, in turn, caution a '*reification of the local and its 'naturalization*' *as a bulwark against anomic global capitalism'*. This goes along with an appeal for '*reflexive localism*' that starts from an adequate analysis of '*politics in place*', that avoids conflating social relations with spatial relations and that sufficiently acknowledges the significance of local expressions of class-, race- or gender-based social struggle.

This alternative food system literature underlines as such the significance of relational approaches for an appropriate understanding of rural change. Yet, it lacks a broader perspective on the role of agriculture in rural place-making processes. European rural development scholars developed a relational perspective that incorporates and integrates different types of social struggle around agriculture's role in society. Their multi-dimensional analytical framework defines the central *rural web* notion as follows: '*the more or less coherent resources, actors, activities, linkages, transactions, networks and positive externalities that result from and, in turn, support and strengthen rural development processes*' (Marsden & van der Ploeg, 2008:225). The framework makes a distinction between six dimensions that refer to specific fields of rural activity and agency, drawing on different disciplinary backgrounds (Miloni & Ventura, 2010). It is further stressed that these six dimensions, as briefly introduced in Table 6.1, may be theoretically distinguishable but empirically are strongly intertwined through the specificity of their interrelations, exchanges and externalities. This analytical focus on mutual interaction patterns between the six domains is thought to make the rural web framework a meaningful analytical tool (Marsden and van der Ploeg, 2008:8). Developed, applied and tested in the European ETUDE 7th framework programme, it defines, approaches and understands the role of agriculture in rural place- making from a clearly relational perspective.

This will be empirically demonstrated in two metropolitan rural areas in the Netherlands, both having National Landscape status and, thus, sharing similar new societal demands in terms of rural functions. Their specific rural web features first underpin

Endogeneity	The degree to which a regional economy is grounded on regionally available and regionally controlled resources, the balance between endogenous and exogenous resources.
Novelty production	Regional capacity to continuously improve processes of production, products and patterns of cooperation on the basis of contextual knowledge, mostly initially elaborated outside the realm of codified or scientific knowledge
Institutional arrangements	Sets of regulations, laws, norms or traditions that are shaped through human interactions and that are often manifested in an organizational structure
Social Capital	The ability to get things done as embodied in the ability of individuals, groups, organizations and institutions to engage in networks, to cooperate and to use social relations for a common purpose
Sustainability	Territorially-based development that redefines nature by re-emphasizing food production and agro-ecology and that re-asserts the socio-environmental role of agriculture as a major agent in sustaining rural economies and cultures
Governance of markets	The institutional capacity to control and strengthen markets and to construct new ones in relation to the specific organization of supply chains and the sharing of total value added

Table 6.1 The six theoretical dimensions of the rural web

the fact that agricultural activity still plays a key role in rural place-making processes, even in rural areas with diminishing direct contributions to rural employment and rural income-generation. Secondly, the specific features of these rural webs will reveal that this role is closely interwoven with the place-specific unfolding and strength of multifunctional agricultural pathways, including their ability to co-shape the mutually re-enforcing interaction patterns that transform into the strong rural web configurations and underlie rural competiveness, quality of rural life and the preservation of close functional ties between rural and urban spaces. The following in-depth analysis of the role of agriculture in Dutch rural place-making processes builds on evidence-gathering through documentary investigation, interviews with stakeholders and the triangulation of overall case-study findings through feedback sessions (see Broekhuizen *et al.*, 2007a and 2007b).

6.2 Rural web frictions and tensions in Rivierengebied

Literally meaning 'river area', *Rivierengebied* is a rural area located in the heart of the Netherlands, characterized by the presence of two of the major national rivers

De Rijn and De Waal (see figure 6.1). The area has about 60.000 inhabitants, mostly living in villages and small settlements of a few thousand to a few hundred inhabitants. Utrecht, (289.000 inhabitants) Den Bosch (136.000), Arnhem (143.000), and Nijmegen (161.000) are nearby larger urban centers in the vicinity. In 2004 national landscape policy suggested delineating this rural area as a National Landscape. For different reasons, rural stakeholders and conventional farmers' interests groups seriously opposed such a status. Regional organisations of tree nurseries and of glasshouse farmers, for instance, feared that a National Landscape status sooner or later would bring limitations for agricultural modernization opportunities and, as such, undermine their 'level playing field' conditions. In the early stages of delineation proposals by the national government, their opposition succeeded in excluding areas with a concentration of avenue tree nursery firms and glasshouse vegetable production. It reflects regional farmers' influence on rural policy design, as well as a clear distrust in alternative agricultural pathways. Indeed, regional farmers' organizations continue primarily to advocate agricultural modernisation inspired ideas in their policy statements and project proposals (De Boomkwekerij, 2007; Fruit pact, 2008; LaanBoompact Betuwe, 2006; LTO-Noord 2005 and 2006).

Another source of opposition against the National Landscape status came from the urban administration of Tiel, the largest regional urban centre that initially is included in the National Landscape boundaries. This opposition especially addressed the '*zero demographic growth*' part of National Landscape policy objectives, which does not correspond with the urban expansion plans of Tiel. This conflict has been resolved by excluding the municipality of Tiel completely in the final delineation of the National Landscape boundaries. Also, wider urban commitment to the National Landscape proposals as an instrument to protect, safeguard and strengthen specific rural amenities of *Rivierengebied* is hardly present. Nearby larger urban centres such as Arnhem, Utrecht and Den Bosch are historically oriented towards other rural zones in their direct vicinity. This means that *Rivierengebied* still largely lacks a direct urban interest in the governance of its rural amenities. Moreover, territory based rural governance is complicated by the involvement of two different provincial administrations and a total of 14 municipalities. This goes along with tensions in steering perceptions and inter-municipal rural policy coordination problems. Just to give one example: whereas the Province of Utrecht defines its role in rural policy processes increasingly as a *facilitator* that aims to de-centralize decision making as much as possible, the Province of Gelderland operates much more as a process *manager* that takes the lead in project development (Provincie Gelderland, 2007b).

In addition, territory based *social capital* is still largely absent due primarily to the persistence of sub-regional cultural and religious oriented identities (Esterik, 2003). The delineated National Landscape area follows primarily landscape criteria instead of shared values, beliefs and identities, which created rather peculiar problems. Regional rural tourism, for instance, is being promoted under the brand *Rivierenland* with the purpose to upscale and professionalize sub-regional forms of cooperation between rural tourism enterprises through active region branding (www.rivieren-

Figure 6.1 National Landscape Rivierengebied
source www.nationalelandschappen.nl

land.nl). Representatives of this public-private partnership are not pleased with the decision to name the National Landscape *Rivierengebied.* In their opinion this was a clear indication of policy actors' ignoring of already existing rural network dynamics and lack of commercial thinking. Involved municipalities that had started to promote *Rivierenland*, sent a letter of complaint to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Nature, as initiator of the National Landscape Programme. Yet, this turned out to be unsuccessful when other stakeholders started to oppose their suggestion to re-name *Rivierengebied* into *Rivierenland***.**

The dominance of primarily sector-based action and thought in *Rivierengebied* is further reflected in the presence of agricultural innovation networks with an outspoken strategic orientation towards agriculture's competiveness in international food and non-food markets. The *Betuws Flower* initiative, for instance, has been initiated by regional influential agro-clusters for fruit production, avenue tree nurseries and mushroom production, in cooperation with the Universities of Wageningen and Nijmegen. The initiative focusses on technological solutions for agri-environmental problems, food logistics and food marketing through a number of innovative projects (Fruitpact, 20008). None of these projects, however, pays explicit attention to the valorisation of endogenous resources such as landscape and nature values. The economic strength of regional agricultural modernization forces can be further illustrated by the following figures: the production costs per hectare of fruit of modern high yielding fruit varieties are about 5 times lower than those of the traditional standard fruit varieties as symbols of the typical *Rivierengebied* landscape. Agri-

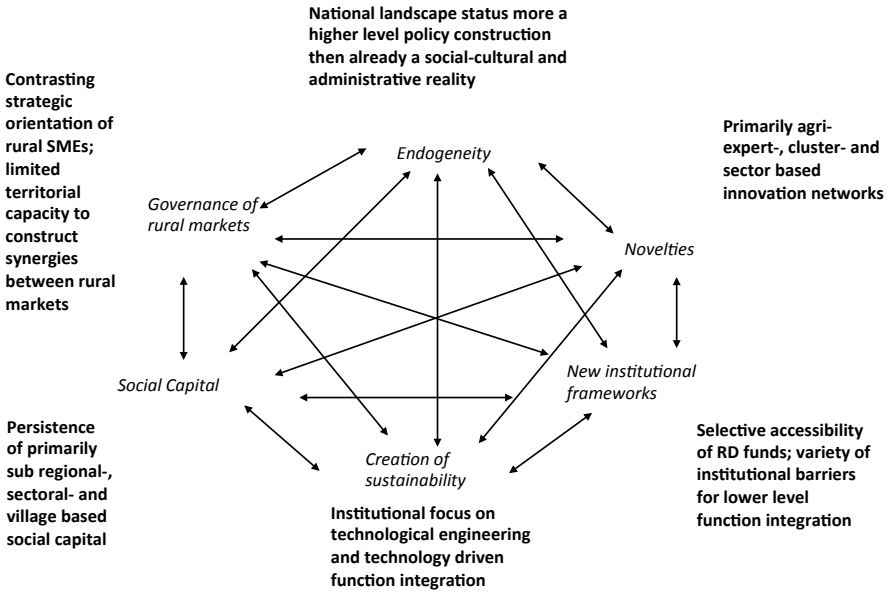

Figure 6.2 Rural web frictions in Rivierengebied

experts' interest in multifunctionality is primarily oriented towards high-tech agriculture. The aforementioned innovation programme, *Betuws Flowers*, for instance, intends to sustain regional glasshouse vegetable production through combinations with energy production, based on the exploration of solar and earth warmth. This is perhaps innovative from a sectoral perspective, but it also has different trade-offs in terms of preservation of landscape values. Similar tensions between agro-industrial logics and new rural functions pop up in scenario studies that imagine *Rivierengebied* without agricultural activity at all, transforming it into a rural area with moors and floating residences as novel responses to climate change and water management related policy challenges (Innovatienetwerk plattelandsontwikkeling, 2007; Bureau Waardenburg, 2004).

The overall variety of practices, ideas, tensions and conflicts characteristic of *Rivierengebied* are synthesized in Figure 6.2. This tries to visualize how the current overall absence of mutually re-enforcing interactions and interrelations between rural web domains is partly to be explained by strongly present agricultural modernisation forces that go along with a marginalization of endogenous resources, tensions in overall rural market governance and loss of opportunity to build upon available social capital. Together with an institutional focus on high-tech sustainability and sector based novelty production, these dominant rural web features transform into a limited place-specific capacity to oppose spatial fragmentation tendencies, to preserve and valorise rural distinctiveness and to come to the human, social and institutional agency as expected by national rural policy objectives for *Rivierengebied*.

6.3 Emerging counter structure

An alternative perspective on agriculture's role in rural place-making in Rivierengebied starts with regional dairy producers, taking care of a large amount of agricultural land resources but socio-politically less influential then regional fruit and tree nursery producers. Much more than the latter, these dairy producers demonstrate a growing interest to be actively involved in regional nature and landscape management. Also, by developing new forms of territory based organisation within agri-environmental cooperatives (www.capriton.nl; www.van-lingestreek.nl) regional dairy farmers want to become serious partners in the delivery of agri-environmental services at the National Landscape level (Vereniging voor agrarisch natuurbeheer Tieler- & Culemborgerwaard, 2008). Their involvement in territory based cooperation around agri- and rural tourism (www.terechtanders.nl; www.betuwetocht.nl) and regional typical food produce (www.betuwsbest.nl) further illustrates how farmers in *Rivierengebied* increasingly explore opportunities for new rural development activities. According to available agricultural statistics (LEI, 2006; LEI, 2007), about one third of regional farmers participate in agri-environmental schemes, and other new rural development activities are also increasingly present (Animal Science Group Wageningen UR, 2005; Ernst & Young, 2006; CLM, 2002; CLM 2007), sometimes associated with a strong cultural embeddedness of regional rural SMEs (Kamer van Koophandel Centraal Gelderland, 2004; Programmabureau Rivierengebied, 2006) and increasingly actively promoted by tourism and leisure policy documents (Provincie Utrecht, 2006).

This alternative perspective could further refer to on-going policy devolution tendencies that facilitate more territory-based, participatory and integrated rural governance. Some parts of *Rivierengebied* started to experiment relatively early with LEADER, which resulted in more bottom-up rural policy delivery and also induced new forms of territory-based cooperation (Gebiedscommissie Langbroekerwetering 2006 and 2007; Stuurgroep Kromme Rijn, 2007). Through their Regional Programme Offices both involved provincial administrations try to stimulate territory-based stakeholder cooperation, to improve inter-provincial coordination and cooperation at the National Landscape level (Provincie Utrecht, 2006; Provincie Gelderland, 2007a) and to valorise regional, typical cultural values (Gebiedsgericht Cultuurbeleid Rivierenland, 2008; Regio Rivierenland, 2008, 2007 and 2006; Regionaal Bureau voor Toerisme Rivierenland, 2008; Kamer van Koophandel Rivierenland, 2006). This involves experimenting with novel policy instruments such as '*new rural estates' (*Provincie Gelderland, 2007b; Gemeente Neder-Betuwe, 2006). Also in Rivierengebied, traditional rural estates turn out to be inspiration sources for rural function integration (Provincie Gelderland, 2008; www.Marienwaerdt.nl). The novel policy instrument 'new rural estates' interlinks residential building permission in rural areas with a set of conditions regarding private willingness to invest in nature and landscape values and architectural beauty (Ministerie van VROM, 2008; LEI, 2012). Other policy experiments concern the mobilization of extra financial resources for nature and landscape management through so-called 'compensation payments' in the case

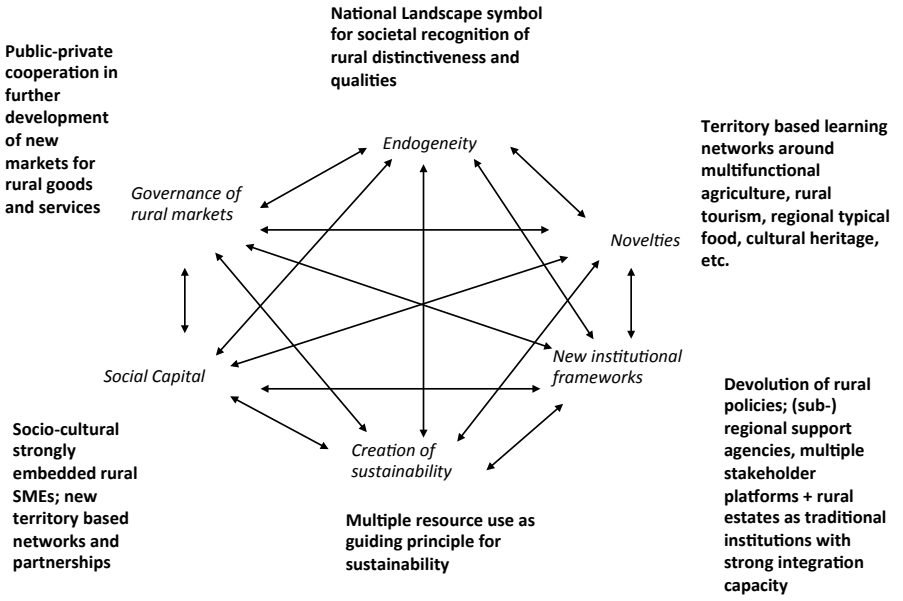

Figure 6.3 The emerging 'counter-structure' in Rivierengebied

of large scale infrastructural projects. Incidentally, this has been accompanied by the outsourcing of the operational management of new nature areas to agri-environmental cooperatives instead of professional nature organizations. Similar new institutional arrangements have been initiated by the regional Water Board, which started a pilot project with an agri-environmental cooperative around the integration of agricultural land use with temporary water storage and nature management.

Figure 6.3 synthesizes this alternative role of agriculture in rural place-making in *Rivierengebied* as a set of mutually re-enforcing interlinkages between the different web domains. As a whole, this set of positive interrelations may be understood as a kind of 'counter structure' that tries to oppose the dominantly present rural web tensions, as described earlier. This counter structure is grounded on a return to multifunctional agricultural pathways as the guiding principle for sustainable agricultural and rural development, new forms of territory-based cooperation, new institutional arrangements, new modes of rural market governance and novelty production that starts from available endogenous resources. Although certainly in many ways a still more vulnerable and volatile emerging alternative rural web configuration, it reveals how agricultural activity in *Rivierengebied* also induces rural place-making processes that entail more promising responses to broader societal demands regarding rural functions and services. The next case-study will demonstrate in more detail how this alternative role in rural place-making processes may be closely related to farmer-led and wider societal resistance against the trade-offs of the agricultural modernisation model.

6.4 The unfolding rural web in Laag-Holland

Laag Holland is a typical Dutch open rural landscape between the urban centres Amsterdam, Alkmaar, Hoorn and Zaanstad (see figure 6.4). This open landscape has become an important nature and recreation area for urban dwellers of the northern wing of the Randstad, a metropolitan area with over one million inhabitants. *Laag-Holland*'s cultural landscape attracts lots of urban visitors, who often need less than 10 minutes to reach this rural area, something increasingly appreciated as an important competitive advantage in relation to the southern wing of the Randstad (the industrial Rotterdam region) and regional international competitiveness in a globalizing world (Provincie Noord Holland, 2007a, 2007b). Its National Landscape status since 2004 manifests this growing policy recognition of the specific qualities of this diverse man-made cultural landscape, a diversity that contains a mixture of small land reclamations and so-called 'old-land', i.e., former peat islands cultivated since the 16th century. Its current National Landscape status protects Laag-Holland against further urbanization pressures. The total number of inhabitants is not allowed to increase, as officially incorporated in 2006 in regional spatial planning policy. The same policy framework mentions the following regional 'spatial core qualities' (Provincie Noord Holland, 2007b):

- Openness of the peat meadow landscape.
- Preservation of the peat meadow areas, especially those covered by the Habitat directive.

Figure 6.4 National Landscape Laag Holland
source www.nationalelandschappen.nl

- Preservation of cultural-heritage.
- Accessible recreational connections and tourist facilities.
- Realisation of new nature and recreation areas.
- A sustainable water management system for different rural functions.
- Structural improvement of agricultural businesses that support sustainable land management.

Together, these 'core qualities' illustrate how Laag-Holland is increasingly perceived as 'a green lung' in a metropolitan area that, according to scenario studies, may expand with 150.000 extra houses in the period up to 2030 (Provincie Noord Holland, 2007b). To avoid this eroding specific rural qualities, regional rural policy intends to promote a 'landscape based economy' that will contribute positively to the preservation and maintenance of cultural landscape values (Bureau Helsdingen, 2003).

In contrast to *Rivierengebied*, regional farmers in *Laag-Holland* embrace these regional rural policy ideas and intentions. The first nuclei of their re-orientation towards more multifunctional agrarian pathways trace back to the late 1970s. The '*Workgroup Young Farmers Waterland*' was founded at that time in the heart of the currently delineated National Landscape area. Ideas and initiatives of this Workgroup became the start of a regional farmers' movement that questions national dominant agricultural modernisation discourse in following ways:

- The future of regional farming is thought to depend on the integration of nature and landscape management in farming practices.
- Regional farmers oppose further uniformization and standardisation of agriculture and promote local conditions and ecology as a starting point for agricultural development.
- Regional farmers emphasize the need for self-regulation as a pro-active strategy against agri-environmental policy changes, with alternative ideas and proposals, starting from the conviction 'we can do better' on the basis of local farmers' knowledge about landscape and nature management.
- Regional farmers search for new forms of territory-based cooperation with other rural stakeholders.

These ideas deviated fundamentally from prevailing national rural policy at that time for '*less favoured rural areas*', in the sense that these still primarily focussed on large scale land consolidation projects, enlargement of parcels by filling up ditches, and single agricultural productivity oriented water management: a set of conventional intervention tools with only one imaginable response to the loss of rural landscape and nature values. As new societal demands emerge, these values are expected to be incorporated into a policy of rural function segregation with some areas reserved for further agricultural modernisation and others where agricultural activity is assumed to disappear in time. The Young Farmers Movement became the initiator of and catalyst for territory-based cooperation among farmers which, in time, succeeded in evolving into highly professional agri-environmental cooperatives for na-

ture and landscape management. After their merging, these currently operate at the National Landscape level. Especially in the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the new millennium, this has been followed by a variety of other new forms of farmer-led territory-based cooperation (see Table 6.1).

The Landzijde cooperative for green care-provision is an interesting case in point. It concerns a cooperative that represents around 100 care-farmers and functions as an intermediary organisation between large scale public health organisations and individual farm-enterprises that provide care-facilities for target groups such as mentally and physically disabled people, drug addicts, managers with burn-out problems, etc. (www.landzijde.nl). Other forms of territory-based cooperation among farmers focus on agri- and rural tourism (www.boerenkamer.nl), short food supply chains (www.marqt.nl) and green educational activities for urban primary schools (www.klaszoektboerderij.nl). All point to a strong interest in new rural development activities among regional farmers through a strategic re-orientation, which is accompanied by active novelty production around issues such as agri-environmental services, green-care quality monitoring and control, alternative food networks and new interlinkages between the rural and urban. This explains why *Laag-Holland* has a higher percentage of multifunctional farm enterprises than other Dutch rural areas (Roest & Schouten, 2010; Hendrik-Goossens *et al.*, 2012), which generate a significant part of overall farm income from new rural development activities. Moreover, these new income opportunities go along with positive interrelations, with investments in agricultural development and trust in overall future farm development opportunities (Oostindie *et al*., 2011).

Regional farmers' strategic return to multifunctional pathways is increasingly also institutionally facilitated. Proposals of the Young Farmers Working Group, initially often disqualified as '*unacceptable*' or '*unfeasible*' by public authorities and conventional agricultural interest groups, gradually gained support from other stakeholders. Available social capital among regional farmers, the development of shared visions and ideas among stakeholders, the construction of coherence and many-sided cooperation between grass root initiatives, all transformed into a certain place-based capacity to create new institutional arrangements. Programme Office Laag-Holland is one of these new institutional arrangements. As a multi-stakeholder platform it formally interlinks rural municipalities, major cities (Amsterdam, Zaanstad), the province, other administrative bodies, the farmers' union and representatives of other regional stakeholder organisations. With the overall objective to come to a better coordination of rural–urban relationships, cooperating actors aim to relocalize food supply chains and to enhance commitment for nature and landscape management among stakeholders. The urban administration of Amsterdam participates in this '*defence of rural Laag-Holland*' through 1) membership on the board of National Landscape; 2) a financial contribution to its overall budget; 3) protection of the openness of rural areas in spatial planning procedure; 4) the development of information and educational projects on food and cultural history; and 5) the organisation of regional food markets and food procurement initiatives such as '*Taste-*

Title of initiative	Actors involved	Short description
Association Agrarian Nature and Landscape Management Water, Land en Dijken www.waterlandendijken.nl	The Association represents about 80-85% of farmers, with about 75% of total regional land resources, plus about 600 volunteers.	Organisation and realisation of agricultural nature and landscape management in practice / development of new projects for agricultural nature and landscape management
Programme Office Laag Holland	Public and private organisations. Provincial administration, rural and urban municipalities, social movements	Support initiatives in the area / elaborate implementation plans / stimulate territory-based cooperation
Hotel de Boerenkamer www.hotel-boerenkamer.nl	Farmers with luxurious small-scale accommodation in the Province of Noord Holland, mostly located in National Landscape Laag Holland	Cooperation with regard to marketing
Landzijde www.landzijde.nl)	Care-farms, Public Health Assurance Companies, Public Welfare Organisations, Municipalities	Front-office for people with a care-demand / collective intermediary to health-institutions, like insurance companies
Waterlants Weelde www.Waterlantsweelde.nl	Farmers + slaughterhouses + small retailer outlets	Hallmark for region-specific meat, rules for production, cooperation in marketing
Gate of Waterland www.Poortvanwaterland.nl	Visitor centre, catering entrepreneurs, farmers	Plans to establish a visitors centre at the border of the area as a starting point for routes (walking, biking, etc.) to visit attractions on farms (regulation of recreational traffic)
Foundation Schermer-mills, www.schermermolens.info	Volunteers	Restoration and exploration of traditional windmills in the Schermer polder, museum-mill, educational activities.
Taste & Test Garden Amsterdam, www.Proeftuinamsterdam.nl; www.farmingthecity.net	Municipality Amsterdam, citizens, an Amsterdam educational centre, Water, Land en Dijken.	Mobilization of urban citizens, public health promotion with, amongst others, specific attention to region-specific products
Association Farmer-city-demand www.boerenstandswens.nl	Inhabitants of Amsterdam	Articulation of urban demands with regard to rural areas; communication with farmers

Table 6.1 Territory-based cooperation in Laag-Holland.

Garden Amsterdam', activities that contribute to a process where urban dwellers from Amsterdam start to articulate their rural demands in more direct ways (see e.g. www.boerenstandswens.nl) and not primarily indirectly through membership of e.g. nature organisations or other social movements. Also, this more direct interaction and legitimation may contribute positively to the overall responsiveness in *Laag-Holland* to new urban demands (Huige, 2006; Carsjens & Van der Knaap, 2002).

It is important to note that the Regional Programme Office builds on earlier regional policy experiments with territory-based rural governance within the so-called *Green Lung* and *Valuable Cultural Landscapes* programmes. Both provided opportunities to experiment with a more active and integrative role for provincial administration around issues such as agricultural environmental performances, the preservation of cultural heritage and the diversification of rural economies. These policy experiments were clearly positively evaluated both by regional public and by private stakeholders (Selnes *et al.*, 2006). This already long history of experimenting with territory-based rural governance explains the emergence of new networks, new partnerships and new forms of cooperation in *Laag-Holland*. It resulted in an increasingly positive interaction between farmer-driven initiatives, on the one hand, and new territory-based institutional arrangements, on the other, which substantially contributed to necessary competences, capacity and willingness to *re-direct* developments through:

· A shift from sectoral to more integrated, territory-based approaches.
· The rehabilitation of local resources from 'hindrances' for agricultural modernisation into promising endogenous resources.
· A return to multifunctionality as a starting point for rural planning and development.
· Institutional openness to new forms of self-regulation as exemplified by the authorities' growing trust in the benefits of agri-environmental cooperatives.

Especially in combination, these different factors explain why *Laag Holland* increasingly succeeds in valorising its locally available resources, with local ecology as the starting point for agricultural development, local knowledge as a crucial resource to improve agri-environmental performance and local farmers as carriers of nature and landscape management. This valorisation of local resources further builds upon rural market governance with the following characteristics:

· A de-monopolisation of regional nature and landscape management by collective farmers' action.
· Longer-term lease contracts between farmers and professional nature organisations which enlarge farmers' opportunities to integrate nature management in farming strategies, supported by the creation of a Regional Land Bank as another facilitating new institutional arrangement.
· A growing access to national public health budgets in favour of care-farms with an important intermediary role for the regional care-farm cooperative, Landzijde.

Active region branding of Laag-Holland in close cooperation with city branding activities of the wider Amsterdam region.

This territory-based rural market governance, in turn, is increasingly grounded in new urban–rural relationships through:

- Urban spatial planning doctrines that explicitly define, protect and acknowledge Laag-Holland as a 'green lung' and highly attractive rural landscape within the Randstad metropolis (Ruigrok, 2008).
- Urban leisure demands (biking, walking, sailing etc.) that provide additional opportunities for new rural services and the valorisation of regional nature and landscape values.
- A growing urban interest in local food procurement.
- An active mobilisation of territory-based policy frameworks (national as well as European) that provide extra financial resources for rural development.
- Relatively high rural estate prices (Nai Uitgevers, 2006), perhaps less favourable for rural dwellers looking for residential places in their vicinity, but simultaneously a source for extra tax revenues to support sustainable rural resource management.

Returning to the role of farmers in these wider rural place-making characteristics, it should be concluded that relatively early expressions of farmer-led resistance to the trade-offs of the agricultural modernisation model have been a crucial trigger for the relatively strong rural web configuration of *Laag-Holland* nowadays. Figure 6.5 visualizes that this presence of mutually re-enforcing web relations initially centres around positive interactions between 1) regional sustainability concerns related to nature and landscape values; 2) available social capital among farmers; and 3) the ability to create new institutional arrangements exemplified by agri-environmental cooperatives such as *Water Land en Dijken* and *Landzijde* as well as *Regional Programme Office Laag-Holland*. Over time, other domains have been more and more actively incorporated as part of active rural web 'design' through collaborative agency.

This collaborative agency also covers certain awareness that a rural web configuration requires continuous attention in terms of the exploration of new practices, approaches, institutional arrangements and domain interlinkages. Stakeholders refer especially to the following issues in relation to future opportunities and limitations for rural web design in *Laag-Holland*:

- Further strengthening of the 'landscape based economy' through new modes of rural market governance (see also Chapter 5).
- Extra opportunities to re-distribute the positive socio-economic impacts of nature and landscape values to the providers of these services.
- Better alignment by professional nature organisations of agri-environmental services with nature and landscape management.
- Avoidance of primarily 'power based' policy responses to multi-level governance dynamics (see also Chapter 4).

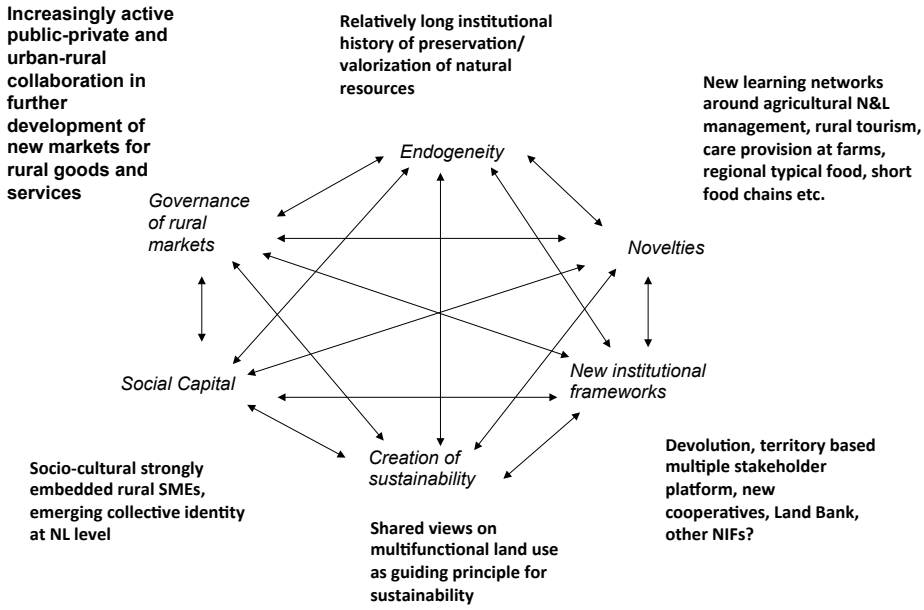

Figure 6.5 Laag-Holland's unfolding rural web

- Continuity of the 'zero migration balance' policy in a wider setting, where demographic growth remains financially much more attractive for administrations than the preservation of nature and landscape values.
- Provision of rural services in line with new urban demands that succeeds in avoiding the erosion of specific rural qualities.

6.5 Conclusions

This chapter started with an introduction to the need for relational perspectives on the place-based manifestation, mediation and transformation of modernisation and globalization forces. Subsequently, the rural web framework has been briefly introduced as an analytical tool that approaches the role of agriculture in rural place-making processes from a relational perspective. Overall, the presented empirical evidence from two Dutch National Landscapes revealed how this role may differ rather fundamentally in rural areas that face similar new societal demands. Relatively strongly present agricultural modernisation forces in *Rivierengebied* go along with socio-spatial fragmentation and a loss of rural distinctiveness as the overall outcome of the incongruences, frictions and tensions between rural web domains. Consequently, rural place-making that valorises regional landscape and nature values manifests itself so far primarily as a '*counter-structure'*, a set of still vulnerable, mutually re-enforcing web relations with an important role for regional farmers that

opt for a strategic return to multifunctional agrarian pathways.

National Landscape *Laag-Holland* demonstrates how in other areas such multifunctional pathways became key drivers, triggers of and catalysts for increasingly robust rural web configurations. Here, relatively difficult ecological conditions for the agricultural modernisation model went along with early manifestations of farmer-led resistance to marginalisation tendencies and an increasingly broadly shared agreement on multifunctionality as a guiding principle for sustainable agricultural and rural development. This wider normative agreement on agriculture's role in rural development induced the development of new institutional arrangements, a more territory-based governance of rural markets and a growing attention to the preservation and valorisation of endogenous resources. Regional farmers turn out to be key actors in this alternative *rural* place-making, building upon mutually re-enforcing networks, interactions and resource use, new functional ties between rural and urban spaces and new multifunctional rural business models.

Table 6.2 synthesizes the key differences between farmers' roles in rural place-making in the two Dutch National Landscapes, by associating these with contrasting sustainability views. Marsden and Kitchen (2009) interlink '*eco-economy*' with '*the recalibration of micro-economic practices that, added together, can potentially realign production and consumption chains and capture local and regional value between rural and urban spaces*' (ibid:275). Contrastingly, '*bio-economy'* is primarily related to agro-industrial concepts such as industrial ecology, biotechnology, genomics, chemical engineering, enzyme technology and global corporate control. Rural web dynamics in *Rivierengebied* reflect the dominance of bio-economy inspired practices and ideas, which goes along with a loss of farmers' strategic interests to

Laag-Holland	**Rivierengebied**
Active re-design of agrarian pathways to multifunctionality as a crucial co-constituting component of an unfolding rural web that increasingly succeeds in preserving, maintaining and strengthening rural distinctiveness and competiveness.	Dominantly present agricultural modernisation forces induce rural web tensions, conflicts, threaten rural distinctiveness and go along with loss of rural amenities.
New functional ties between regional rural and urban spaces through new forms of territory-based cooperation	Loss of functional ties between regional rural and urban spaces, with so far still vulnerable re-localization attempts through strategic returns to multifunctional pathways
Eco-economy as dominant sustainability paradigm.	Bio-economy as dominant sustainability paradigm.

Table 6.2 Agriculture's role in rural place-making processes.

preserve rural distinctiveness and to maintain strong functional ties with urban spaces, although this strategy may be partly actively re-explored within an emerging, still more vulnerable, alternative rural web configuration. The strength of eco-economy inspired actions and thoughts appears much more prominently in *Laag-Holland.* Its unfolding rural web reflects a recalibration of micro-economic practices based on a much more widely shared strategic return to multifunctional pathways and a growing ability to re-align food consumption and production through new modes of rural market governance, new institutional arrangements and new functional ties with nearby urban spaces.

As a whole, these case-study findings underpin how the rural web framework provides an interesting tool to analyse the role of agricultural activity in rural place-making processes. Its emphasis on the multi-dimensional and relational aspects of this role offers a heuristic device for a more profound and comprehensive understanding of the spatially differentiating outcome, coalescence and precipitation of agricultural activity. Complementary to notions such as '*the global countryside*', '*the politics of place*' or the '*organisation of proximity*' the framework underlines agriculture's still prominent role in rural place-making processes, albeit in rather different ways and increasingly independent from its direct contribution to wider rural employment and rural economies.

Prospects for agrarian pathways to multifunctionality in the Netherlands

7

7.1 introduction

This thesis postulates that agriculture's multifunctionality is characterized and propelled by flows of resistance, redesign and resilience. This is a key argument that has been approached from different perspectives, theoretical strands and levels of analysis. In this final chapter I will reflect especially on the future of Dutch multifunctional agricultural pathways. It starts with an impression of short-term drawbacks due to prevailing financial and economic crises. This will be followed by an inventory of longer term prospects, with special attention to a selected number of redesign challenges that are thought to be of key importance. The final section will concentrate on the performativity of rural sociology in relation to these future prospects and its implications in terms of the theoretical ambitions of this thesis. Before doing so, there will be a brief summary of how the resilience of multifunctional agricultural pathways has been approached in previous chapters:
The contemporary complexity of social ordering processes is clearly reflected in the Dutch debate about the future of farming. After decades of agricultural modernisation, the actual and potential multifunctionality of agriculture is disputed. The rural development model, especially, points to the persistence and adaptability of multifunctional pathways, even in rather unfriendly institutional settings. Yet, the contested nature of agriculture's multifunctionality within the Dutch agri-expert system suggests a still rather modest transformative capacity of multifunctional pathways in terms of the normative alignment of societal ideas about the core functions of agriculture.

In this same setting, the transformative capacity of multifunctional pathways manifests itself much more convincingly at the micro-level. As argued, this resilience is intrinsically interwoven with the following specificities of family farming: 1) strong interlinkages between economic and socio-cultural values as integrating forces for productive, as well as consumptive, rural functions; 2) changing gender relations that result in new patterns of labour division and distribution of responsibilities; 3) newly emerging professional identities with alternative strategic meanings for agricultural activity; and 4) a certain flexibility in resource use, including the organization of inter-generational succession.

Resilience appears in European agri-environmental governance as self-governance and self-regulation capacity. Besides the emergence of different types of market-led approaches throughout Europe, this also involves experiments with hybrid remuneration systems, more territory-based and tailor-made provision systems and more performance based accountability arrangements between policy actors and between policy actors and practitioners, as specific responses to hyper control tendencies in hierarchical relations, as well as prevailing institutional voids in governance settings. The overall background and features of these Dutch on-going self-governance and self-regulation initiatives around the provision of agri-environmental services, underlines that resilience may also reside in farmer-led and policy actor-driven attempts to come to new institutional arrangements, with specific attention to the

relevance of experimental space, synchronicity, consistence and coherence in increasingly complex multi-level governance settings and to the exploration of 'front-stage' and 'backstage' solutions for prevailing institutional voids in these settings.

The analysis around emerging '*nested markets*' in Europe interlinks resilience with the appearance of distinctive market relations. The ability of multifunctional agricultural pathways to persist, adapt and transform coalesces here into alternative practices and normative frameworks that, in contrast with hegemonic food market relations, succeed in integrating social, ethical and ecological values with market relations. These nested markets further allow for synergy-effects between traditional and novel rural markets at different levels, might influence consumer behaviour in positive ways and, additionally, contribute to lower transaction costs for producers and consumers for getting access to high quality food markets.

The rural web analysis, especially, further interlinks resilience with flows of resistance and redesign. First, the six dimensions *endogeneity, sustainability, social capital, novelty production, new institutional arrangements* and *governance of rural markets* characterize these flows in detail. Secondly, the rural web framework underpins the relevance of their mutual interaction patterns, interdependencies, coalescence and spatial precipitation. Here, the resilience of multifunctional agricultural pathways precipitates spatially in the strong rural web configurations that characterize rural competitiveness, quality of rural life and close functional ties between urban and rural spaces. The differentiating rural web dynamics of two Dutch National Landscapes demonstrate how this resilience may manifests itself more or less promisingly, reflecting the place specificity of the interrelations between the past, present and future of farming.

On the basis of this synthesis, it may be concluded that the resilience of multifunctional agricultural pathways in the Netherlands is, above all, grounded in family-based farming. Dutch family-farms' growing interest in a return to multifunctionality could be further illustrated by the rapid expansion of farmers-led collective action around new rural development activities such as regional typical produce, farm-shops, green education, agri- and rural tourism, agri-environmental and landscape services, sustainable energy production, etc., rooted in a longstanding tradition of cooperativism in Dutch agriculture (Oostindie *et al.*, 2007; Bieleman, 2008). A certain optimism regarding the future of multifunctional pathways may be, albeit more incidentally, also derived from facilitating institutional redesign. The introduction of personal care budgets in the national health sector, for instance, which de-monopolized the provision of public health services, partly explains the rapid expansion of care-facilities at farms in the Netherlands. Again, this is accompanied by farmer-led collective action to grasp these newly emerging opportunities through a better coordination of demand and supply, the facilitation of training in skills and competences and by developing tailor-made quality, control and monitoring systems (www.landzijde.nl).
The unfolding rural web of Laag-Holland shows that such farmer-led initiatives may

spatially increasingly coalesce into resilient multifunctional agricultural pathways at the regional level. Yet, as crucial co-constitutors of strong rural web configurations, also here multifunctional pathways may remain vulnerable to (temporary?) setbacks. Laag-Holland's Regional Project Office, as one of the promising new institutional arrangements to facilitate territory-based rural governance, for instance, has been closed down. This decision was motivated by the budgetary consequences of the outbreak of the global financial crisis. These affected the provincial administration of Noord-Holland rather dramatically, due to its saving accounts at an Icelandic Bank. Additionally, national experiments with rural policy performance contracts may have been another reason. Similarly to policy reactions in the province Gelderland (see Chapter 4), also in Laag-Holland, these experiments reduced provincial policy actors' enthusiasm for bottom-up rural policy initiatives. These are just two examples that show how the resilience of multifunctional pathways in Laag-Holland through multi-actor rural web design has time and again to be confirmed, preserved and combatted within wider processes of economic and institutional change.

The social struggle involved can be further illustrated by serious budget cuts in the National Ecological Main Structure (NEMS) as a consequence of wider national financial austerity measures. This decision forced provincial administrations to reconsider and re-negotiate NEMS targets in their performance contracts for 2007-2013. For farmers, these budget cuts sometimes brought rather abrupt changes in preliminary agreements with provincial administrations on the funding of agri-environmental measures and, therefore, suddenly increased their dependence on market-led remuneration systems. Similar national financial austerity measures also restricted the opportunities to make use of personal care budgets in the national public health system and, as such, negatively affected short-term prospects of green-care provision. It shows again that facilitating new institutional arrangements may turn out to be still rather fragile in times of economic downturn.

More generally, national economic and financial crises seem to favour agricultural modernisation forces and closely associated neo-liberal ideas that agricultural activities do not fundamentally differ from any other economic activity. Institutionally, this is probably most clearly reflected in the decision to merge the former Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and Nature Management with the former Ministry of Economic Affairs into the new Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation (Ministerie van Economische Zaken, Landbouw en Innovatie (from now on Ministry of EL&I) in 2010. This decision was accompanied by the introduction of the so-called 'Top Sectors' innovation programme in 2011, with the intention to concentrate public funding on the internationally most competitive economic sectors and the selection of *Agri&Food* and *Glasshouse Horticulture & Starting materials* as two agricultural priority sectors. These two sectors were invited to join the '*golden triangles*' of partnerships between national agri-expert systems, policy bodies and business communities. The launching of the 'Top Sectors' programme went along with the dismantling of National Taskforce Multifunctional Agriculture in 2012. During a public meeting around the presentation of the findings of the research project 'Dynamics and Robustness of Multifunctional farm-enterprises' (see Chapter 3), the official spokesman of the Ministry of EL&I justified this decision as follows: '*The Min-*

istry is pleased to hear that the national multifunctional agriculture sector entails robust rural businesses, able to stand on their own feet'. For the audience, consisting of a broad representation of the national community of practice for multifunctional agriculture, this was a rather surprising and disappointing re-framing of overall presented research findings, as well as an unmistakable signal of loss of policy support at the national level.

This changing political climate in favour of modernisation forces is certainly disputed. The National Environmental Assessment Agency, for instance, foresees that the 'Top Sector' Programme, certainly when applied in combination with a further reduction of national public funding for the agricultural sector, will result in growing solvability problems among the largest farm-enterprises, i.e., those most representative of the agricultural modernisation model. It foresees, therefore, a slowdown of necessary further improvement of agriculture's sustainability performances (Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving, 2012). National wider societal resistance against the negative externalities of the agricultural modernisation model is clearly expressed in on-going controversies around so-called 'mega-stables'. The resistance to plans for agri-industrial production units with up to 10 or even more hectares of agricultural buildings, especially in intensive animal production systems, covers different aspects such as incompatibility with small scale rural landscapes, animal welfare issues and public health concerns (Heederik & IJzermans, 2011). Termeer *et al*. (2011) speak of '*a dialogue of the deaf*' to characterize the absence of 'real' communication between involved stakeholders due to incompatibility of views, discourses and interests. It further echoes evolutionary scholars' understanding of resilience decline as a state of inertia that precludes rigidification and stagnation (Simmie & Martin, 2010). Similar rigidification tendencies may also be associated with prevailing food market dependencies and orientations. Just to give some figures: national vegetable production volume exceeds by more than four times national dietary needs. The same goes for animal production protein volumes. More than half of the national pork and chicken production volume is exported. Per capita, the Netherlands exports 43 kg cheese, 72 kg potatoes and 475 kg vegetables (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2012). All these figures underscore Dutch agriculture's dependence on food exports and make it interesting to recall the differentiating farm-level trajectories towards multifunctionality as presented in Chapter 3. As concluded, the national recent emergence of an accelerated trajectory towards strong multifunctionality is relatively often accompanied by a downscaling of agricultural production volumes as a way to extensify former land use intensity. So far, agricultural downscaling with the purpose of releasing resources to enable a return to multifunctionality remains highly controversial in Dutch debate about the future of agriculture where '*volume sentiments*' often set the boundaries for (un-) imaginable futures. Simultaneously, the relevance of national raw material production for overall agro-industrial value added creation is diminishing. Again some figures: in 1995 63% of total gross value added of Dutch agro-complex originated from nationally produced raw material. In 2009 this percentage was reduced to 48% (Raad voor de Leefomgeving en Infrastructuur, 2013). These indications of a growing discrepancy between primary producers' interests and those of down- and up-stream food chain actors remain largely

hidden in national dominant food security discourse, which could be characterized as '*shrouded by neo-Malthusian assumptions that production and demography are the key factors and that the solutions lie in producing more food*' (Lang & Barling, 2012:323). These same food scholars disqualify the notion *'sustainable intensification*' as an '*oxymoron*' that increasingly dominates global thinking about how to tackle food security concerns. Its growing influence and specific interpretation in national debate around the future of agriculture certainly makes a reduction of food volumes currently a sensitive issue in the Netherlands, although some food scholars might plead to disconnect the notion sustainable intensification completely from production volume arguments to create space for '*land sparing*' (monofunctional) as well as '*land sharing'* (multifunctional) food system futures (Garnett & Godfray, 2012).

National debate around agrarian pathways to multifunctionality is further reflected in the outcomes of a state-of-the-art review around their future prospects. As summarized in Table 7.1, this review made a distinction between 1) macro-trends; 2) institutional factors; 3) regional specific factors; 4) farm specific factors; and 5) person-specific factors. Together, the diversity in trends, factors, actors, drivers, skills, etc., underscores the multi-facetted, multi-actor and multi-level nature of the transition processes involved. The following sections will go into more detail about some of the associated key challenges in terms of facilitating institutional redesign. Admittedly, this selection is more or less at odds with dominant thinking and acting in Dutch policy- and wider institutional setting. Yet, its main purpose is to further characterize 'reflexive, interactive and practical redesign' (Bos *et al.*, 2012) that may enhance the future prospects of multifunctional pathways.

7.2. Towards multifunctional mirror images for agro-industrial 'mega-stables'

Dutch family farms are increasingly in competition with agro-industrial business models. Relatively independent land resource sectors such as glasshouse production and intensive animal husbandry systems, but also land based agricultural activities such as dairy production and arable farming, increasingly mobilize (temporary) external labour force (Planbureau voor Leefomgeving en Infrastructuur, 2013). Similar tendencies, although to a lesser degree, can o be witnessed among multifunctional farm-enterprises. Earlier, references were made to concerns, especially among Dutch representatives, of strong multifunctional farm-enterprises regarding future succession opportunities (see Chapter 3). It makes the future organisational models of multifunctional farms also an issue that is surrounded by design challenges. It is an intriguing question whether Dutch traditional rural estates may be a source of inspiration in this respect. Their organizational model combines characteristics such as cultural embeddedness, multiple resource use, relatively abundant access to land resources (varying from several hundred to more than a thousand hectares) and the presence of professional management skills. Together these characteristics

Macro-trends	• Deteriorating competitiveness of conventional agriculture • Food-chain differentiation tendencies • Changing Food culture • Public health concerns / Obesity • New urban-rural relationships • Ageing population / population decrease • Leisure activities • Multi-cultural society • Growing attention to sustainable development / climate change • Co-existence of multiple sustainability paradigms • Financial / economic crisis • Globalization / re-localization tendencies • Spatial claims for new rural functions (nature, water, residence, etc.)
Institutional factors	• CAP reforms • National rural policy devolution tendencies (e.g. Investment Budget Rural Areas) • Growing attention to function-integration in spatial policy • Newly emerging institutional arrangements in different fields such as care, nature and landscape management, energy, regional food chains, etc. • More active institutional support for rural entrepreneurship in the broader sense (education, advisory services, training, financial institutions, etc.) • More active support, more territory-based cooperation and innovation (regional Knowledge arrangements, innovation networks, etc.) • Experimental space within regulatory frameworks (local, regional, national EU)
Regional specific factors	• Intensity of agricultural production • Landscape values • Urban vicinity • Rural attractiveness for residence and leisure • Regional / Rural economy characteristics • Urban recognition and acknowledgement of rural qualities • Territory-based cooperation / social capital
Farm-specific factors	• Farming Style / Strategy • Farm location • Role of farm-women within family farms • Scale and intensity of agricultural production ('path-dependencies') • Ability to create synergies between new rural development activities • Farm investments / economic revenues • Changing strategic meanings of agricultural activity in overall business activities
Personal factors	• Non-economic drivers and values • Learning and work experience • Entrepreneurial skills / competences • Strategic management qualities

Table 7.1 Factors influencing agriculture's multifunctionality in the Netherlands (Source: Oostindie et al, 2011)

often go along with a certain capacity to 1) create coherence in rural resource use; 2) safeguard rural distinctiveness; 3) establish new public-private partnerships; 4) mobilize co-financing resources for commercial investments; and 5) resist exclusively financially driven threats: a set of alternative design principles that could provide an appealing multifunctional counter-image to the '*mega-stable*' icon for agricultural modernisation driven scale-enlargement thinking.

Thus far, the national agri-expert system shows little interest in organisational re-design with special attention to multifunctional agricultural pathways. In the wider context of a growing heterogeneity of formal business entities such as single ownership, partnerships, limited partnerships and private limited companies (Jongeneel & Slangen, 2005), multifunctional farm-enterprises frequently opt to combine legal business entities to overcome incompatibilities with and inconsistencies between regulatory frameworks that stem from different sectors (Pijnenburg & van Boxtel, 2011; Taskforce, 2012). It may reflect family-farms' creativity to deal with complex regulatory environments but does not alleviate more substantial problems with regard to, e.g., inter-generational succession. Sometimes innovation projects explore the opportunities for new business models, based on active citizen participation, co-ownership, co-financing and co-sharing of responsibilities (Wagemans, 2011; Pijnenburg, 2011). The growing popularity of '*social venturing entrepreneurship*' reflects a growing societal demand for new business models (Kievit, 2011). Yet, the active design of novel rural business models through the direct involvement of multifunctional agricultural *practitioners* remains largely absent, although interesting initiatives can be witnessed where overall business activities are legally sub-divided into a set of micro-businesses to facilitate overall business continuity through novel co-ownership and succession constructions. These new legal constructions of closely and formally cooperating micro-businesses, within a larger formal business entity, intend to preserve the strength of family-based farming as a key driver of multifunctional pathways through novel responses to some of its specific vulnerabilities.

7.3. Towards sustainable food planning

The re-localization of food production and consumption in the Netherlands faces a variety of problems and challenges, as underlined in multiple ways throughout this thesis. Loss of farm-based and regional food distinctiveness, the dominance of agro-industrial food quality conventions, the vanishing of small scale food processors as strategic partners for alternative, more artisanal food qualities, are just some of these problems and challenges. The notion of sustainable food planning interlinks these problems with the role of cities as food policy actors. It emphasizes that urban food strategies and public food procurement are two crucial, partly interrelated and mutually reinforcing '*social axes*' of '*integrated territorial food geography*', addressing the key challenges of contemporary food systems (Viljoen and Wiskerke, 2012:25-26). As such, it aims to integrate sustainability issues such as food accessibility, affordability and freshness, concerns about fossil fuel dependency, public

health, soil degradation, waste management, loss of biodiversity, water stress, etc. As an evolving theory and practice it may be in many respects still in its infancy, notwithstanding a myriad of promising initiatives throughout the world. This infancy state certainly characterizes the Netherlands, where active urban food governance continues to be surrounded by manifold institutional obstacles (Derkzen & Morgan, 2012). The same goes for emerging, often still vulnerable, public food procurement initiatives, certainly in comparison to other parts of the world (Rijk, 2010; Vonk *et al*., 2009; Dekking *et al.*, 2007; Sonnino, 2010). Sustainable food planning encompasses manifold redesign challenges. Here I will just touch upon some. The re-localization of food systems, as a crucial component of more sustainable rural-urban functional relationships, will have to deal with a reality in which urban dwellers have increasingly multi-cultural backgrounds and, thus, historically different ties with the food cultures in their contemporary direct vicinity. A growing body of literature confirms that the multi-cultural backgrounds of Dutch urban dwellers goes along with differentiating demands for rural amenities such as nature and landscape, leisure activities, green care and rural educational services (Schans *et al.*, 2009; Kloen *et al.*, 2011; Peters, 2008; Hendriks & Stobbelaar, 2003). This socio-cultural fragmentation of urban demands regarding food and other rural services makes sustainable food planning challenging and complex. Simultaneously, it creates new opportunities for agrarian pathways to multifunctionality due to, e.g., less outspoken preferences for 'wild' nature images and more food related rural recreational preferences among ethnic minority groups (Jay *et al.*, 2012; Somers, 2004). It makes sustainable urban food planning certainly an intriguing and highly relevant second field of redesign that will co-shape the future of agriculture's multifunctionality in the Netherlands.

7.4. Towards more inclusive assessment methods

A third field of redesign addresses the shortcomings of available societal impact assessment methods. As indicated in Chapter 3, available socio-economic impact studies of new rural development activities in the Netherlands continue to be largely limited to the level of activities. For pragmatic reasons, the National Taskforce decided to focus its monitoring activities on the progress of the '*multifunctional agricultural sector'* in terms of turnover-growth of a (selection of) new farm-based rural development activities (Roest *et al.*, 2009; Buck *et al.*, 2009; Bos *et al.*, 2008; Kierkels *et al.*, 2012). Acknowledging their limitations, the same Task Force requested the national research community to shed its light on the question: what are the wider societal benefits of multifunctional agriculture? This request resulted in an inventory study among researchers with specific expertise on this field. The outcomes of this inventory study showed, first and foremost, that their ideas about wider societal benefits vary considerably (Oostindie *et al.*, 2011). These further revealed that benefits such as new interlinkages between agriculture and society, agriculture and nature, food production and food consumption, farming and rural economy, the rural and the urban, etc., are difficult to align with available agricultural and rural data-collection systems. Sonnino and Marsden (2006:195) speak in this respect of

'*reluctance by many national governments to alter the increasingly outmoded data collected under the conventional agricultural sector*'. The problem of 'outmodedness' of available agricultural data-systems indeed sets serious limits on Dutch agri-expert system opportunities to assess multifunctional agricultural pathways in more inclusive ways, as also concluded by the few rural economists that did attempt to assess their socio-economic impact beyond the farm level (Heringa *et al.*, 2009). It requires more rural SME centric data-collection systems to fuel national debate on this broader socio-economic impact, with evidence-based information systems that, depending upon the specificity of rural settings, compare multifunctional pathways with conventional farming, specific farming styles or a situation without any agricultural activity. In rural settings with agri-ecological features as Laag-Holland, for instance, a choice for this last point of reference will be most appropriate given the ecological constraints for the agricultural modernisation model. Obviously, this selection of the relevant point of reference ('benchmark') will greatly affect the overall outcomes of impact assessments (Ploeg, 2000).

Another well-known methodological complexity concerns the coverage of trade-offs, replacement-, substitution- and synergy-effects (Knickel & Renting, 2000). Dutch agri-expert systems may show a growing interest in the quantification of the negative externalities of the agricultural modernisation model by different types of '*full costs approaches*' (see e.g. Harmsen *et al.*, 2012) but serious attempts to assess, measure and quantify the '*full benefits*' of multifunctional agricultural pathways in accordance with the body of literature on rural capital assets (Slee, 2003; Garrod *et al.*, 2006; Flora *et al.*, 2007; Ventura *et al.*, 2010) remains largely absent. The Dutch expert system shows remarkably little interest in the development of more inclusive societal cost-benefit approaches that intend to unravel the complex interrelations between the economic, environmental and social welfare aspects of contrasting agricultural pathways. The rural web framework is a step in this direction (see Chapter 6). The same goes for recent research attempts to assess the societal benefits of multifunctional agricultural pathways in urban fringes and metropolitan rural areas (Veen & Abma, 2013; APPM *et al*. 2012). The imperative of these more inclusive assessment methods remains largely ignored in the latest formulated knowledge, innovation and ambition agenda for the national 'multifunctional sector' (LTO, 2013; Meulen *et al.,* 2014). Hence, together with meaningful agricultural and rural data-collection systems, it makes more appropriate and sophisticated assessment methods another key issue for institutional redesign that could enhance Dutch multifunctional agricultural pathways.

7.5. Towards substantial CAP reform

Historically, the Netherlands is a major CAP beneficiary, especially in terms of support levels per hectare of land use (Baldock *et al*., 2011). On-going CAP reforms imply a reduction in the national CAP pillar 1 budget for the period 2013-2019, by far the most important source of public support for agricultural activities in the Nether-


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lands, although with a significant diversity between farmers, agricultural sectors and regions (Doorn *et al.*, 2011). These historically grown differences in support levels are increasingly impossible to justify. Dutch veal producers, for instance, known for their relatively poor environmental and animal welfare performances, receive the highest support levels per ha, with an average of 3211 euro in 2009. Contrastingly, extensive dairy producers, with relatively good environmental and animal welfare performances, received in the same year an average of 410 euro per ha (ibid). Similar contradictions also appear at the regional level. Dutch highest CAP pillar 1 support levels can be found in an area with a concentration of starch potato production, notorious for its environmental problems and its wider loss of rural amenities.

Obviously, these historically rooted inefficiencies and injustices in the allocation of CAP pillar 1 support are the subject of policy debate. This partly underlay the initiative of the then still Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fishery to come up with a so-called '*charcoal sketch*' to clarify the Dutch position in European debates about CAP 2013 reforms (Ministerie LNV, 2008). These charcoal sketches start from the idea of a future differentiation of direct-income support systems along two dimensions: 1) rural areas with and without natural or institutional handicaps (e.g. a National Landscape status); and 2) farmers' ability and willingness to deliver agri-environmental services. This represents a two-level discriminative system that aims to re-allocate direct income support more in line with differences in rural settings, as well as farmers' opportunities and strategic interests, in the provision of agri-environmental services. Yet, these ideas gradually disappeared from the national policy agenda when calls for CAP budget cuts started to dominate the European policy debate in the aftermath of the global financial and economic crises. At the national level, this coincided with a policy re-orientation in favour of CAP pillar 1 allocation methods that prioritize minimal transaction costs (Roza & Selnes, 2012). It went along with a political re-framing of the need to fundamentally re-distribute CAP support, in line with earlier charcoal ideas, as a less important issue that may be resolved by temporary compensation mechanisms (Jongeneel *et al.*, 2011).

Similar tendencies to withdraw from substantial adaptations can be witnessed around the 'greening' of the single payment system. EU proposals to include criteria for permanent pastures and crop diversification are nationally criticized since these would bring only marginal environmental benefits against large 'administrative burdens' (Roza & Selnes, 2012; Westhoek *et al.*, 2012). This is one of the reasons for starting four pilot projects around more territory-based approaches for the 'greening' of single payments (Ministry EL&I, 2011). These four pilots strongly build upon the growing interest in territory-based self-regulation and self-governance initiatives of farmers and other rural land owners (see Chapters 4 and 6) and address particularly the following issues: 1) regional integration of CAP pillar 1 and 2 funding; 2) farm-level 'top-ups' that may further facilitate and stimulate the provision of ecosystem services; and 3) extra budgets for these services through modulation (Agrarische Natuurvereniging Oost-Groningen *et al.*, 2011; Veelzijdig Platteland *et al.*, 2012). In cooperation, the pilot groups proposed to introduce a certification

system for '*Green by Definition*' requirements that enables farm-level sustainability to be approached from a broad perspective, including topics such as energy, water and soil quality and carbon emissions (Schipluidengroep, 2012). This has been followed by the collective publication of a letter of concern with respect to on-going CAP reforms, stressing current uncertainties regarding the prolongation of territory specific measures, lack of transparency in available co-financing budgets by national and provincial administrations and insufficient political willingness to grasp the opportunities within EU regulations for extra payments in less favourable rural areas (Hoogendoorn, 2013). It points again to the significance of institutional voids in multi-level governance settings (see Chapter 4). Simultaneously, it reveals that thus far substantial re-allocations of CAP pillar 1 funding in favour of more straightforward and transparent relations, with the willingness and ability to provide agri-environmental services, are difficult to put into practice at the national level. Such a re-allocation seems to be of utmost importance for Dutch agrarian pathways to multifunctionality, especially at a moment when national self-governance initiatives, are striving for more efficient, effective and transparent delivery systems and have been promised extra experimental space in the forthcoming RDP period.

7.6. Towards longer term policy commitment

The next, more process-oriented institutional redesign challenge refers to what has been described as '*administrative short-termism*, *the temporal dimension of project proliferation and other short-term policy devices'* (Sjøblom, 2009:165) that undermines policy coherence, consistence and democratic control and what Kovach *et al.* (2009) call '*project proliferation*' that threatens policy's ability to facilitate sustainable rural development. Drawing upon my personal research experiences, I certainly recognize the shortcomings and pitfalls of project based rural policy delivery. Often expected to deliver outputs in timespans that lack any realism regarding involved combined processes of learning, negotiation and trust building, this may frequently be accompanied by strong tendencies to 'upgrade' project outcomes. Just to give one example: Some years ago I participated in an innovation project with the intention to apply a participatory multi-stakeholder approach. As a rural researcher with (assumed) expertise on region branding, selected as one of the fields of specific interest by regional stakeholders, I experienced how start-up delays, in combination with an extremely tight overall project time schedule, gradually induced a tendency to reframe already existing initiatives into 'novel rural business plans' and 'value based product-market combinations' as overall foreseen project outcomes. Certainly, the outcomes of this exercise were beautifully and broadly disseminated by a glossy brochure, yet for those engaged in the ongoing initiatives this hardly contributed to developing new responses to the 'wicked' problems that characterize sustainable rural governance (Sorensen, 2011).

I could give many other examples of how short-term project approaches lack substantial commitment from institutional settings, tend to ignore the importance of

trust based relations with '*intermediaries*', '*networkers*' and '*knowledge brokers*' (Horlings & Remmers, 2009; Klerx & Leeuwis 2009; Eshuis, 2006; Stuiver, 2006) in the '*collaborative governance*' (Ansell & Cash, 2008) necessary for sustainable rural resource management or may go along with growing '*project fatigue*' problems among rural initiative groups (Remmers *et al.*, 2000). Meta-governance scholars emphasize policy actors' roles as *network designers*, *network framers*, *network managers* and *network participants* to warn against the pitfalls of short-termism (Sorensen & Torfing, 2009). Hajer (2011) does the same by speaking of '*the energetic society*', where policy faces the challenge to interlink with available societal energy. Boutellier (2011) point to the need for '*social ordering programmes*' that succeed in bridging prevailing discrepancies in expectations between civil society and its institutional environment. All these governance scholars acknowledge the imperative of permanent and trust-based policy-practice relations. As symbolized by the dismantling of the national Task-force after a period of only 4 years, such a genuine policy commitment to multifunctional agrarian pathways continues to be still largely absent in Dutch policy and the wider institutional environment, although at lower scale levels, sometimes, promising dynamics might be witnessed such as the unfolding rural web of Laag-Holland.

7.7. Other redesign challenges

The key role of institutional redesign may be further illustrated by national spatial planning regulations. Characterized by some as a '*petrification*' of the dominant doctrine in force (Roodbol-Mekkes *et al.*, 2012), spatial planning regulations continue to provide often limited opportunities for function integration, especially at lower scales, although in the last decade, certainly, a growing number of experiments with novel, more integration oriented spatial planning practices can be noticed (Valk, 2002; Wieringa, 2011, 2004; Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten, 2011). Table 7.2 refers to these and other types of institutional barriers as part of the wider outcomes of an inventory study on the opportunities and limitations of the rural development activities covered by national Task-force Multifunctional Agriculture (see Chapter 3). The overall outcomes of this inventory study confirm how the future prospects of these individual activities may be interwoven with institutional redesign.

Activity	Opportunities	Limitations
Agricultural care-facilities	• Growing attention to care-facilities in agrarian /green environments • Growing scientific foundation of added value of agricultural care-facilities • Growing attention for professionalization and quality • Expansion of intermediary structures	• Overcoming scale differences with regular care institutions • Still relatively unknown in regular health sector • Changes / uncertainties in public health financial structures (AWBZ, WMO)
Agrarian Nature and Landscape management	• Growing societal demand for nature and landscape management • Growing strategic meaning at farm-level • Synergy-effects with other MFA expressions • Growing policy attention for new policy instruments • Growing attention for territory-based cooperation	• Need for a reduction of policy transaction costs • Lack of continuity in remuneration systems • EU state-support proof regulations • Lack of remuneration systems that succeed in bridging the problem of public benefits and private costs • Lack of policy instruments for landscape values
Agri-Tourism	• Expanding niche-market within overall market for leisure and recreation • Added value of small-scale leisure supply in agrarian / green environments • Growing number of manifestations of territory-based cooperation / collective marketing / region branding • Synergy-effects with other expressions of rural tourism	• First signs of market saturation tendencies in some regions • Often little cooperative relationship with regular tourism sector • Lack of expansion opportunities within prevailing spatial planning policies
Regional Typical Food	• Differentiating food markets • Growing interest in identity / authenticity / regional specificity • Professionalization of producers (broader assortments, collective marketing, training, chain-based partnerships, etc.) • New interlinkages with public institutions and urban actors • Synergy-effects with other expressions of MFA	• Relatively weak market dynamics • Lack of cooperation / absence of strategic chain partners • Prevailing food hygienic and safety regulatory frameworks

Activity	Opportunities	Limitations
Farm-education	• Societal interest in nature- and food education • Growing recognition of the added value of 'education at location' • Creation of national platform organisations Farm-education • Positive spin-off of national project 'Farm-schools' • Expansion of urban-farm initiatives with educational objectives	• Farm education still weakly embedded in regular educational systems (largely absence in formal learning plans of primary, secondary and special educational centres) • Limited opportunities for financial compensations / competition with existing Nature Education Programmes at schools • Insurance-related uncertainties and other types of institutional intransparency
Agricultural child-care	• General growth in demand for child-care • Special interest in child-care in green-environments • Professionalization of child-care at farms through the newly established Interest Association and cooperation with public and private partners • New opportunities due to policy orientation on 'broader' educational centres.	• Still relatively unknown among broader public • Prevailing regulatory frameworks for child-care

Table 7.2 Opportunities and limitations of multifunctional pathways in the Netherlands (Source: Oostindie *et al.*, 2011)

7.8. Role of rural sociology

The foregoing sections give an impression of the scope of transition challenges that accompany Dutch agrarian pathways to multifunctionality. As such, these challenges also underpin the unpredictability of the same pathways. Indeed, I consider any attempt to draw firm conclusions about their prospects as controversial, arbitrary and, therefore, of little meaning. Similar to future flows of resistance against the still dominant present agricultural modernisation forces, future flows of redesign are highly unpredictable, uncertain and surrounded by contingencies. Therefore, I will restrict myself here to some final reflections on the role of rural sociology in this respect. Following Law and Urry (2004) this starts from the argument that reality should be understood as brought into being by interaction with social sciences: '*social inquiry and its methods are productive: they help to make social realities and social worlds. They do not simple describe the world as it is, but also enact it*' (Law & Urry, 2004:395). The same scholars admit that economy sciences might be most successful and influential in this respect but simultaneously want to stress that other

social sciences enact reality. This leads to the following ontological reflection: '*if methods help to make the realities that they describe, then we are faced with the question: which realities might we try to enact?*' (ibid: 396). It makes the study of agriculture's multifunctionality a performative act around '*that what is or could be made more real*'. Gibson-Graham (2010) relates involved ontological choices to the prospects of so-called '*diverse economies*' for *'other worlds*'. She distinguishes the following techniques for '*doing thinking*' that might contribute to the creation of '*diverse economies*': 1) ontological reframing to produce the grounds of possibility; 2) re-reading for difference to uncover or excavate the possible; and 3) creativity to generate actual possibilities where none formerly existed. It may be argued that agrarian pathways to multifunctionality, in a setting for decades dominated by modernisation forces, do indeed represent '*diverse economies*', with rural development scholars, to which I consider myself, exploring '*other worlds'* that build upon different techniques for '*doing thinking*'.

In his comparison of the history of rural sociology in Europe and the US from a performativity perspective, Low (2010) draws the conclusion that European rural sociology has a tradition of more openness to cultural diversity. He refers to the work and ideas of Hofstee, the founding father of rural sociology in the Netherlands, to explain this relatively strong attention to the cultural factors that result in heterogeneous farmers' responses to modernity. More recently, the performativity of Dutch sociological work has been analysed in relation to the emergence of agri-environmental cooperatives (see also Chapter 4). Daniel (2011) contends that '*the idea initiated by rural sociologists of self-regulation as the driving force for sustainable rural development had a large influence of the farmers' repertoire*'. At the same time, he comes to the conclusion that '*their [the rural sociologists] utterance was not able to breach the socio-political realm'* and that *'the government manages to incorporate the farmers' movement into its agri-environmental policy, while thwarting the main component of the movement [...] shifting from being a self-regulating utterance to a self-organising one*'. These conclusions require some nuancing in the sense that farmer communities have been and still are the principle drivers of on-going self-regulation initiatives and that - although perhaps slow - progress can be witnessed in terms of institutional willingness to support these initiatives (see also Chapter 5). Notwithstanding these nuances, Daniel's 'performativity' analysis confirms how rural sociology practices have become part of the overall factors that explain processes of rural change. Returning to Gibson-Graham (2010:618), this fundamentally opposes the idea that '*social scientists are trained to be discerning, detached and critical so that we can penetrate the veil of common understanding and expose the root causes and bottom lines that govern the phenomenal world*'. According to her, a performativity perspective makes it possible to avoid the danger that '*theorizing is tinged with scepticism and negativity, not a particularly nurturing environment for hopeful, inchoate experiments*'. Its avoidance would imply a choice for 'weak theorizing' characterized by '*refusing to extend explanations too widely or deeply, refusing to know too much'.* And, as further argued: [w]*eak theory could not know that social experiments are doomed to fall or destined to reinforce dominance; it could*

not tell us that the world economy will never be transformed by the disorganized proliferation of projects (ibid: 619).
This thesis finds its inspiration in these ideas about 'weak theorizing' in the sense that its principle understanding of agrarian pathways to multifunctionality as flows of resistance, redesign and resilience has only modest scientific or academic ambitions. It aims more to describe empirical realities than to extend knowledge on the well-known fact that many on this world suffer from domination and oppression. Again, in line with Gibson-Graham's weak theorizing, its principle ambition is to '*see openings and to provide spaces of freedom and possibilities*' (ibid: 619). As such it may be indeed understood as a political-ethical stance that imagines multifunctionality as a crucial component of flourishing agricultural futures in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

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Summary

During my more than two decades of research experiences as a rural sociologist, the multifunctionality of agricultural activity was a subject of major interest, although under different denominators. In this thesis I theorize and present agriculture's multifunctionality as characterized, shaped and propelled by *flows of resistance, redesign, and resilience.*

This central thesis starts with an introduction to the key notions resistance, redesign and resilience. I associate the meaning and significance of resistance, especially, with a long standing tradition of farmers' resistance to the negative externalities that accompany modernisation, commoditisation and globalisation processes and broader socio-cultural resistance against loss of rurality. Together these underpin how resistance continues to be a crucial component in agricultural and rural development through 1) its more or less overt and covert expressions; 2) its material as well as symbolic representations; and 3) its conservative as well as transformative power.

This relevance of resistance appears more specifically in Chapters 2 to 6. The emergence, definition and interpretations of the multifunctionality concept in the Dutch agri-expert system shows how societal resistance against the negative externalities of the agricultural modernisation model went along with a renewed attention for agriculture's multifunctionality, although more or less broadly defined and more or less widely accepted.

The role of resistance shows up next as part of the wider driving forces that underlie the multifunctionality of farming practices. In addition to the persistence of farm-development trajectories based on pluriactivity and diversification, this will be particularly associated among Dutch professional farm-enterprises engaged in new rural development activities with the desire to '*farm differently'* i.e., different from the logics of the agricultural modernisation model in the sense of enabling more direct contact with consumers, citizens, other rural dwellers, etc. The distinction and characterization of different farm-development trajectories in the overall analysis further confirms that multifunctional pathways remain closely interwoven with different expressions of resistance within family-based farming.

In the analysis of European agri-environmental governance resistance will be specifically related to dissatisfaction and discontent that addresses hierarchical relations and its consequences in terms of prevailing institutional 'voids' in multi-level governance settings. The latter notion refers to the absence of transparency and agreement on institutional conditions and rules in multi-level governance settings. As such the analysis concentrates especially on resistance that emerges at the interfaces between different policy levels and between policy and practice.

The relevance of resistance appears in the analysis of '*nested*' rural markets in Europe as opposition against hegemonic food market relations. It addresses different types of the negative consequences of dominant food market relations such as the loss of distinctiveness at farm and territorial level, of trust in food, of influence within globalizing chains, of income opportunities for farmers, of food justice, etc.

Chapter 6 stresses that resistance manifests itself spatially in specific ways by introducing the rural web as an instrument to analyse rural differentiation processes. As a multi-dimensional analytical tool it addresses resistance especially through the distinction of the domains *endogeneity*, *social capital* and *sustainability.* Overall, the rural framework enables us as such to focus on the spatial interlinkages and interaction patterns between different manifestations of farmer-led and broader social-cultural resistance against marginalisation tendencies and loss of rural distinctiveness.

Next to resistance, *redesign* is thought to be a second key notion that characterizes and propels multifunctional agricultural pathways. Theoretically it makes it possible to underline that these are also closely interwoven with transition processes around a fundamental re-positioning of the role of agriculture in rural development processes and, as such, are part of new ways of social ordering. The further conceptualization of redesign as combined processes of *dis-embedding* and *re-embedding* stresses the multi-facetted nature and complexity of involved redesign processes.

Again, the significance and meaning of redesign

will appear in different ways in Chapters 2 to 6, in the first place as an issue that divides the Dutch agri-expert system. The analysis around the national emergence of the multifunctionality concept reveals how, particularly, the rural development model associates agriculture's multifunctionality with a fundamental re-positioning of agriculture's role in rural development and, thus, manifold redesign challenges. In other, narrower definitions of multifunctionality redesign is limited much more to debates about the pros and cons of interventions in market relations and land property rights. Overall, contrasting ideas within the Dutch agri-expert system about the necessity of and opportunity for redesign reflect a transition context where the societal benefits of multifunctional agricultural pathways remain strongly the subject of debate.

In this Dutch setting redesign, in line with the rural development model, manifests itself as already more promising at the micro-level. Next to more historically rooted expressions of multifunctional pathways, Dutch professional farm enterprises increasingly succeed in building new relations with consumers, in creating new interlinkages with other rural sectors, in developing new professional identities and in constructing new rural business models. Analytically, these different expressions of farm-level redesign reflect a strong capacity to re-vitalise family farming and to re-define farm boundaries. The distinction between different farm-level pathways shows how these redesign capacities are more or less prominently present and may be expressed at different paces.
In the analysis of European agri-environmental governance, redesign emerges as a subject of growing institutional attention and openness to new, more market-led approaches, new forms of self-organisation and self-regulation, new forms of public-private cooperation and new accountability arrangements. Thus, redesign centres on a re-distribution of responsibilities between public, private and civil actors and novel responses to the rigidity and limitations of hierarchical relations, as well as the manifold institutional voids, in increasingly complex and barely transparent multi-level governance settings.

The analysis around emerging '*nested*' rural markets in Europe goes more into detail as to how market relations are actively redesigned. It emphasizes the significance of new roles for and relation between food producers and food consumers, building upon new normative frameworks, new boundary organisations, new food reputations, new forms of common pool resource management and new forms of co-experimentation, in short, novel rural market governance mechanisms that intend to safeguard, reproduce and strengthen the specificities of place, products and networks.
Rural web analysis underlines that redesign will manifest itself spatially in different ways within rural place-making processes. Particularly, the web domains '*new institutional arrangements*', '*rural market governance'* and '*novelty production'* refer to different manifestations of redesign and stress that their place specific interaction patterns will comprise a second crucial component for an adequate understanding of on-going rural spatial differentiation tendencies.

Resilience, as the third overarching key notion to characterize multifunctional agrarian pathways, attracts growing attention in different theoretical strands. Sociologically, I understand resilience as the need for alignment within contemporary increasingly complex '*improvisation societies'* in pursuit of sustainable development. Inspired by agro-ecological approaches that make a distinction between its stabilising ('*bouncing back'*) and adaptive and transformative ('*bouncing forward*') capacities, I further conceptualize the resilience of agricultural pathways to multifunctionality more specifically as the outcome of flows of resistance and redesign. Briefly, resilience as the capacity to persist, to adapt and to transform and as such representing certain promises to align social ordering processes.
This specific understanding and relevance of resilience is further clarified throughout Chapters 2 to 6. The Dutch emergence of the multifunctionality notion shows how the negative externalities of agricultural modernization may go along with a gradual rediscovery and rehabilitation of agriculture's multifunctionality. The emerging rural development model, particularly, recognizes and

acknowledges the persistence and adaptability of multifunctional pathways. The national co-evolution of contrasting sustainability paradigms reveals, at the same time, that this translates into a still more limited transformative capacity in terms of the *normative* alignment of societal ideas about the core-functions of agriculture.

Chapter 3 underlines that this transformative capacity may express itself already much more prominently at the micro-level: next to pluri-active and hobby farms, as well known expressions of the adaptability of multifunctional agrarian pathways, the Netherlands knows also robust novel multifunctional rural business models. These novel business models are strongly grounded in the following characteristics of family-based farming: 1) strong linkages between economic and socio-cultural values as integrative powers for productive and consumptive rural functions; 2) changing gender relations that result in new forms of labour division and a re-distribution of responsibilities within farm-families; 3) new professional identities with differentiating strategic meanings for farming; and 4) a certain flexibility in the use of resources. The farm-development trajectories illustrate how this resilience of Dutch family-farms presents itself to different degrees and at different paces.
The analysis of European agri-environmental governance underscores that resilience is closely interwoven with self-organization and self-regulation capacity. In addition to the emergence of different types of market-led approaches, this covers in the Netherlands experiments with more hybrid remuneration systems, more performance based accountability arrangements and more collective and place-based provision systems. It particularly demonstrates that the resilience of multifunctional agricultural pathways will be also reflected in their ability to mobilize experimental space and to create synchronicity and coherence in highly complex multi-level institutional settings.
The analysis around emerging '*nested markets*' in Europe approaches resilience as distinctive market relations. The ability of agriculture's multifunctionality to persist, adapt and transform, coalesces here into alternative practices and normative frameworks that, in sharp contrast with hegemonic food market relations, succeed in integrating social, ethical and ecological values with market relations. This may contribute to a reduction of transaction costs for producers and to consumers getting access to high quality food markets. It actively forges synergy-effects between traditional and novel rural markets at farm and regional level and succeeds in transforming consumer behaviour.
Finally, rural web analysis further depicts resilience as interacting flows of resistance and redesign. First, its distinction between the dimensions *endogeneity, sustainability, social capital, novelty production, new institutional arrangements* and *governance of rural markets* enables the characterization of these flows in more detail. Secondly, it underpins the highly place specific interaction, coalescence and precipitation of such flows. The resilience of multifunctional agrarian pathways transforms here into the strong rural web configurations characteristic of rural competitiveness, quality of rural life and strong functional ties between rural and urban spaces. The differences in rural web dynamics between *Laag-Holland* and the *Rivierengebied* demonstrate how this spatial coalescence of resilience capacities may express itself rather differently in rural areas facing similar changing societal demands. These empirical findings confirm that multifunctional agricultural pathways represent specific, non-linear interrelations between the past, present and future of farming.

Chapter 7 starts with a reflection on their future in the Netherlands and reaches the conclusion that the financial crisis and economic downturn since 2008 went along with a (temporary?) deteriorating political climate as, amongst others, reflected in the growing popularity of the notion '*sustainable intensification*' and the specific way that this is being interpreted. The longer term prospects of agrarian pathways to multifunctionality are further briefly depicted with the help of the various outcomes of national opportunity-constraint analyses. More specifically, I dwell upon the following selection of institutional redesign challenges that are thought to have a great impact on these longer terms prospects:

1) towards alternative multifunctional symbols for the agro-industrial mega-stable; 2) towards sustainable urban food planning; 3) towards more inclusive cost-benefit analysis; 4) towards substantial CAP reforms; and 5) towards longer term support commitment.

The last part of Chapter 7 draws attention to the unpredictability of the national future of agrarian pathways to multifunctionality. It acknowledges the limitations of sociological theory but, at the same time, the growing scholarly recognition of the performativity of the social sciences. That the social sciences do influence the way societal reality unfolds is particularly underlined by scientists that oppose social theorizing that loses itself in skepticism and negativism. Alternatively, so-called 'weak theorizing' is propagated with ambitions primarily oriented towards providing openings, degrees of freedom and hope. In line with these rather modest scientific intentions and pretentions, I finish by expressing the hope that this thesis may contribute to prosperous and flourishing multifunctional family-farming futures, particularly in the Netherlands, but also elsewhere.

Samenvatting

Als ruraal socioloog heb ik me de afgelopen 25 jaar op verschillende manieren bezig gehouden met de multifunctionaliteit van landbouwbeoefening. In deze thesis benader ik de multifunctionaliteit van agrarische praktijken als *flows of resistance, redesign, and resilience.* Oftewel: multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkeling laat zich begrijpen en wordt tegelijkertijd vormgegeven en voortgestuwd door *stromen van verzet*, *herontwerp en veerkracht.*

Deze centrale stelling start met een toelichting op de wijze hoe ik de drie kernbegrippen begrijp. Daarin wordt het belang van *verzet* allereerst gekoppeld aan een lange traditie van boerenweerstand tegen de gevolgen van moderniserings-, commoditerings- en globaliseringsprocessen. Daarnaast verbind ik het belang van verzet met bredere sociaal-culturele weerstand tegen verlies van ruraliteit binnen de hedendaagse complexe netwerkmaatschappij. Als geheel begrijp ik de multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkelingspaden daarmee als de uitkomst van: 1) meer of minder openlijke manifestaties van boeren- en breder maatschappelijk verzet; 2) zowel materiële als symbolische vormen van verzet en 3) zowel het transformerende als het conserverende karakter van verzet.
De cruciale betekenis van verzet wordt telkens op meer specifieke wijze nader geduid in de thematische hoofdstukken 2 tot en met 6. Zo wordt de wijze waarop het multifunctionaliteitsbegrip binnen het Nederlandse agri-expertise systeem verschijnt mede verklaard vanuit een groeiende maatschappelijke weerstand tegen de gevolgen van het dominante agrarische moderniseringsmodel. Tegelijkertijd illustreert deze analyse dat deze groeiende maatschappelijke weerstand zich vooralsnog vertaalt in uiteenlopende opvattingen over de multifunctionaliteit van agrarische praktijken, waarbij vooral het ruraal sociologische plattelandsontwikkelingsmodel zich kenmerkt door een breed perspectief op multifunctionaliteit.
De rol van verzet verschijnt vervolgens als een belangrijk onderdeel binnen het brede spectrum aan drijfveren achter multifunctionele agrarische bedrijvigheid zoals gedefinieerd binnen het plattelandsontwikkelingsmodel. Daarin komt o.a. een sterk verlangen naar '*anders boeren*' naar voren onder de vertegenwoordig(st)ers van Nederlandse professionele agrarische bedrijven met nieuwe plattelandsactiviteiten. Dat wil zeggen: anders dan de logica van het agrarische moderniseringsmodel. De beschrijving van uiteenlopende ontwikkelingspaden in deze microanalyse bevestigt eveneens dat een keuze voor multifunctionaliteit ook tegenwoordig nog sterk verbonden is met verzet vanuit het agrarisch familiebedrijf tegen de marginaliseringstendenzen die inherent zijn aan het agrarische moderniseringsmodel.

De betekenis van verzet verschijnt in de analyse rondom het Europese agrarische natuurbeheer in de vorm van onvrede die zich richt op zowel de rigiditeit van hiërarchische institutionele relaties als de aanwezigheid van institutionele *'leegtes'* in hedendaags *multi-level governance*. Het begrip '*leegte*' verwijst hier naar het ontbreken van overeenstemming rondom regelgeving en institutionele voorwaarden, waarbij de analyse zich vooral concentreert op verzet dat zich manifesteert op de grensvlakken ('interfaces') tussen bestuurslagen en tussen beleid en praktijk.
Het belang van verzet manifesteert zich in de analyse rondom de opkomst van nieuwe, meer *'nested markets'* in Europa als weerstand tegen het verlies van product-, plaats- en netwerk specifieke karakteristieken die kenmerkend zijn voor gangbare voedselmarkten. Oftewel, weerstand tegen markrelaties die gepaard gaan met verlies aan invloed van producenten, betrokkenheid van consumenten, onvrede rondom de verdeling van kosten en baten bij betrokken partijen en verminderd vertrouwen in voedselkwaliteit in brede zin. Dat uiteenlopende vormen van verzet zich ruimtelijk op specifieke wijze manifesteren wordt benadrukt in hoofdstuk 6. Daarin wordt het rurale web geïntroduceerd als een analytisch instrument dat het mogelijk maakt om de rol van landbouw in plattelandsontwikkeling vanuit een relationeel perspectief te benaderen. Dit multidimensionale analytisch raamwerk koppelt de relevantie van verzet vooral aan de handelingsdomeinen endogeniteit, sociaal kapitaal en duurzame ontwikkeling, met specifieke aandacht voor de interactie tussen uiteenlopende expressies van verzet.

Naast verzet beschouw ik *herontwerp* als een

tweede kernbegrip om multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkelingspaden te begrijpen. Het maakt het mogelijk om deze eveneens te duiden als complexe transitieprocessen die gepaard gaan met een fundamentele herpositionering van de rol van landbouw in plattelandsontwikkeling en als zodanig nieuwe vormen van sociale ordening weerspiegelen. De complexiteit van bijbehorend herontwerp definieer ik als complexe processen van ontkoppeling (*dis-embedding*) en herkoppeling (*re-embedding*).
Ook de betekenis en het belang van herontwerp komt in de hoofdstukken 2 tot en met 6 telkens op specifieke wijze aan de orde. De analyse rondom de opkomst van het begrip multifunctionaliteit in Nederland laat zien dat vooral het plattelandsontwikkelingsmodel zich uitspreekt voor een fundamenteel herontwerp van de rol van landbouw binnen duurzame plattelands- en maatschappelijke ontwikkeling. Andere, meer 'nauwe' invullingen van het begrip multifunctionaliteit verbinden bijbehorend herontwerp voornamelijk tot het interveniëren in markten en landeigendomsrechten. Als geheel weerspiegelen deze uiteenlopende opvattingen binnen het Nederlandse agri-expertise systeem daarmee een transitiecontext, waarin de behoefte aan en mogelijkheden van herontwerp ten gunste van multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkelingspaden vooralsnog sterk ter discussie staan.
De microanalyse gaat nader in op de betekenis en kracht van herontwerp op bedrijfsniveau in de vorm van nieuwe plattelandsactiviteiten, nieuwe netwerkrelaties, nieuwe verbindingen met andere plattelandssectoren, nieuwe beroepsidentiteiten en nieuwe verdienmodellen. Analytisch wordt herontwerp daarmee vooral geassocieerd met een revitalisering van het agrarische familiebedrijf, een herdefiniëring van de grenzen van agrarische bedrijvigheid en de verschillende gradaties waarin deze processen gestalte krijgen.

De analyse rondom het Europese agrarische natuurbeleid associeert herontwerp met een herdefiniëring van de verdeling van verantwoordelijkheden tussen publieke, private en civiele actoren, nieuwe vormen van zelforganisatie en zelfregulering, nieuwe vormen van publiek-private samenwerking en nieuwe vormen van bestuurlijke verantwoording *('accountability')*. De analyse concentreert zich vooral op hoe institutionele 'leegtes' in *multi-level governance settings* zich vertalen in zowel kansen als beperkingen voor institutioneel herontwerp ten faveure van multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkelingspaden.
De analyse rondom opkomende '*nested markets*' in Europa koppelt herontwerp aan de ontwikkeling van andersoortige marktrelaties. Oftewel, marktrelaties die wél in staat zijn om bij te dragen aan behoud en versterking van specificiteit van product, plaats en netwerken. Hier verschijnt herontwerp in de vorm van nieuwe rollen voor voedselproducenten en –consumenten, nieuwe gedeelde normatieve raamwerken, nieuwe verbindingen tussen traditionele en nieuwe plattelandsmarkten en nieuwe uitingen van '*common pool resource management'*.

De rurale web analyse benadrukt dat ook herontwerp zich op uiteenlopende wijzen zal manifesteren door onderscheid te maken tussen de handelingsdomeinen '*nieuwe institutionele arrangementen*', *governance van rurale markten'* en '*novelty productie'.* De specifieke interactie tussen uiteenlopende vormen van herontwerp verschijnt daarmee als een tweede cruciale factor om de groeiende diversiteit aan plattelandsgebieden theoretisch op een adequate wijze te doorgronden.
Veerkracht als derde kernbegrip kent een groeiende aandacht binnen uiteenlopende wetenschappelijke disciplines. Sociologisch verbind ik veerkracht met de groeiende behoefte aan afstemming van sociale ordeningsprocessen binnen de hedendaagse complexe improvisatiemaatschappij. Vooral geïnspireerd door agroecologische benaderingen, associeer ik veerkracht verder met zowel stabilisatievermogen ('*bouncing back'*) als adaptatie- en transformatievermogen ('*bouncing forward'*). De veerkracht van multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkelingspaden laat zich daarmee karakteriseren als de uitkomst van stromen van verzet en herontwerp. Een uitkomst die een bepaald vermogen tot volharding, adaptatie en transformatie weerspiegelt dat bijdraagt aan een betere afstemming van sociale ordeningsprocessen.

Ook de betekenis van veerkracht wordt op ver-

schillende manieren nader geïllustreerd in de thematische hoofdstukken. Zo leert de wijze waarop het Nederlandse agrarische expertisesysteem multifunctionaliteit benadert, dat een langdurige periode van agrarische modernisering heeft geleid tot een hernieuwde belangstelling voor en (gedeeltelijke) rehabilitatie van multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkelingspaden zoals gedefinieerd binnen het plattelandsontwikkelingsmodel. De huidige co-evolutie van sterk uiteenlopende duurzaamheidsparadigma's in Nederland maakt tegelijkertijd duidelijk dat dit vooralsnog gepaard gaat met een beperkt transformatievermogen in termen van normatieve afstemming van maatschappelijke opvattingen rondom de kernfuncties van agrarische activiteiten.

In deze context manifesteert het transformatieve (of transformationele?) aspect van veerkracht zich beduidend sterker op microniveau, zo wordt in hoofdstuk 3 benadrukt. De opkomst van robuuste multifunctionele rurale bedrijfsmodellen in Nederland wordt daarin gerelateerd aan de bijzondere veerkracht van het agrarische familiebedrijf in de vorm van: 1) sterke verbindingen tussen economische en sociaal-culturele waarden als integratieve krachten voor de productieve en consumptieve functies van het platteland; 2) veranderende genderverhoudingen resulterend in een herverdeling van verantwoordelijkheden binnen gezinsverband; 3) nieuwe beroepsidentiteiten, inclusief andersoortige strategische betekenissen voor agrarische bedrijvigheid en 4) een bepaalde flexibiliteit in het gebruik van hulpbronnen. De uiteenlopende bedrijfsontwikkelingstrajecten illustreren hoe deze uiteenlopende uitingen van veerkracht zich empirisch in meer of minder sterke mate manifesteren.

In de analyse rondom de dynamiek van het Europese agrarische natuurbeleid wordt veerkracht benaderd als zelforganiserend en zelfregulerend vermogen. Naast de opkomst van meer marktgerichte benaderingen manifesteert zich dit vermogen in Nederland eveneens in de groeiende belangstelling voor meer hybride beloningsvormen, een meer prestatiegerichte beleidsverantwoording en meer collectieve- en gebiedsgerichte benaderingen. De specifieke kenmerken en achtergronden van deze nieuwe institutionele arrangementen rondom agrarisch natuurbeheer verwijzen in het bijzonder naar de volgende veerkracht componenten van multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkelingspaden: beleidsmatige experimenteerruimte, synchroniciteit en coherentie in *multi-level governance settings.*

De analyse rondom de opkomst van '*nested markets*' in Europa verbindt veerkracht vervolgens met andersoortige marktrelaties. Het volhardende, adaptieve en transformatieve karakter van multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkelingspaden verschijnt hier in de vorm van andersoortige praktijken en normatieve opvattingen die gepaard gaan met een integratie van sociale, ecologische en ethische waarden binnen marktrelaties, verlaging van de transactiekosten voor producent en consument rondom de toegang tot bijzondere voedselkwaliteiten en in de vorm van synergie-effecten tussen voedsel- en nieuwe plattelandsmarkten op bedrijfs- en lokaal niveau. Als geheel zijn dit kenmerken die van grote betekenis worden geacht om een omgeving te creëren met experimenteermogelijkheden om consumentengedrag daadwerkelijk te beïnvloeden en te veranderen.

De rurale web analyse maakt het mogelijk om veerkracht nader te duiden als interacterende stromen van verzet en herontwerp. Allereerst door deze stromen te karakteriseren middels de domeinen endogeniteit, duurzaamheid, sociaal kapitaal, novelty productie, nieuwe institutionele arrangementen en governance van plattelandsmarkten. Daarnaast door te benadrukken dat deze domeinen telkens op specifieke wijze interacteren, samensmelten en 'ruimtelijk neerslaan'. De veerkracht van multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkelingspaden verschijnt hier in de vorm van cruciale bijdrages aan de sterke rurale web configuraties die ten grondslag liggen aan rurale concurrentiekracht, rurale levenskwaliteiten en nieuwe functionele verbindingen tussen stad en platteland. De uiteenlopende rurale web kenmerken van *Laag-Holland* en *Rivierengebied* laten zienr hoe deze veerkracht zich op verschillende wijzen manifesteert in Nederlandse plattelandsgebieden die te maken hebben met gelijksoortige veranderende maatschappelijke behoeftes. Het empirisch materiaal onderstreept

daarmee de noodzaak om multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkelingspaden te begrijpen als plaats specifieke, niet-lineaire interactiepatronen tussen heden, verleden en toekomst van agrarische praktijken.

Hoofdstuk 7 start ik met een reflectie op de toekomst van multifunctionele landbouw in Nederland, met o.a. aandacht voor een (tijdelijk?) verslechterend politiek klimaat als gevolg van de financiële en economische crisis en de daarmee verbonden groeiende populariteit van het concurrerende begrip "duurzame intensivering". De uitkomsten van nationale kansenbeperkingen analyses geven vervolgens een impressie van de langere termijn perspectieven. Vervolgens sta ik wat uitgebreider stil bij de volgende transitieopgaven die ik van bijzonder belang acht: 1) een multifunctioneel alternatief voor de agro-industriële megastal; 2) duurzame stedelijke voedselplanning; 3) meer inclusieve kosten-baten analyses; 4) substantiële GLB hervormingen en 5) continuïteit in de beleidsmatige ondersteuning van multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkelingspaden.
In het laatste deel van hoofdstuk 7 ga ik in op het onvoorspelbare karakter van multifunctionele agrarische ontwikkelingspaden in Nederland en onderken ik als zodanig de beperkingen van sociologische theorievorming. Tegelijkertijd put ik moed uit de groeiende inzichten dat sociale wetenschapsbeoefening wel degelijk invloed heeft op de wijze waarop maatschappelijke realiteiten zich ontvouwen. Deze inzichten gaan veelal gepaard met de opvatting dat theorievorming zich niet moet verliezen in scepticisme en negativiteit en zich beter kan beperken tot zogenaamd '*weak theorizing*' met ambities die primair gericht zijn op het bieden van openingen, vrijheidsgraden en hoop. Aansluitend bij deze bescheiden wetenschapsopvattingen eindig ik met de hoop dat deze thesis een positieve bijdrage zal leveren aan behoud van toekomstperspectieven voor het multifunctionele agrarische familiebedrijf. In het bijzonder in Nederland, maar zeker ook daar buiten.

Curriculum Vitae

Henk Oostindie was born on the 10th of April 1959 in Groningen the Netherlands and graduated in 1990 in Rural Sociology at Wageningen University. Since then has been predominantly employed in the academic world at the Rural Sociology Chair of Wageningen University with an emphasis on following fields of interests: farming styles and – strategies, rural policy and food chain dynamics, new rural development activities and multifunctional farming practices. These fields of interests have been, among others, conducted within following national and EU research and dissemination projects:
2014-2017: TRANSMANGO, Global drivers of change and European food and nutrition security
2013-2015: GLAMUR, Global and Local Food assessment
2010-2011: Dynamics and Robustness of Multifunctional Agriculture
2008-2010: RUDI, Impact-assessment of European Rural Development Programs
2008-2010: Coordinator Rural Development Course, Wageningen Business School
2007-2009: ETUDE, Enlarging Theoretical Understanding of Rural Development
2006-2008: COFAMI, Encouraging Collective Farmers Marketing Initiatives
2004-2006: SUSCHAIN, Marketing sustainable agriculture
2004-2005: MULTAGRI, the conceptualization of multifunctional agriculture
1999 -2001: IMPACT, the socio-economic impact of rural development activities
1991-1993: CAMAR, Design Methods for Endogenous Development

Since January 2015 he has been appointed as assistant professor at the Rural Sociology Chair of Wageningen University and Research Centre.

Some of his key publications

Dynamiek en Robuustheid van multifunctionele landbouw (co-authorship with R. van Broekhuizen, P. Seuneke and H. Wiskerke). Wageningen University, Rural Development Chair, 2011

The central role of nested markets in Europe (co-authorship with J.D. van der Ploeg, R. van Broekhuizen, F. Ventura and P. Milone*).* In: Revista di Economia Agraria, Volume 2, June 2010.

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For a long time I thought that there would be place for people like me in the academic world, but I turned out to be wrong: also I had to subordinate to the academic rules if I wanted to continue to work in a setting where I could follow my principle professional interest: research on agricultural and rural dynamics. It both enforced and stimulated me to reflect more theoretically on my research experiences of last decades. As such being the outcome of a much longer trajectory than normal these days, I want to express my gratitude to a number of people.

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