Regional nature governance in the Netherlands

Four decades of governance modes and shifts
in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant

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Regional nature governance in the Netherlands

Four decades of governance modes and shifts in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant

Rikke Arnouts

Thesis

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Chapter 1 Introduction

In this introductory chapter, the incentives behind this PhD thesis are outlined. First of all, in section 1.1 governance and Dutch nature policy, the subjects of this thesis, are introduced. Section 1.2 explains why these subjects are interesting enough to base this dissertation upon them. After that, in section 1.3 the goal of this study and the research questions are presented. A general outline of this thesis is elaborated in section 1.4.

1.1 The governance of Dutch nature

This thesis is about governance and Dutch nature policy. Consequently, the terms "governance" and "policy" are mentioned extensively throughout this book, and so to establish their precise meaning, they are first briefly discussed here. For introductory purposes, I refer to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Wehmeier et al, 2005), which defines governance as *"the way in which a country is governed or a company or institution is controlled"*. A policy is defined as *"a plan of action agreed on or chosen by a political party, a business, a government, etc"*.

According to these definitions, governance is the resultant of governing activities. The fact that "to govern" is a verb implies that it is done by somebody, i.e. by a governor. In political science, such governors are often referred to as actors, who are people or organizations that have a stake in the object that is governed (hence another well-known term, "stakeholders"). Policies are consequently defined as action plans issued by one actor or a group of actors. They therefore represent the subject of the governing activities.

Policy science literature generally focuses on those governing activities that relate to policies with a collective interest; besides nature, other examples include the environment, infrastructure or national security. The governance of such policy fields has traditionally been linked to the sphere of the state; governmental actors are the ones that are, and should be, responsible for it. Over the last few decades, however, policy scientists have begun to discern a decline in governmental involvement in such policy fields, and a corresponding increase in governing activities by non-governmental actors, i.e. from the spheres of the market and civil society. This phenomenon is often referred to as the shift in governance or as the shift from government to governance (Jordan et al, 2005).

An initial glance at Dutch nature policy reveals that the changing pattern of governmental and non-governmental involvement does not seem to tally with the shift in governance claim. In fact, a rather confusing picture arises. This confusion, further elaborated in section 1.2, is the main incentive for this thesis. The remainder of this section provides a brief overview of the character of Dutch nature policy. First of all, in section 1.1.1, a brief overview of involved actors is given, followed in section 1.1.2 by a brief historical sketch.

1.1.1 Governmental and non-governmental undertakings: an overview

In the past, the governance of Dutch nature was not characterized by preservation; rather, it reflected an agrarian orientation. This led to the disappearance of primeval nature, the last patch of which (the *Beekbergerwoud*) was cleared in 1871 (Van der Zanden and Verstegen, 1993). The Dutch government traditionally played an important role in these cultivation activities. De Jong (1999, p. 84) for example argues that, at the start of the 20th century, *"the primary motive for government intervention in the rural area was protection against nature instead of the protection of nature"* (my translation, as is the case in the remainder of this thesis).

Around the same time, however, the preservation of nature is also put on the agenda by non-governmental nature conservation organizations (NCOs; for an overview of all abbreviations and acronyms in this thesis, see Annex I). Eminent among them is *Natuurmonumenten* (Nature Monuments: NM), founded in 1905. In addition, there are *De Landschappen* (the Landscapes), twelve provincial sister organizations founded in the 1920s and 1930s. Nowadays, these NCOs have acquired extensive amounts of land (NM about 88,500 hectares, *De Landschappen* about 100,000) and are supported by many benefactors (about 900,000 for NM and 300,000 for *De Landschappen*) (figures based on the situation in 2007, www.natuurenmilieucompendium.nl). In addition, there are NCOs who are concerned with the protection of certain species (for example the Dutch branch of Birdlife International) and NCOs who have their support base in a smaller part of the country. Other involved non-governmental actors are scientific knowledge institutes and actors from adjacent policy fields, for example farmers or private estate owners (Van Veen et al, 2004).

In addition, from the late 1960s, nature policy has also become firmly embedded in Dutch governmental organization. Nowadays, the *Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Voedselkwaliteit* (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality: LNV) creates the main guidelines, coordinating this with other interested ministries such as the *Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieu* (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment: VROM). In addition, LNV and VROM together subsume nature policies introduced by the EU. Subsequently, the provinces take care of the implementation of the national policy frameworks, often developing their own policies at the same time (IPO, 2006; Peters, 2007). They also supervise the activities of local governments, who guide expansions in their respective rural areas through their spatial plans, but otherwise are not very much involved (Balduk, 2003). Other important governmental actors are *Dienst Landelijk Gebied* (DLG), LNV's implementation agency, and *Staatsbosbeheer* (the State Forest Service: SBB), founded in 1899 and responsible for managing the lands owned by the state (in 2007 about 250,000 hectares) (www.staatsbosbeheer.nl).

This brief overview suggests that, whereas a century ago nature policy was a non-governmental matter, nowadays a broad scale of actors is involved. The engagement of the government has significantly increased (see also Van Oldenbeek, 2000), while at the same time non-governmental actors have remained influential players (see for example Van der Windt, 1995; De Jong, 1999; Van Veen et al, 2004). In the next section, this changing picture is elaborated in more detail.

1.1.2 Sixty years of Dutch nature policy: a brief historical sketch

After the Second World War, government gives limited attention to nature policy because of a general focus on the rural economy; this results in government support for sectors such as forestry and especially agriculture, through the so-called modernization project (Boonstra, 2004), which constitutes a neo-corporatist coalition known as the *Groene Front* (Green Front) (Frouws, 1993). The main components of the modernization project are large-scale re-allotment processes, which are heavily disputed by the abovementioned NCOs (Driessen et al, 1995). This results in a struggle about the amount of land that

should be re-allotted. In this "battle of the hectares" the NCOs are forced into a defensive role (De Jong, 1999).

From the 1970s: signs of explicit governmental involvement

From the late 1960s, however, the ongoing deterioration of Dutch natural areas is criticized by a growing proportion of the population. As a result, the Dutch government decides to become more actively involved in nature policy (Boonstra, 2004). The Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Societal Works (CRM) is made responsible for nature policy and provides new subsidies for the purchase of natural areas, to be effected by the NCOs. Moreover, in 1968, the *Natuurbeschermingswet* (Nature Protection Act) is initiated with the aim of safeguarding threatened species and natural areas (Kuindersma et al, 2002).

In the early 1970s, further action is undertaken. By now, the total amount of Dutch nature has shrunk from 875,000 hectares at the beginning of the century to 480,000 hectares (Huitema and Hinssen, 1998). As a response, the government launches three so-called green policy plans – the *Nota Nationale Parken*, the *Interimnota Nationale Landschapsparken* and the *Relatienota* – which respectively aim at the foundation of National Parks, National Landscape Parks and the preservation of agricultural lands with high nature and landscape values (Van Kleef, 2004).

However, throughout the 1980s, the impact of the new government nature policies is rather limited. The VCNP, the national committee established to bring about the installation of National Parks, operates very slowly, and the ambition to create National Landscape Parks is not taken up at all (Van Schendelen, 1997). Moreover, the setting up of nature reserves under the *Relatienota* is only marginal, mainly because agrarians are not inclined to participate in nature management activities or to sell their lands. The *Relatienota* does not provide the incentives to elicit cooperation from the agrarians (Boonstra, 2004). In addition, the Dutch NCOs are still not able to build up a countervailing force against the *Groene Front* activities (Driessen et al, 1995). The transfer of responsibility for nature policy from the Ministry of CRM to the *Ministerie van Landbouw en Visserij* (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: L&V) in 1982 does not change this.

Towards the late 1980s, new room for nature policy initiatives seems to appear, closely related to cracks in the agricultural domination of the rural area. Resistance to the detrimental effects of agrarian activities is growing. Eventually, the government introduces unprecedented restrictions on agricultural activities, for example on manure production, which are strongly but unsuccessfully contested by agrarians (Frouws, 1993). Under the new *Landinrichtingswet* (Land Consolidation Act: LIW), large re-allotment projects are no longer authorised (Van den Bergh, 2004).

The 1990 as a turning point: government nature policies intensified

Around the same time, spurred by the lack of success of the *Relatienota* and by the abovementioned developments in the agricultural sector, L&V civil servants work on a new nature policy plan. They pursue ecological criteria and introduce the idea of nature development, inspired by, for example, *Plan Ooievaar* (De Bruin et al, 1987). In 1990, when the Ministry has changed its name to LNV, the plan is issued under the heading *Natuurbeleidsplan* (Nature Policy Plan: NBP). The main pillar is the realization of a network of natural areas, the Ecological Main Structure (EHS), which in addition to the traditional purchase of existing natural areas also focuses on the development of new nature and the interconnectedness of natural areas (Ministerie van LNV, 1990).

After the issuing of the NBP, nature policy gains a foothold in Dutch rural area policy, mainly because the government becomes much more explicitly engaged in it. The *Wetenschappelijke Raad voor Regeringsbeleid* (Scientific Council for Government Policy: WRR) even characterizes the EHS as *"a classic example of top-down policy"* (Boonstra, 2004, p. 54). The NCOs are also involved, but the government takes the lead (Huitema and Hinssen, 1998). In 1994, a so-called decentralization impulse is introduced. As a consequence, the Dutch provinces have to take care of the elaboration and implementation of the EHS (De Jong, 1999). DLG, the LNV implementation agency, is actively involved in the realization of the EHS as well, assuming responsibility for acquiring and developing land.

However, whereas on paper the new policy seems to have a rather hierarchical character, in practice, the situation is much more nuanced. For example, agrarians are still not obliged to sell their lands for nature policy purposes. Moreover, the amount of money

provided for these purchases and for the subsequent development of new nature is not sufficient to realize all the new ambitions. In addition, the still powerful agricultural interest organizations lobby strongly to downgrade the EHS targets, as a consequence of which the implementation of the new policy encounters significant difficulties (Bogaert and Gersie, 2006).

Around the mid 1990s, additional nature policy-related initiatives appear. First of all, the installation of National Parks begins to get underway (Hinssen, 1998). Moreover, LNV and VROM begin to emphasize a more integral approach to the rural area, combining nature policy with adjacent policy fields. Boonstra (2004) refers to this as *Geïntegreerd Gebiedsgericht Beleid* (Integrated Area Specific Policies: GGB). Examples are LNV's WCL policy, which focuses on enhancing the qualities of several unique man-made landscapes, and VROM's ROM policy, in which several environmental and planning targets are combined (Driessen and Glasbergen, 2000). In such projects, NCOs become involved to varying extents (Pleijte et al, 2000).

The second half of the 1990s is also characterized by the entrance of the European Union into the Dutch nature policy arena. The EU already introduced the Bird Directive in 1979, but this has had only a marginal impact (Arnouts and Arts, 2009). In 1994, it introduces the complementary Habitat Directive. Gradually, it turns out that this new actor has quite a powerful position. It demands, for example, that the two directives be properly translated into Dutch legislation, ignoring LNV's claim that the EHS policy already meets the requirements of both directives (Van den Top and Van der Zouwen, 2000). When LNV fails to comply, the Netherlands are convicted by the European Court of Justice. After that, LNV has to make haste with the incorporation of the EU policies (Arnouts and Arts, 2009).

Towards the end of the 1990s, the abovementioned EHS implementation difficulties result in significant delay. Many agrarians still refuse to sell their lands, and land prices have begun to rise (Bogaert and Gersie, 2006). Moreover, agrarians and private owners are reluctant to engage in nature management activities (RIVM et al, 1997). To try and solve this latter problem, the government works on a new subsidy scheme, the *Programma Beheer* (Management Program: PB) that formally recognizes farmers and private owners as nature managers. This is an important break with the past,

as now the traditional NCOs are no longer the only government-sanctioned managers (Kickert and Van der Meer, 2007).

The 2000s: integration, EU pressure, private nature management, decentralization

In 2000, LNV presents *Natuur voor Mensen, Mensen voor Natuur* (Nature for People, People for Nature: NvM; Ministerie van LNV et al, 2000). In this successor to the NBP, the EHS is presented as an important success. Consequently, new measures to strengthen it are introduced. However, the ministry also acknowledges that, since 1990, nature policy has been too much guided by ecological criteria set by government (Balduk, 2003; Bogaert and Gersie, 2006). Therefore, LNV wants to increase the involvement of the general public and new non-governmental actors and calls for a more integral approach, acknowledging that nature has a much broader societal function, for example as living environment, recreational facility or economic commodity.

As a consequence, a new government, taking office in 2002, further emphasizes the realization of the EHS through nature management and development activities by farmers and private owners, in line with the new PB subsidy scheme. At the same time, it reduces the budget for purchasing existing natural areas. With this so-called transition from purchase to management, the government wants to reduce costs and at the same time broaden the group of non-governmental actors engaged in nature policy. NCOs do not like this development and argue that farmers and private owners do not have the expertise to adequately manage and develop nature (Van Veen et al, 2004; Kickert and Van der Meer, 2007).

Meanwhile, the Dutch government is still struggling with the implementation of the Bird and Habitat Directives, continually pressurized by the EU. Because in the meantime Dutch courts have to apply the unelaborated directives in the strictest fashion, important construction works are halted. This is resented by many actors, who argue that this has led to a construction stoppage in the Netherlands (Arnouts and Arts, 2009; Kickert and Van der Meer, 2007). Eventually, the revised *Natuurbeschermingswet* (Nature Protection Act) and the *Flora- en Faunawet* (Flora and Fauna Act: FFW) incorporate the directives, respectively issued in 2005 and 2002. However, the latter one in particular is often criticized for being far too radical (Broekmeyer et al, 2003).

In addition, nature policy continues to be integrated with other policy fields. This is particularly obvious in the *Reconstructiebeleid* (Reconstruction Policy), the first signs of which appear after a 1997 outbreak of swine fever. In the early 2000s, this policy manifests itself as a comprehensive integral initiative to reorganize a large part of the Dutch rural area (Bleumink, 2007). Furthermore, the Ministry of LNV, in cooperation with several other ministries, issues the *Nota Ruimte* (Spatial Memorandum) in 2004 and the *Agenda Vitaal Platteland* (Agenda for a Vital Rural Area: AVP) in 2005. The former designates several regions as National Landscapes, the latter distinguishes AVP regions. Regions that are given such statuses receive additional government support to further integrate rural area functions.

The late 2000s are characterized by a further decentralization of nature policy. In 2007, the Ministry of LNV initiates the *Investeringsfonds Landelijk Gebied* (Investment Fund for the Rural Area: ILG), a budgetary scheme that transfers new financial responsibilities to the provinces. The ILG is expected to help diminish the extensive load of coexisting policy initiatives (Selnes and Kuindersma, 2006). As a consequence, provincial involvement in nature policy further increases. The provinces are able, for example, to direct DLG, traditionally a ministerial implementation agency (Kickert and Van der Meer, 2007).

1.2 The governance puzzle

As mentioned, the main incentive for this thesis is the confusion that seems to appear when the above-presented developments are confronted with theoretical claims about governance. In this section, this confusion, phrased as the *governance puzzle*, is further elaborated. First, governance, and a shift in governance, is introduced somewhat more explicitly. After that, the governance puzzle is constructed.

1.2.1 Governance and a shift in governance: a brief introduction

The previous section has provided an example of a policy field in which both governmental and non-governmental actors are engaged. As already mentioned,

governance is one of the theories that discusses such engagement. As a concept, it has many faces, which will be more elaborately discussed in the next chapter (section 2.1.1). For now, it suffices to introduce some main characteristics that are at the core of this thesis. These are based on definitions by Pierre (2000b), in his introduction to a book that has become a well-known contribution to the governance debate (Pierre, 2000a).

Pierre (2000b, p. 3) argues that governance *"denotes a conceptual or theoretical representation of co-ordination of social systems and, for the most part, the role of the state in that process"*. This is the common focus of most, if not all, contributions to the governance debate (Treib et al, 2005). Therefore, governance theory discusses the role of the government in determining the course of events in a society. From this, it logically follows that governance theory also considers the role of non-governmental actors. Pierre (2000b) acknowledges this by splitting up his meaning of governance into two categories that reflect two ends of a continuum.

On the one hand, he refers to *state centric* or *old governance*, which relates to governing activities by governmental actors, focusing on political brokerage and the definition of goals and priorities, implying that policy processes are essentially a government affair (see also Weber et al, 1978; Hill and Lynn, 2005). On the other hand, he mentions *society centred* or *new governance*, which focuses on the allegedly considerable influence of non-governmental actors on such processes. In such a case, the government has to take serious cognizance of, and is sometimes even overshadowed by, the governing activities of non-governmental actors (see also Rhodes, 1997).

The classifications *old* and *new* attribute a chronology to the different types of governance; they suggest that a pattern of change is visible from the old state centric conception of governance towards the new society centred conception. This is what is meant by the *shift in governance* or *the shift from government to governance* (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004; Jordan et al, 2005). Pierre (2000b, p. 4) illustrates this shift by arguing that *"what previously were indisputably roles of government are now increasingly seen as more common, generic, societal problems which can be resolved by political institutions, but also by other actors. The main point here is that political institutions no longer exercise a monopoly on the orchestration of governance"*.

The extent to which a shift from state centric to society centred governance has appeared over the years is very much disputed among governance theorists. Some claim that the state has lost its central position; others argue that this is not the case. Again others claim that more traditional types of governance coexist alongside newer ones, resulting in a juxtaposition. Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that at least some sort of shift has appeared (Kooiman, 1993; Pierre and Peters, 2000; Pierre, 2000a; Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004; Treib et al, 2005; Goetz, 2008).

1.2.2 Governance in Dutch nature policy: puzzlement

To sum up, governance is about the governing activities of certain actors, and it becomes manifest in policy processes. In this, two extremes are visible as two ends of a continuum. On the one hand, governmental actors govern society; on the other hand, non-governmental actors do. Although governance theorists take various positions on this continuum, there is a tendency to assume that the role of non-governmental actors has increased over time, at the expense of traditionally dominant governmental actors. When this claim of a shift in governance is confronted with the developments visible in Dutch nature policy, a rather confusing situation seems to appear. On the basis of the overview presented in section 1.1.2, evidence can be found for at least three different claims.

First of all, the shift in governance thesis can be supported. From the overview, it can be deduced that government involvement in nature policy begins to rise from the early 1970s, culminating in the initiation of the NBP and EHS in 1990; this, according to many, is a classic example of state centric governance. After that, however, when the implementation of these policies encounters problems, a shift towards more society centred forms of governance is visible. Nature policy is increasingly regarded from an integral perspective, with all kinds of new non-governmental actors engaging in nature policy-related governing activities.

Secondly, and quite paradoxically, it can also be argued that the exact opposite of such a shift appears, i.e. a *reversed* shift in governance. The overview indicates that, before the 1970s, nature policy is the responsibility of the traditional NCOs. This picture remains largely accurate throughout the 1970s and the 1980s. The government does

become involved, but with a relatively limited impact. This suggests society centred governance. In 1990, however, exemplified by the launch of the NBP and EHS, the government begins to become explicitly engaged. After that, there is a rather explosive increase of government initiatives in nature policy, overshadowing the exploits of non-governmental actors. Moreover, from the late 1990s, the EU involvement in Dutch nature policy further emphasizes the state centric character of nature policy.

Thirdly, it can also be stated that nature policy is characterized by a type of governance that is located in between the state centric and society centred extremes, a picture that does not change over time. Already in the late 1960s, governmental and non-governmental actors are working together – visible, for example, in the fact that the former provides the finance for the latter to buy land. This picture of a *non-shift* in governance continues to appear over the years, even though the contents of nature policy and the interrelation between, for example, nature and agriculture have changed. This claim is grounded in the assumption that the Netherlands has a neo-corporatist tradition (Lijphart, 1968; Frouws, 1993; Veenman, 2008); it is a longstanding phenomenon that the government works closely together with a select group of non-governmental actors. It is likely that this phenomenon is visible in Dutch nature policy also.

1.3 Research goal and research questions

The aim of this research – the unravelling of the above-elaborated threefold governance puzzle – can be realized through an analysis of Dutch nature policy, focusing on the changing governing activities of governmental and/or non-governmental actors. This leads to the following research goal:

> *To explain how governmental and non-governmental actors have shaped Dutch nature policy over time, in order to determine whether a shift, a reversed shift or a non-shift in governance is visible in relation to this policy field.*

By studying governance shifts in Dutch nature policy, an important claim in contemporary policy science literature can be investigated, confined to the boundaries of a select

empirical field. This means that, to some extent, this study has a theory testing character (George and Bennett, 2005). The field in question has been chosen because a critical analysis seems justified; there are reasons to doubt that a shift in governance in Dutch nature policy has taken place. This can also be deduced from research by, for example, Boonstra (2004), Van der Zouwen (2006), De Boer et al (2008) and Van Bommel (2008). In addition, the conceptual framework created to address this research goal (see Chapter 2) can be used to analyse governance shifts in general and consequently constitutes another scientifically relevant contribution of this thesis.

Besides having scientific relevance, this thesis is interesting from a policy perspective. First of all, it provides a detailed description and analysis of Dutch nature policy. Secondly, it addresses the governing activities and abilities of governmental and non-governmental actors over a relatively long time span (see below). Therefore, even though this research does not have an explicit evaluative purpose, it is likely that some conclusions can be drawn on the functioning of governance in Dutch nature policy. This may be useful for current and future generations of Dutch – and international – nature policymakers.

In addition, some further elaboration and clarification of the research goal is in order. First of all, when talking about the actors involved in Dutch nature policy, I am using the dichotomy governmental/non-governmental to emphasize the difference between actors from the sphere of the state on the one hand and actors from the spheres of the market and civil society on the other. The term non-governmental actors should not be confused with the well-known term non-governmental organizations, or NGOs. The latter typology refers to non-profit organizations from the sphere of civil society, whereas the former, to which I adhere, is broader – for example also including non-governmental interest organizations.

Furthermore, nature policy, as used in this thesis, has not yet been formally defined. By nature policy, I mean policies relating to the conservation and/or enhancement of natural areas and/or qualities. A frequently heard term in this respect is nature conservation policy. However, although conservation constitutes an important part of nature policy, it implies a rather narrow focus, emphasizing the maintenance of a status quo. Section 1.1.2 has outlined that nature policy also constitutes nature development.

Therefore, I would like to use the broader term *nature policy* (see also Van der Zouwen, 2006).

It is also important to acknowledge that the actions of actors are not the only forces that can affect policy change and governance shifts. The overview presented in section 1.1.2 shows that, at the same time, developments in adjacent policy fields, general trends and unexpected events also have been of influence. Examples are societal unrest, decentralization processes, the rise of the EU, a weakening agricultural sector and an outbreak of swine fever. Such factors have not explicitly been mentioned in the research goal because the activities of governmental and non-governmental actors are the focal point, but they have to be taken into account nevertheless (see section 2.3).

Finally, until now, I have dealt with nature policy developments mainly on the national level. However, the unravelling of the governance puzzle requires a more detailed investigation. Therefore, I study two cases, the Dutch regions Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant. In addition, to focus on governance shifts, a significant time span has to be encompassed. My analysis commences in the early 1970s because, from this point in time, governmental actors begin to become more explicitly involved in Dutch nature policy (see section 1.1.2). It ends in 2008, when the data gathering process ceased. These methodological issues are further addressed in Chapter 3.

Now that the goal of this study has been established and elaborated, it can be split up into four research questions. The first question addresses the governing activities of governmental and non-governmental actors:

1. How have governmental and non-governmental actors over time been involved in shaping Dutch nature policy?

Answering this question will identify which actors are involved, how they operate, how they interrelate with each other and how this eventually affects Dutch nature policy. The next question connects this to governance, focusing on changes that occur over time:

2. Which types of governance are visible over time in this shaping process?

As already outlined, why shifts in governance occur is also a subject of interest, i.e. the extent to which this is related to governmental and non-governmental actors and to trends, events and developments in adjacent policy fields. This is dealt with in the third question:

3. If visible, why do changes in these types of governance occur?

The fourth and final research question addresses the different claims that constitute the governance puzzle. Answering it will achieve the goal of this thesis:

4. To what extent do these changes tally with the respective claims of a shift in governance, a reversed shift in governance or a non-shift in governance?

1.4 General outline

In this final introductory section, the outline of the remainder of this thesis is presented. Chapter 2 deals with the theoretical framework of this thesis. In section 2.1, governance is further elaborated. In section 2.2, the main analytical tool, i.e. the policy arrangement approach, and the main concepts of this thesis, i.e. four ideal typical modes of governance, are presented. Section 2.3 discusses governance shifts. Chapter 3 constitutes the methodological account. Section 3.1 introduces the main research strategy used in this thesis – the case study. Section 3.2 subsequently deals with the selection of the two cases that are at the core of this research. Section 3.3 focuses on the consequences of studying a particular time span, and section 3.4 explains the process of data selection and collection. In section 3.5, the research questions stated in section 1.3 are rephrased in terms of the theoretical framework and methodological account.

Chapters 4 and 5 are the two empirical chapters, the former dealing with the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case, the latter elaborating the Midden-Brabant case. These two chapters have a similar structure. They constitute an opening section (respectively 4.1 and 5.1) in which the two regions are introduced, both geographically and empirically. The next four sections (respectively 4.1 to 4.5 and 5.1 to 5.5) deal with the four successive periods studied. The first of these four sections is slightly different from the others

because it elaborates a “starting point”, i.e. the situation in the region at the beginning of the story. In these sections, the most important developments in terms of nature policy are described and analysed in terms of the policy arrangement approach, with attention also being paid to adjacent policy fields. Note that the two empirical chapters are not wrapped up with a conclusion as the conclusions of this thesis are presented in Chapter 7 (see below).

In Chapter 6, the policy arrangements constructed in the empirical chapters are analysed in terms of governance by comparing them to the four ideal typical governance modes constructed in Chapter 2. Section 6.1 deals with the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case, and section 6.2 focuses on the Midden-Brabant case. Subsequently, in section 6.3 the governance developments in the two cases are compared with each other. In section 6.4, some generalizations are presented on the basis of this comparison.

Finally, Chapter 7 presents the main conclusions and reflections of this thesis. In section 7.1, the former are elaborated by briefly answering the research questions rephrased in section 3.5. Section 7.2 presents a theoretical, methodological and empirical reflection.

Chapter 2 Theoretical framework

In this chapter, the analytical, theoretical and conceptual building blocks of this thesis are presented. In section 2.1, governance is elaborated and classified. In section 2.2, four modes of governance are conceptualized. Section 2.3 deals with governance shifts.

2.1 Elaborating governance

Since the early 1990s, governance has been one of the most broadly discussed issues in both academic and non-academic policy-related literature. It appears, for example, in disciplines such as public administration, political science, international relations, economic studies and development studies. Several authors have attempted to provide an overview of different perceptions on governance (Kooiman, 1993; Rhodes, 1997, 2000; Hirst, 2000; Pierre, 2000a; Pierre and Peters, 2000; Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004; Kjaer, 2004; Treib et al, 2005). This introductory section also attempts to do so, first by providing a governance state of the art and second by distinguishing three perspectives embedded in this overview.

2.1.1 A state of the art

As outlined in Chapter 1, the debates on governance generally identify *state centric governance* (Pierre, 2000b), also referred to as *old governance* (Pierre, 2000b; Peters, 2000) or *hierarchical governance* (Kooiman, 2003), as a first governance category. In this respect, governance deals with the traditional command-and-control fashion of governing, in which governmental actors determine policy goals and also implement policy. Society is governed by laws and other strict forms of regulation, and this results in a clear distinction between the governmental and non-governmental spheres (Pierre and Peters, 2000). This category is closely related to ideas about *traditional authority* (Pierre and Peters, 2000), *etatism* (Van Waarden, 1992) and *bureaucracy* (Weber et al, 1978).

Several authors emphasize that state centric governance is still very much in vogue (Pierre and Peters, 2000; Goetz, 2008). Others talk about the extent to which hierarchical governance has been replaced or juxtaposed by newer forms of governance (Hill and Lynn, 2005). There are also those that debate the ability of state centric governance to

deal with the problems of contemporary societies, for example questioning the legitimacy and effectiveness of governmental interventions and opting for the possibility of state failure (Jänicke, 1990).

The variety of newer types of governance is much larger. *Network governance* takes a very prominent place amongst them, mainly appearing in political sciences and public administration (Rhodes 1997, 2000; Scharpf, 1997; Törfing, 2006). The debate on network governance is a continuation of the discussions on policy networks. These discussions date from the late 1970s, the 1980s and the early 1990s (Van Waarden, 1992; Jordan and Schubert, 1992; Dowding, 1995; Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997) and deal with the idea that policy processes are dominated by autonomous networks of interdependent governmental and non-governmental actors. Together, these actors decide what happens in a policy process through bargaining, negotiation or deliberation. Kooiman (2000, 2003) refers to network-related governance as *co-governance*.

The debate on network governance often focuses on the extent to which networks have replaced hierarchies; this is closely related to the allegedly decreased influence of governmental actors. Some authors claim that networks indeed have replaced hierarchies and that the role of government has diminished (Rhodes, 1997, 2000; Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004). Others argue that, even though networks often appear in contemporary policy processes, governmental actors retain a certain form of dominance, and networks and hierarchies exist alongside each other (Hill and Lynn, 2005; Hirst, 2000). This debate can be traced back to discussions on policy communities and issue networks (Jordan and Schubert, 1992), or neo-corporatism and liberal pluralism (Van Waarden, 1992).

The network governance debate has also a more normative aspect. Although it is generally acknowledged that networks can have a beneficial effect on a policy process, at the same time, many authors focus on less positive side effects, or even on network governance failure (Jessop, 1998, 2000; Kjaer, 2004). For example, Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden (2004) refer to problems of accountability and legitimacy in relation to network governance, and Rhodes (1997, 2000) emphasizes accountability problems and talks about a democratic deficit in network governance. Sørensen and Törfing (2005) study the democratic anchorage of networks. According to Törfing (2006), governance

network research has moved towards addressing exactly these kinds of normative questions, focusing on the problem-solving capacity of networks.

Society centred governance is a governance conception closely related to network governance, since it acknowledges the existence of the network-like structures in which policies evolve. The key difference is that network governance assigns a certain amount of centrality to governmental actors (how much precisely remains contested) whereas in a society centred or *self governance* situation governmental actors play a peripheral role (Kooiman, 2003). The idea is that non-governmental actors are perfectly capable of taking care of their own affairs, effectively operating in policy processes without the involvement of government (Peters, 2000). Society centred governance is grounded in the autopoeisis thesis (Luhmann, 1982, 1995), in discussions about self organization (Oström, 1990) and in the notion of governing without government (Rhodes, 1996, 1997).

There is some debate about the extent to which non-governmental actors are really able to operate autonomously, i.e. beyond government control. Some argue that societal governance practices only occur when government agrees with the pursued targets, setting certain guidelines. A frequently heard expression in this context is self regulation *in the shadow of hierarchy* (Héritier and Eckert, 2008; Börzel, 2007). In the public administration literature, however, self regulation by non-governmental actors is a phenomenon in its own right (Kooiman, 2003)

A conception of governance that is closely related to network governance is *multi-actor governance* (Kohler-Koch and Eising, 1999). The debate on this conception emphasizes the number of actors involved in a policy process and claims that this number increases over time. Furthermore, the fact that actors stem from different backgrounds increases the diversity of a policy process. Therefore, multi-actor governance emphasizes the horizontal character of networks (Van Bommel, 2008). It is often questioned, however, whether increases in process diversity and actor numbers lead to better policies. An increase in actors, for example, can lead to an actor overload, which in turn may trigger a trade-off between legitimacy and effectiveness (Arnouts and Arts, 2009).

Multi-level governance is another important governance perspective. It is often mentioned alongside multi-actor governance to emphasize the distinction between a vertical and horizontal governance conception. Although several authors attribute a multi-

level component to networks (for example Marks and Hooghe, 1996; Héritier, 1999; Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004), multi-level governance is considered as a governance strand on its own. It stems from the fields of international relations and comparative European public policy analysis (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004) and emphasizes the changing involvement of actors from different – and sometimes new – policy tiers. It also concerns the changing division of tasks and responsibilities between the actors operating on these tiers, implying a changing division of power amongst these actors and levels.

Much of the debate on multi-level governance focuses on the extent to which national governments are able to continue dominating policy processes. On the one hand, there are those who advocate the *hollowing out of the state* thesis (Rhodes, 1994, 1997, 2000; Marks and Hooghe, 1996; Börzel, 1998). They state that, over time, national governments have lost their dominant position to actors on other levels. On the other hand, there are authors who argue that the nation state remains the most important governing actor (Moravcik, 1993, 1998; Putnam, 1993). Others do acknowledge that the state has lost some of its traditional influence, but argue that its role has changed rather than decreased (Hirst and Thompson, 1995; Pierre and Peters, 2000; Arts and Leroy, 2006a; Arts et al, 2009).

Another aspect of the debate on multi-level governance deals with the alleged consequences of a shift towards multi-level governance. Rhodes (1997), for example, discusses the accountability problems that could arise in a so-called hollow state. Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden (2004) claim that there is major concern among multi-level governance theorists about legitimacy problems that result from the rise of the European policy tier.

Multi-sector governance is a less extensively debated notion of governance, mainly found in environmental policy sciences and often used as a complement to the multi-actor and multi-level distinction (Wiering and Driessen, 2001; Crabbé, 2008). It refers to the idea that policies – in this case environmental – can no longer be considered in isolation; they need to be seen as connected to other adjacent policy fields. This implies a shift towards a multi-sector environmental policy (Leroy and Arts, 2006) that requires more integral policy processes (Lafferty and Hovden, 2003). Multi-sector governance is closely

related to debates on *intersectoral coordination* (Verbij and Schanz, 2002; Shannon and Schmidt, 2002; Verbij 2008) that discuss the interrelation and cooperation of actors originating from different sectors.

Informal governance is a relatively recent governance branch, for example elaborated by Christiansen and Piattoni (2003). It refers to the occurrence of policy processes outside the traditional governmental institutions and is grounded in the sub-politics idea introduced by Beck (1997; see also Buizer, 2008) and the idea of policies that arise in a so-called institutional void (Hajer, 2003). The debate on informal governance focuses on the extent to which the spheres of the state, market and civil society encroach on each other (Arts and Leroy, 2006a), a process that is also called de-differentiation (Dubbink, 1999), the blurring of the traditional boundaries between state, market and civil society (Kooiman, 2000; Van der Zouwen, 2006) or the interplay between formal and informal practices (Van Tatenhove, 2003).

Some of the debate on this branch of governance focuses on the question of the extent to which informal governance is democratic, accountable, effective, etc. Van Tatenhove et al (2006) see openness, accountability and transparency as important aspects when looking at a formal–informal interplay. Hajer and Wagenaar (2003) present deliberative democracy as the way of dealing with governance in the institutional void.

Global governance is related to multi-level governance because it emphasizes policy processes on inter- and supranational levels and because it also stems from the field of international relations. This governance notion is linked to the well known political globalization debate. The question at the core of this debate is: Who rules the world? On the one hand, there is the traditional neo-realist model that claims that states are the dominant actors in the international field (Kjaer, 2004). On the other hand, this model has been heavily criticized over the years, for example by Rosenau (1992, 2000) who claims that global issues are addressed by so-called spheres of authority, which can contain both governmental and non-governmental actors. Consequently, governance without government is very well possible on a supranational level.

Furthermore, there is a debate going on about the prospects of the increasingly global character of policy processes. This debate includes global governance optimists like Held (1995), who claims that globalization has created opportunities for the rise of a

cosmopolitan democracy, and pessimists like Cerny (1999), who argues that policies become less democratic and accountable because of globalization.

Good governance stems from the field of economic development studies (Kjaer, 2004), referring to a set of proper administrative processes to be followed by governments that apply for financial support from institutions like the World Bank or the IMF (Doornbos, 2001). It has been a buzzword since the end of the 1980s and defines explicit criteria required to make governance "good". Its most important aspect is the creation of an effective political framework that is conducive to private economic modernization (Hirst, 2000).

Over the years, good governance has been challenged as well. Doornbos' (2001) claim that expectations about the results of good governance are overstretched has led to a diminution in its popularity, mainly because of the strong political connotations attached to the conception. Kjaer (2004) confirms this by claiming that development studies have severely critiqued the donor community for imposing neo-liberal models of governance on the developing world.

Corporate governance is closely related to good governance. It refers to the introduction of good governance principles in the private sphere (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004) and has recently gained a boost in popularity. According to Hirst (2000), corporate governance is mainly a normative concept. It deals with trying to increase the accountability and transparency of large corporations and provides a set of criteria to be pursued by the management of these corporations.

New public management (NPM), also known as *market governance* (Pierre and Peters, 2000) or *economic governance* (Jones, 2001; Jessop, 1997) is a final governance perspective that is often mentioned. It deals with the introduction of management concepts from private enterprises into the public realm, implying a focus on efficiency and customer orientation and a diminished role for government. New public management characteristics were strongly advocated in the 1980s by the Reagan administration in the United States and the Thatcher administration in Britain, both of whom addressed the problems of "big government" (Pierre and Peters, 2000; Kjaer, 2004; Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004; Padt, 2007).

2.1.2 Three governance perspectives

In the state of the art presented in section 2.1.1, roughly three governance perspectives can be distinguished. First of all, many authors more or less equate governance with governing, to be carried out by governors, i.e. governmental and/or non-governmental actors. This is the most basic definition of governance, as introduced in section 1.2.1. Hirst's (2000, p. 24) definition, for example, is in line with this perspective: "*governance can be generally defined as the means by which an activity or ensemble of activities is controlled or directed*". Put like this, governance also includes the more traditional state centric way of steering society. This definition also suggests that governance is by no means new.

This latter claim is contested by those who reserve the term "governance" for conceptions beyond the state centric way of governing society. Stoker's (2000, p. 93) definition reflects this idea: *"governance can be broadly defined as a concern with governing, achieving collective action in the realm of public affairs, in conditions where it is not possible to rest on recourse to the authority of the state."* These authors distinguish between government and governance, using the former term as a substitute for state centric governance. Héritier (2002) elaborates this schism by distinguishing an encompassing category (in which governance also constitutes traditional forms of governing) and a restricted category (which does not include the state centric conception). For example, in the overviews of Rhodes (2000), Hirst (2000) and Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden (2004) a restricted approach is apparent.

The second perspective focuses on a chronological approach to governance, which closely relates to the claims embedded in the governance puzzle (see section 1.2.2). This perspective places different modes of governance in a chronological order and deals with the question of whether or not there has been a shift from state centric to society centred governance (Pierre, 2000b), from old to new governance (Peters, 2000) or from government to governance (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2001). Leroy and Arts (2006, p. 12), for example, claim that *"governance relates to the fact that steering no longer is the privilege of governmental agencies."* Debates relating to this perspective

often concern the extent to which a shift is visible, if it is visible in the first place (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2001).

The third perspective on governance is more normative. It focuses on the performance of different governance types and deals with the question of whether shifts in governance are desirable and good, i.e. whether they improve the problem-solving capacity of a policy process. Debates relating to this perspective centre on the extent to which different governance types are, for example, legitimate, accountable, effective, democratic, efficient, etc., providing a set of evaluation criteria to measure governance capacity (Kjaer, 2004). Governance in such a case can also be regarded as an instrument to be applied to create better policies. Hirst (2000, p. 24), for example, argues that governance *"should deliver an acceptable range of outcomes according to some established social standard."*

To sum up, the first perspective refers to governance *modes*, i.e. types of governing with their own distinct characteristics. The second perspective deals with governance *shifts*, i.e. processes of transformation in which different modes appear at different points in time. The third perspective addresses governance *performance*, i.e. a focus on the problem-solving capacity of a particular mode and the subsequent desirability of a shift. The different governance perceptions discerned in the previous section can be ordered according to these three perspectives (see Table 2.1; an overview of all the tables and figures presented in this thesis is given in Annex II). Note that this thesis focuses on the first two perspectives (modes and shifts). Addressing governance performance is beyond the scope of this research.

	Governance modes	**Governance shifts**	**Governance performance**
State centric governance	Command & control by the government	Government retains its domination; no change	Government able to solve societal problems
Network governance	Governing in networks of various actors	Networks replace/appear beside hierarchies	Network legitimacy, accountability & effectiveness
Soc centred governance	Self regulation (in the shadow of hierarchy)	Increase in governing without government	Self governing capacity of non-governmental actors

	Governance modes	Governance shifts	Governance performance
Multi-actor governance	Governing with a large group of actors	The number of actors increases over time	Actor overload, legitimacy–effectiveness trade-off
Multi-level governance	Governing dispersed over various tiers	Hollowing out/changing role of the state	Accountability and legitimacy gap in the hollow state
Multi-sector governance	Governing dispersed over policy sectors	(Environmental) policy as multi-sector field	Increased efficiency through integral governing efforts
Informal governance	Governing in the institutional void	Encroaching state, market and civil society	Transparent, open and deliberative democracy
Global governance	Governing in a globalizing world	Relocation of politics in spheres of authority	Global accountability & democracy deficits
Good governance	Governing rules for developing countries	Overstretched good governance loses ground	Effective framework for economic modernization
Corporate governance	Governing rules in the private sphere	Corporate governance gains in popularity	Accountability and transparency increase
New public management	Governing based on market principles	Move away from big government	Governmental efficiency & customer orientation

Table 2.1: Classification of different governance perceptions

2.2 Modes of governance

In this section, the modes of governance perspective is conceptualized. In section 2.2.1, an analytical framework is introduced to structure this conceptualization. Section 2.2.2 elaborates the state centric/society centred continuum of section 1.2.1 into a governance typology. Section 2.2.3 deals with the actual operationalization of these modes, creating the conceptual building blocks of this thesis. In section 2.2.4, the way in which these concepts should be applied is discussed.

2.2.1 Creating analytical clarity: the policy arrangement approach

To conceptualize modes of governance and address the governance puzzle of section 1.2.2, an analytical “search light” is required. This search light has to incorporate several

key terms that need to be addressed to successfully carry out this research. These key terms can be deduced from the research questions presented in section 1.3. From the first question, it can be derived that an analysis should incorporate a particular policy field (in the case of this thesis Dutch nature policy). In addition, this question addresses the actors that are involved in this policy field, while also focusing on the roles that these actors play and on how they influence each other. Furthermore, the first research question focuses on changes that occur over time. The second research question introduces an obvious key term, i.e. types of governance, which in section 2.1.2 have been rephrased as governance modes. Research question three subsequently addresses changes in these types of governance, or, in terms of section 2.1.2, governance shifts. An overview of the seven different key terms is provided in Table 2.2.

Key terms
1. Policy
2. Actors
3. Roles
4. Influence
5. Change
6. Governance modes
7. Governance shifts

Table 2.2: Key terms to address the governance puzzle

The policy arrangement approach: an introduction

The policy arrangement approach (PAA) is a framework that takes into account the above-formulated key terms. It is suited to carrying out an institutional analysis of a particular policy field, focusing on the dynamics and stability of that field. A policy arrangement is defined as *"the temporal stabilisation of the content and organisation of a particular policy domain"* (Leroy and Arts, 2006, p. 13). It constitutes four dimensions, one of them referring to the content of the relevant policy domain (i.e. discourse), the

other three emphasizing the organization of this domain (i.e. actors, power and rules of the game). The PAA therefore incorporates the ideational–material duality that is often referred to in the social sciences (Leroy and Arts, 2006). These four dimensions function as analytical lenses, enabling the unravelling of the relevant policy domain. Moreover, they are interrelated; developments in one dimension are likely to affect what happens in the other dimensions. Therefore, a policy arrangement can be visualized as a tetrahedron (Liefferink, 2006, see Figure 2.1).

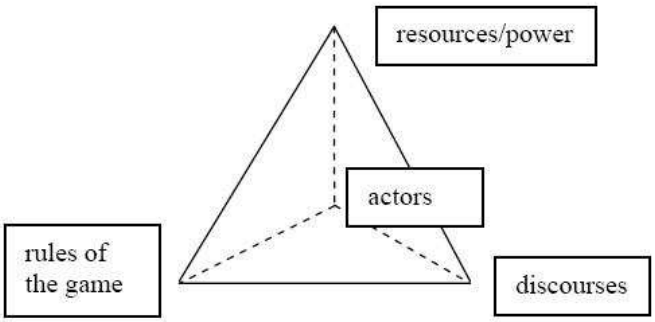

Figure 2.1: The four dimensions of a policy arrangement

The fact that a policy arrangement is referred to as a stable situation with a *temporary* character implies that it is susceptible to change (Leroy and Arts, 2006). This means that the structural properties of an arrangement at a certain point in time can lose their stability, reshaping into a – partially – new form, or disappearing altogether. This process of stabilization and change is referred to as institutionalization.

In explaining why policy arrangements change, the PAA distinguishes between endogenous (or internal) and exogenous (or external) change factors (these are further elaborated in section 2.3). Endogenous change is brought about by the conscious actions of actors involved in a policy arrangement. Exogenous change is caused by developments that occur beyond the control of these actors. This means that the approach is inspired by a second duality, i.e. that between agency and structure (Giddens, 1984), or voluntarism (Hay, 2002; Scharpf, 1997) and determinism (Kjaer, 2004).

Meeting the key terms

The first five key terms, derived from research question one (see Table 2.2), are all in a way covered by the PAA. The first key term, i.e. the contents of the policy field studied in this thesis (i.e. nature policy as it materializes in two Dutch regions, see Chapter 3) can be captured in the discourse dimension. The second key term, actors, directly corresponds with the actor dimension of the PAA. The third key term, addressing the roles that the involved actors fulfil, is covered by the rules dimension, even though roles and rules of the game are not per definition the same (see below). Subsequently, the fourth key term, influence, relates to the power dimension. Finally, the fifth key term, change, is addressed by focusing on the institutionalization process that an arrangement undergoes. This means that research question one can be answered by constructing nature policy arrangements as they develop over time (this is done in Chapters 4 and 5, see section 2.2.3).

This leaves the sixth and the seventh key term, i.e. governance modes and governance shifts. Both these key terms also can be addressed by using the PAA, but this requires some elaboration. Concerning governance modes, at the beginning of section 1.1 it was argued that governance mainly is an organizational matter. A policy then is the subject of governance. When this train of thought is connected to the ideational-material duality that is incorporated in the PAA, it can be argued that each policy arrangement enshrines a certain mode of governance. This mode then corresponds with the three organizational dimensions of a policy arrangement (see section 2.2.3). Subsequently, a shift in governance is then caused by changes in one or more of these organizational dimensions. As argued above, such changes are in turn brought about by endogenous or exogenous change factors.

However, the PAA does not yet offer an explicit governance operationalization, and neither does it explicitly link the explanatory change factors to governance shifts. Consequently, a modes of governance typology based on the organizational dimensions of the PAA, needed to answer the second research question, has to be constructed. Moreover, the link between the change factors and shifts in governance, needed to answer the third research question, has to be established. To achieve the former, the PAA will be complemented with the work of Kooiman (2003). To realize the latter, the endogenous and exogenous change factors referred to in the latest PAA-related publication (Leroy and

Arts, 2006) are elaborated. These exercises are carried out, respectively, in the remainder of this section (2.2) and in section 2.3. Before this is done, however, the four PAA dimensions are delineated in more detail (for an overview see Table 2.3).

Actors: coalitions and policy entrepreneurs

Liefferink (2006) argues that an analysis based on the PAA can provide various foci, depending on the dimension that is taken as the point of departure. Which dimension should be selected as such a point of departure depends on the research goal and questions. Given the emphasis that this thesis puts on the involvement of governmental and/or non-governmental actors in governance, it seems logical to take the actor dimension as a starting point and interpret the other three dimensions from this perspective. Within this dimension, it is first of all important to identify the governmental and non-governmental *actors* that participate in a certain arrangement.

In addition, the *coalitions* that are formed between these actors are studied. A coalition, for the purposes of this thesis, is defined as a more or less stable form of cooperation between a group of at least two actors. It can be bound by a common discourse, but also, for example, by rules or resources. This ultimately remains an empirical question. On the one hand, it may be possible that all actors in the arrangement form a tight group, operating together. On the other hand, it may be possible that several smaller coalitions operate beside each other. It is also possible that actors are not at all organized in coalitions or that certain actors are left out.

Moreover, it is likely that, within an arrangement or a coalition, some actors will be more proactive than others. When these proactive actors are actually able to make a significant difference, they are referred to as *policy entrepreneurs* – a term inspired by the work of Kingdon (1995). A policy entrepreneur is able to tackle an existing policy problem by combining it with an existing or newly developed policy alternative, at the same time navigating the push and pull factors of the political arena. By doing so, a policy entrepreneur is able to change what happens in an arrangement (see also section 2.3).

Discourse: concepts and strategies

In the *discourse* dimension, the contents of an arrangement are captured, focusing on the policies that are the subject of governance. There are many different ways to interpret discourse. Arts and Buizer (2009), for example, refer to communication, text, frame or social practice. The PAA uses Hajer's (1995) definition, referring to discourse in relation to physical and social realities. However, this more structural interpretation does not tally with the focus on actors that is adhered to in this research. A discourse interpretation that relates to interactional framing (Dewulf et al, 2009) seems to be better suited.

Through interactional framing, actors in interaction negotiate a discourse. For the purpose of this thesis, a distinction is made between two levels. First of all, a discourse constitutes a policy *concept* (Wiering and Immink, 2006). Such a concept is then framed by the actors that are involved in the relevant policy arrangement. Dewulf et al (2009) refer to this phenomenon as interactional issue framing. A concept reflects a desirable situation – in the case of this thesis concerning nature, for example ecological networks. A nature policy arrangement may also embody more than one concept, for example framed by separate coalitions. Such concepts may either co-exist, or one may be predominant, challenged by the other(s).

Secondly, a policy concept is further operationalized by a policy *strategy* (Wiering and Immink, 2006). Strategies reflect ideas about the process through which a concept should be put into practice; they comprehend options for reaching the desirable situation. Consequently, the actors involved in an arrangement or a coalition elaborate the concept to which they adhere into one or more strategies. In this matter, Dewulf et al (2009) talk about interactional process framing. Also in this case, more than one strategy may appear, respectively contesting with, or co-existing beside, one another. The ecological networks concept might for example be realized through connecting existing natural areas, but also through developing new nature.

Power: resources and influence

Like discourse, power can be interpreted in different ways. Arts and Van Tatenhove (2004), for example, distinguish dispositional power, relational power, power from an organizational or a discursive perspective, transitive or intransitive power and power on

an agency or structural level. Given the fact that the actor dimension is the analytical starting point of this thesis, an interpretation that focuses on the relative power of actors vis-à-vis each other is the most appropriate, i.e. *relational power* (Liefferink, 2006; Schmidt, 2005). Power then focuses on the capacity of such actors to achieve a desired outcome in a cooperative or competitive interaction process with others (Arts and Van Tatenhove, 2004).

With respect to relational power, this thesis distinguishes two different aspects. First, the *resources* upon which the power of the involved actors is based is taken into account. Actors can use such resources to try and reach their goals, while sometimes (either consciously or subconsciously) constraining or sustaining the goals of others (Edwards and McCarthy, 2004). Examples of resources are money, legal means, scientific or lay expertise, land ownership, social contacts, lobbying, experience or charisma (Buizer, 2008). Note that actor coalitions, discourses or rules may also be employed as resources. It remains an empirical question as to which types of resources are used at what moments in time.

Second, when these resources are actually mobilized, the actors orchestrating this mobilization are actively exercising their power, making use of their capacity. In such a case, actors are able to exert a certain amount of *influence* (Willer et al, 1997; Van der Zouwen, 2006). Actors can exert influence by mobilizing resources that they themselves control, but they can also try, for example, to use some of their resources to mobilize resources that are controlled by others. Policy entrepreneurs are generally able to exercise a relatively large amount of influence.

Interaction rules: access and responsibility

Rules also can be interpreted in many ways. Timmermans (2001) for example distinguishes access rules, competence rules, information rules and decision rules. Rules are also often interpreted very broadly, for example when they are equated with institutions (Scharpf, 1997; Kjaer, 2004). It is generally agreed that rules can be explicitly agreed upon, but can also be the result of a tradition of doing things a certain way (Van Buuren and Klijn, 2006). The actor perspective chosen as the analytical starting point of this study implies a focus on *interaction rules* (Liefferink, 2006), also referred to as rules

of conduct or rules of engagement (Hajer, 2006). Such rules constitute the conventions, i.e. formal procedures and informal routines, that shape the interactions between the involved actors, delineating what they do and do not do in their dealings with one another.

This thesis distinguishes two types of interaction rules (Klijn, 2007; Rhodes and Murray, 2007). First of all, *access rules* reflect which actors are allowed – or willing – to participate in or leave an arrangement, and on the basis of which attributes this is determined. Such rules are also referred to as boundary rules (Oström and Crawford, 2005). This may result in arrangements that are relatively closed, i.e. only accessible to a small select group of actors, or relatively open, which means that every actor that wants to participate is allowed to do so.

Secondly, *responsibility rules* determine the division of responsibilities amongst the actors that have gained access to an arrangement. Such rules are also referred to as domain rules (Van Buuren and Klijn, 2006). Responsibility may be formally allocated, for example through official governmental mandates that assign each participant a certain task. It may also be informally taken, for example when an actor (coalition) voluntarily undertakes a certain task in a policy process. It is also possible for actors to dispute each others' responsibility, or for an actor to be officially responsible, but in practice not to act upon this.

Dimensions	**Interpretation**
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	Involved participants - stable forms of cooperation between actors - proactive actors that are able to make a difference
Discourse **- concepts** **- strategies**	Manifest nature policy contents as framed by the involved actors - desired nature-related situation - ideas about how this situation should be achieved
Power **- resources** **- influence**	Capacity that actors have to achieve a desired outcome vis-à-vis others - means that constitute an actor's capacity - extent to which actors make use of their capacity
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Conventions that shape the interactions between the involved actors - which actors (are allowed to) participate - who is responsible for what task

Table 2.3: A policy arrangement with the actor dimension as starting point

2.2.2 Four governance modes

As already mentioned, PAA-related publications do not provide examples of a modes of governance typology. In fact, it is not even clear what the relation between the PAA and governance exactly is. Van Tatenhove et al (2000b), for example, connect a different mode of governance to three stages of modernity. Leroy and Arts (2006, p. 12) in turn refer to governance shifts, for example when they claim that *"governance relates to the fact that steering no longer is the privilege of governmental agencies."* Arts and Van Tatenhove (2006, p. 33) seem to regard governance as a mode, but reserve the term for newer conceptions: *"governance refers to a society centred way of governing or steering, accentuating coordination and self governance."*

This means that a clear governance modes typology that is connected to the organizational dimensions of the PAA still has to be conceptualized. Such a typology should provide various constellations on the interrelation between governmental and non-governmental actors, while also incorporating their power relations and the interaction rules that guide their behaviour. These constellations function as so-called ideal typical governance modes. Working with ideal types is a strategy that is often used in the social sciences (George and Bennett, 2005), having been used in combination with the PAA already (Padt, 2007).

The twofold starting point: the state centric–society centred continuum

As a point of departure, the governance continuum sketched by Pierre (2000b) is taken, introduced in section 1.2.1. On one extreme of this continuum, state centric governance is positioned, on the other end, society centred governance is situated. The former maximizes the role of governmental actors while marginalizing that of non-governmental actors; in the latter it is the other way around (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: State centric/society centred governance continuum (based on Pierre, 2000b)

This governance continuum, however, remains too abstract a base upon which to analyse governance shifts in Dutch nature policy. Its main shortcoming is that it does not conceptualize a mode of governance in which governmental and non-governmental actors work together. Consequently, it does not incorporate a significant portion of the governance debate (for example network governance, multi-actor governance and informal governance, see section 2.1.1). The governance continuum presented by Pierre (2000b) therefore needs to be expanded with another position situated in between state centric and society centred governance.

Governing interactions in first, second and third order governance

To address this issue, I turn to the work of Kooiman (1993, 2000, 2003), who has contributed extensively to the debate on governance. His book published in 2003 gives a comprehensive overview of his conception of governance, so this is the reference mainly used. Kooiman explicitly connects governance to the governing activities of governmental and non-governmental actors; the essence of his argument is that *"governance of and in modern societies is a mix of all kinds of governing efforts by all manner of social-political actors, public as well as private"* (2003, p. 3).

Kooiman elaborates governing efforts by explaining that these result from interactions between actors focused on solving societal problems and creating societal opportunities. He calls this *first order governance*, in which actors form images about what they are governing, images that guide their governing activities. Second, the actors select instruments, derived from certain resources, to deploy in these interactions. Actors have varying access to these instruments. Third, Kooiman refers to social-political action, referring to the extent to which the involved actors, acting on their governing images, are able to put the selected instruments into use.

Subsequently, Kooiman (2003) refers to *second order governance*, which he relates to institutions. He sees institutions as the predefined structures within which first order governance is taking place; this equates with the definition given in the PAA. However, Kooiman does not go into institutionalization; he only refers to the governing needs of first order governance, linking these to the governing capacities of second order governance. He argues that there often is a discrepancy between these needs and

capacities, and that it is the essence of second order governance to balance them. Kooiman elaborates on the possibilities for actors from the spheres of the state, market and civil society to engage in second order governance.

Thirdly, Kooiman distinguishes *third order governance*, also referred to as meta governance. Here he deals with a normative governance connotation. To explain third order governance he uses a simile: *"meta governance is like an imaginary governor, teleported to a point outside, and holding the whole governance experience against a normative light"* (2003, p. 170). It is the task of this imaginary governor to formulate a set of criteria with which to judge governance. Kooiman claims that, with these criteria, the performance of governance can be determined.

Therefore, through interactions, actors take part in so-called governing activities that affect three orders of governance. Consequently, governing is defined as *"the totality of interactions, in which public as well as private actors participate, aimed at solving societal problems or creating societal opportunities; attending to the institutions as contexts for these governing interactions; and establishing a normative foundation for all those activities"* (Kooiman, 2003, p. 4). Kooiman explicitly relates governance to his ideas on governing interactions by defining it as *"the totality of theoretical conceptions on governing"* (2003, p. 4). Note that this means that, in terms of Héritier's (2002) distinction, Kooiman adopts an encompassing perspective to governance, including a state centric conception, rejecting the government–governance terminology. This thesis henceforth also adopts this stance.

First order governance elaborated: hierarchical, co- and self governance

Kooiman's ideas about first order governance in particular are relevant for this thesis, because they can be equated with a modes of governance perspective, emphasizing the efforts of governmental and non-governmental actors in governing activities. Second order governance is less suited for the purposes of this thesis. It does focus on institutions, but, as mentioned, it does not go into institutionalization, i.e. governance shifts. Third order governance is largely compatible with the final perspective distinguished in section 2.1.2, i.e. governance performance. However, as already mentioned, such normative conceptions of governance are beyond the scope of this thesis.

The relevance of first order governance becomes even more profound if one focuses on the way in which Kooiman (2003) structures his rather broad and abstract definition of governing. He argues that there are generally three types of governing activities, to be subdivided into three governance modes, which differ from each other in the extent to which non-governmental and/or governmental actors are involved. He calls these modes hierarchical, co- and self governance. With this threefold elaboration, Kooiman provides the building blocks for the governance typology constructed below; hierarchical governance relates to state centric governance, self governance corresponds with society centred governance and co-governance is the missing intermediate position (see Figure 2.3).

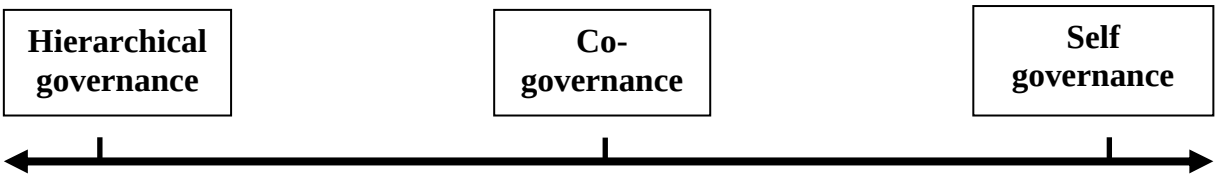

Figure 2.3: The hierarchical, co- and self governance continuum (derived from Kooiman, 2003)

Hierarchical governance (Kooiman, 2003) deals with the most vertical and formalized interactions, also referred to as interventions. In this mode of governance *"those that are governing are, or see themselves in some way as superimposed above those that are governed"* (Kooiman, 2003, p. 115). Although this is not by definition the case, the governors mainly have a governmental status. These actors steer society in the desired direction in a top-down fashion. Behaviour of the non-governmental actors that are governed is heavily influenced through mechanisms of coercion, which are applied in a rather strict fashion. The formulation of a policy and the related decision-making process is effected by a relatively small group of governmental actors. Implementation of a policy is considered a formality, to be carried out without much resistance. Kooiman claims that hierarchical governance can also take a more open appearance, when a limited number of non-governmental parties are allowed to give their opinion. This is meant to increase the quality of, and the support base for, a particular policy.

In *co-governance*, governmental and non-governmental actors have a common goal that they can achieve only if they work together. Co-governance is characterized by more horizontal interplays between involved governmental and non-governmental actors who can have diverse interests and backgrounds. Kooiman (2003) claims that many conceptions of governance fall under co-governance. He gives the examples of communicative governance, public-private partnerships, co-management, networks and regimes. Consequently, the extent to which, and the manner in which, governmental and non-governmental actors work together varies considerably. Kooiman tries to structure this by introducing *collaboration* and *cooperation*. The former refers to much more volatile, diverse and open forms of co-governing in which actors can have conflicting images of what should be achieved, whereas the latter implies much more closed, structured and fixed forms of governing with much more common concern and consensus about what should be achieved.

Self governance refers to the capacity of social entities to govern themselves autonomously. Kooiman (2003) claims that there are no entirely self governing societies, because the state should always play at least a limited role in order to avoid anarchy. In certain policy fields or sectors, however, self governance can be a mode in its own right. Governmental actors set the boundaries but keep their distance and allow non-governmental actors a high degree of autonomy. According to Kooiman, the extent to which actors can govern themselves depends on their organizational capacity, congruence in their interests and enthusiasm. This results in spontaneous, unorganized and flexible forms of interactions that Kooiman calls interferences. These interferences are guided by informal rules established by the self governing actors themselves. Kooiman refers to self organization (Oström, 1990), autopoeisis (Luhmann, 1995) and actor constellations (Mayntz and Scharpf, 1995) as examples.

The fourfold continuum: hierarchical, closed co-, open co- and self governance

The threefold continuum provided by Kooiman is much better suited as a base for a modes of governance typology than Pierre's twofold continuum. Co-governance is an essential addition. That having been said, however, co-governance in itself still remains too broad to adequately capture the variety of ways in which governmental and non-

governmental actors can work together. Kooiman himself seems to acknowledge this as well, by introducing the aforementioned distinction between *cooperation* and *collaboration*. As already stated, the former is characterized by a much more closed form of non-governmental/governmental cooperation that lies closer to hierarchical governance, whereas the latter constitutes a much more open alternative that is more related to self governance. Following this distinction, co-governance is now split up into a closed and an open conception (see Figure 2.4, a further operationalization follows in section 2.2.3).

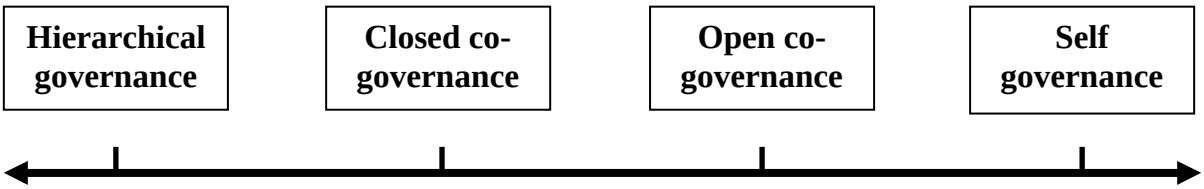

Figure 2.4: The hierarchical, closed and open co- and self governance continuum (based on Kooiman, 2003)

2.2.3 A governance typology: the four modes in PAA terms

In this section, the modes of governance typology is created. This is done by linking the organizational dimensions of the PAA to the hierarchical, closed co-, open co- and self governance modes. First, however, the link between a policy arrangement and a governance mode is further elaborated.

Policy arrangements and governance modes

In this thesis, policy arrangements and governance modes are closely intertwined. Above, a policy arrangement has been defined as the temporarily stabilized organization and contents of a certain policy domain. The four dimensions that constitute a policy arrangement have been interpreted in terms of this thesis and narrowed down further (see Table 2.4). It has also been claimed that the organization of the policy domain in question equates with a certain governance mode. This means that each policy arrangement *enshrines* such a mode. In the previous section, four governance modes were

distinguished. The contents of the policy domain that is embedded in the arrangement are not a part of a governance mode; rather, they are the target of it.

This means that a mode of governance can be operationalized by focusing on three dimensions, not four. A mode of governance constitutes the governing activities of certain actors between whom certain power relations are visible and who are guided by certain interaction rules. By zooming in on these three aspects in a governance mode (instead of only focusing on actors), a nuanced governance picture can be provided.

To determine which of the four modes of governance discerned above is visible in a certain policy arrangement, what each of these four modes looks like in terms of actors, power and rules has to be elaborated. First of all, for each of the ideal types, which participants are involved has to be elaborated. Of special importance is the governmental or non-governmental status of participants and policy entrepreneurs. Subsequently, the issue of which actors have the capacity to achieve a desired outcome has to be addressed. In this case, it is essential to focus on influence and resources as a commodity of governmental and/or non-governmental actors. Finally, the interactions enabled by the interaction rules have to be distinguished. These interaction rules show a certain role division between the involved governmental and/or non-governmental actors.

The specific interrelation between a policy arrangement and a governance mode also has consequences for the structure of the analyses to be carried out in the remainder of this thesis. In each of the empirical chapters (4 and 5), a trail of developing nature policy arrangements is constructed. Each arrangement is named according to its discourse and outlined in terms of substance and organization. These chapters focus on *policy*, providing the answer to research question one. In Chapter 6, the organizational dimensions of the arrangements as elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5 are compared with the ideal typical modes of governance. Chapter 6 therefore focuses on *governance*, addressing research questions two, three and four.

The ideal typical hierarchical governance mode

The first ideal typical mode of governance constitutes hierarchical governance, additionally inspired by ideas on state centric governance, bureaucracy, hierarchy, traditional authority and etatism (see section 2.1.1). In a hierarchical governance mode,

the governors mainly have governmental status and are superimposed above those governed, i.e. non-governmental actors. Non-governmental actors can be involved, but they are mainly on the receiving end of governing. There probably is one strong coalition in which the involved governmental actors are organized, possibly complemented with a few non-governmental actors. Policy entrepreneurs will also have governmental status.

Furthermore, government is significantly more powerful than non-governmental actors because it controls a larger variety and quantity of resources that can be mobilized, among which formal authority and legal means feature strongly. This means that governmental actors are also able to exert considerably more influence, de facto deciding what happens. Non-governmental actors may be able to influence what happens as well, but only when government is susceptible to this. Therefore, government determines governing in a top-down fashion. Implementation of a policy is considered to be a formality, carried out without much resistance.

The interaction rules give government all the room it requires to take the lead. This means that coercion by the government is the predominant interaction type, whereas non-governmental actors (if visible) are forced into a subservient role. Access to governing is restricted to governmental actors and to those that government chooses to involve. Moreover, government takes responsibility for governing, or possibly assigns a portion of it to the involved non-governmental actors. In the latter case, government will monitor carefully whether the allocated responsibilities are met.

The ideal typical closed co-governance mode

The second ideal typical mode is closed co-governance. This ideal type is also inspired by ideas on policy networks, policy communities, network governance and neo-corporatism (see section 2.1.1). In a closed co-governance mode, a select few governmental and non-governmental actors are engaged. These actors are organized in a small and tightly knit coalition. Because all actors are important for the functioning of the arrangement, it is quite likely that some of them, ideally at least one governmental and one non-governmental actor, are operating as policy entrepreneurs.

In addition, power is pooled by the governmental and non-governmental coalition members, mainly because these actors cannot realize a particular outcome on their own.

This implies a certain interdependence on each others' resources. The pooling of such resources is a main prerequisite to achieve a desired result. This also means that both governmental and non-governmental actors are able to exercise a certain amount of influence, taking part in a joint decision-making process.

The interaction rules provide the governmental and non-governmental actors with the leverage they need to jointly take the initiative. This means that cooperation is the role division that is visible, but in a very restrictive fashion. Access is privileged to, and guarded by, those engaged in the main coalition. These actors are able to exclude others. Responsibility is divided among the coalition members, each of which has its own task.

The ideal typical open co-governance mode

The third ideal typical mode is open co-governance. It is also inspired by ideas on network governance, policy (issue) networks, informal governance, good governance, corporate governance, new public management and liberal pluralism (see section 2.1.1). Compared to closed co-governance, open co-governance has a much more lax character. It involves a large group of governmental and non-governmental actors that engages in competitive and/or stimulating governing activities. These actors can be organized in one loosely bound coalition or in several relatively small coalitions that exist beside each other. It is also very possible that they operate on a more individualistic basis. As a consequence, a wide range of various governmental and non-governmental actors can be engaged as policy entrepreneurs.

Because of the extensive involvement of all kinds of actors, power is diffused, residing with the various participants. After all, each of the involved actors controls resources, which are mobilized separately, either by individual actors or by small sub-coalitions that either support or compete with each other. Consequently, many parties to some extent have influence; this is reflected in an open and rather unorganized decision-making process.

The visible interaction rules enable the initiative in governing to be fragmented over the large group of involved governmental and non-governmental actors. This means that flexible collaboration between these actors is the dominant role division. Access to

governing is generally open to those that want to participate. Each actor is responsible for its own activities, only loosely working together with others.

The ideal typical self governance mode

The fourth ideal typical mode concerns self governance. It is inspired by ideas on autopoeisis, self organization, self regulation and governing without government (see section 2.1.1). Self governance refers to the capacity of non-governmental actors to govern their own affairs. Governmental actors will probably be involved as well, but they keep their distance. Therefore, the coalition or coalitions that are manifest will mainly be comprised of non-governmental actors. Moreover, the policy entrepreneurs that are visible will have non-governmental status.

It is not necessarily the case that in self governance power resides with non-governmental actors. Resources can be controlled by government as well. However, they are mainly *mobilized* by non-governmental actors, who thus to a significant extent are able to influence what happens. This gives such actors a high degree of autonomy. In principle, governmental actors retain the potential to interfere, but they only do so when the governing activities violate certain boundaries.

The interaction rules make sure that the non-governmental actors that are involved have the liberty to govern as they see fit, taking the initiative themselves. This means that non-governmental forerunning is the predominant type of interaction. Access in general is open to, and controlled by, non-governmental actors, who can involve those governmental actors that are willing to facilitate. Responsibility for governing mainly rests with non-governmental actors. Governmental actors can stimulate and facilitate governing, but this does not necessarily have to be the case. For an overview of the four ideal typical governance modes, see Table 2.5.

	Modes of governance			
	Hierarchical	**Closed co-**	**Open co-**	**Self**
Actors	Mainly govern-mental actors	Select mixed group of actors	Large mixed group of actors	Mainly non-governmental actors
Power	With government	Pooled	Diffused	With non-government
Rules	Governmental coercion	Restricted cooperation	Flexible collaboration	Non-governmental forerunning

Table 2.4: Comprehensive overview of the four ideal typical governance modes in terms of the organizational PAA dimensions

The four ideal typical modes of governance in a Dutch context

At this point, it should be emphasized that, in the elaboration of the two extremes of the governance continuum, i.e. hierarchical governance and self governance, neither non-governmental nor governmental actors are excluded. It would be too absolute to argue that, in a hierarchical governance mode, there is no room whatsoever for non-governmental actors. In the same train of thought, it would be too rigorous to claim that, in a self governance mode, governmental actors are by definition absent.

This clarification is motivated by the desire to attune the four ideal typical governance modes to the empirical context of this research, i.e. Dutch nature policy. In any case, the complete absence of non-governmental and governmental actors from a governance process is quite unlikely, but in the case of this research this is even more implausible, given the Dutch neo-corporatist tradition. Therefore, this thesis takes a more nuanced stance in relation to hierarchical and self governance.

As a main critique of this choice it could be argued that, in their current form, the four governance modes in fact all have co-governance characteristics; each of them includes both governmental and non-governmental actors. However, this thesis does not focus on the possible presence of a monopolistic governmental or non-governmental position. Rather, it looks for predomination of the one over the other.

2.2.4 Applying the PAA and the governance typology

In this section, two remaining issues are addressed, relating to the application of the PAA and of the modes of governance typology in the remainder of this thesis. First of all, the stability of a policy arrangement and the corresponding strength of a governance mode is addressed. Secondly, an outline is given of how an arrangement is characterized when it reflects different modes.

The stability of policy arrangements and the corresponding strength of governance modes: two stages

In the publications outlining the PAA, the stage at which a particular policy field is stable enough to qualify as a policy arrangement is not specified (Van Tatenhove et al, 2000a; Arts and Leroy, 2006a). This drawback has already been discussed by, for example, Boonstra (2004) and Van der Zouwen (2006), who have solved it by discerning policy arrangements-to-be and policy arrangements in gestation, respectively.

In this thesis, a similar approach is followed, introducing an additional stage in which an arrangement can find itself, i.e. an unstable one. A fully fledged arrangement then is referred to as a stable arrangement. The phrasing proposed by Boonstra (2004) and Van der Zouwen (2006) is not followed because these suggest a certain chronology, i.e. that an unstable arrangement is a pre-stage to a stable arrangement. However, it is also very conceivable that it is the other way around, i.e. that a stable arrangement becomes unstable.

In an unstable arrangement, interactions between the involved actors either occur only occasionally (for example, if there is no visible coalition between them) or have a relatively limited impact. Therefore, the actors involved are only to some extent able to exercise influence, and only few resources are mobilized. The interaction rules that appear, for example, remain unclear, are not really binding or emphasize a lack of engagement.

It ultimately remains an empirical question whether, how and why unstable or stable policy arrangements will manifest themselves and what precisely distinguishes them from one another. The additional stage has been included to more explicitly trace

institutionalizing or deinstitutionalizing policy arrangements back to their source and by doing so reduce the chance of missing important information. It is, for example, important to determine why an arrangement remains unstable, why it institutionalizes (or not) into a policy arrangement, or why a stable arrangement destabilizes into an unstable arrangement.

In addition, it can be claimed that the stability of an arrangement affects the strength of the governance mode embedded in it. In an unstable arrangement, the mode of governance that is visible will have a *weak* connotation, given the irregular or diminished character of the governing activities that take place. A stable arrangement then embodies a *strong* mode of governance.

Characterization of policy arrangements in terms of governance

As mentioned above, the operationalization of modes of governance in three dimensions (i.e. actors, power and rules) enables the construction of a very nuanced governance picture. As a downside, however, it may be difficult to identify the modes of governance found in the cases as hierarchical, closed co-, open co- or self governance; it is not very likely that such modes "from the field" will specifically match one of the ideal typical governance modes.

This means that there is a real chance of the encountered modes being *hybrids*, i.e. mixes of different ideal types. If this is the case, the essential thing is to determine which mode of governance is predominant. For each of the discerned arrangements, the most strongly visible mode of governance must be identified. Otherwise, it would not be possible to distinguish a clear pattern over time. As a first and obvious step, it should be well argued why a particular dimension reflects one of the governance modes; even within one dimension, it may be disputable which mode is predominant.

When all dimensions indicate the same mode of governance, there is no doubt about which mode is predominant. When two out of three dimensions point at the same mode of governance, it seems justified to claim that this mode is predominant. However, it should then be indicated that there is a certain degree of incongruence between the dimensions. In the event of each of the three dimensions reflecting a different governance mode, it is very difficult to select a predominant mode. In such a case, it should be well

argued which dimension is most important. However, it seems rather unlikely that such a situation will occur.

2.3 Shifts in governance

In this section, the seventh and last key term of Table 2.2 is addressed, i.e. governance shifts. Such shifts are caused by the endogenous and exogenous change factors that are incorporated in the PAA. In section 2.3.1, five of these factors are introduced. Since they affect an entire arrangement, i.e. both its contents and its organization, they are responsible for both policy change and governance shifts. This is the reason why the fifth key term of Table 2.2, i.e. change, was not elaborated earlier. Instead, it is addressed in this section as well. Consequently, the term "arrangement change" is used, which indicates that the change factors that are discussed bring about both policy change and governance shifts. In section 2.3.2, the governance shifts perspective is related to the governance puzzle presented in section 1.2.2.

2.3.1 Factors for arrangement change

As mentioned in section 2.2.1, the PAA deals with change by focusing on institutionalization. When a policy arrangement has become fixed at a particular point in time, its four dimensions are the structural properties of a temporarily stabilized situation. The PAA acknowledges that such structural properties can destabilize and change as a result of both human agency and structural trends and events. The former is known as endogenous change, originating from within a certain arrangement, and the latter as exogenous change, stemming from outside an arrangement (Wiering and Immink, 2006; Wiering and Crabbé, 2006).

Endogenous change factor: policy entrepreneurs

In the latest PAA-related publication (Arts and Leroy, 2006b), one endogenous (or internal) change factor is distinguished, i.e. *policy entrepreneurs*. Above, such entrepreneurs have been captured in the actor dimension (see section 2.2.1). The term is

derived from the work of Kingdon (1995). A policy entrepreneur is able to create so-called windows of opportunity by connecting certain policies to certain problems, also navigating the political situation.

In terms of the PAA, a policy entrepreneur may be able to introduce new actors, change the discourse, modify the interaction rules or affect the power relations within an arrangement, possibly making use of opportunities offered by external factors. In this, the entrepreneur may be assisted – or opposed – by other actors that are involved. Either way, its activities will affect the structural properties of an arrangement, bringing about arrangement change.

Exogenous change factors: shock events, adjacent arrangements, socio-political trends, policy initiatives

At the same time, Arts and Leroy (2006b) distinguish three exogenous (or external) change factors, which are all taken into account in this thesis. The first of these factors, *shock events*, refers to occurrences that have an unexpected and dramatic impact. If such occurrences are significant enough, they can spark the launch of new policies or the change of existing ones, subsequently affecting what happens in an arrangement. Examples of shock events are natural disasters, an exploding nuclear plant or a large epidemic outbreak.

The second exogenous change factor, *adjacent arrangements*, refers to developments that are going on in policy domains that are situated close to the arrangement under study. To take an example that is closely related to the subject of this thesis, the presence of a strong agricultural arrangement might constrain the institutionalization of a nature policy arrangement, for example because agrarians dominate the political agenda in a certain region. However, an adjacent arrangement can also have a stimulating effect. Koenig-Archibugi (2002), amongst others, distinguishes between competing arrangements (referring to a competitive relation) and clustered arrangements (constituting a symbiotic relation).

The third external factor, political modernization, refers to *"those structural transformations […] which have or may have consequences for day-to-day policy practices"* (Arts and Van Tatenhove, 2006, p. 21). It therefore concerns abstract structural

processes that have an effect on a particular policy field. Examples are Europeanization or individualization. However, as a concept, political modernization is intertwined with ideas about shifts in governance, interpreted from a more structural perspective (Arts and Van Tatenhove, 2006; Van der Zouwen, 2006; Crabbé, 2008). Therefore, to avoid ambiguity, in this thesis the term *socio-political trends* is used instead; this relates to more concrete processes, such as economic developments, changes in public opinion or decentralization processes, that can affect an arrangement.

In addition, this thesis incorporates a fourth external change factor, one that is not covered by the PAA (Arts and Leroy, 2006b). As mentioned above and elaborated in Chapter 3, this thesis focuses on two Dutch regions. Consequently, the relevant nature policy arrangements will have a (sub)-regional character. Such arrangements are most likely to be affected by new nature-related policy ideas that stem from the European, national or provincial levels. An example is the ecological networks concept, introduced in the Netherlands in 1990 (see section 1.1.2). Such ideas, from now on referred to as *policy initiatives* are also incorporated in this thesis. This means that, overall, four exogenous change factors and one endogenous change factor are distinguished. This is visualized in Figure 2.5.

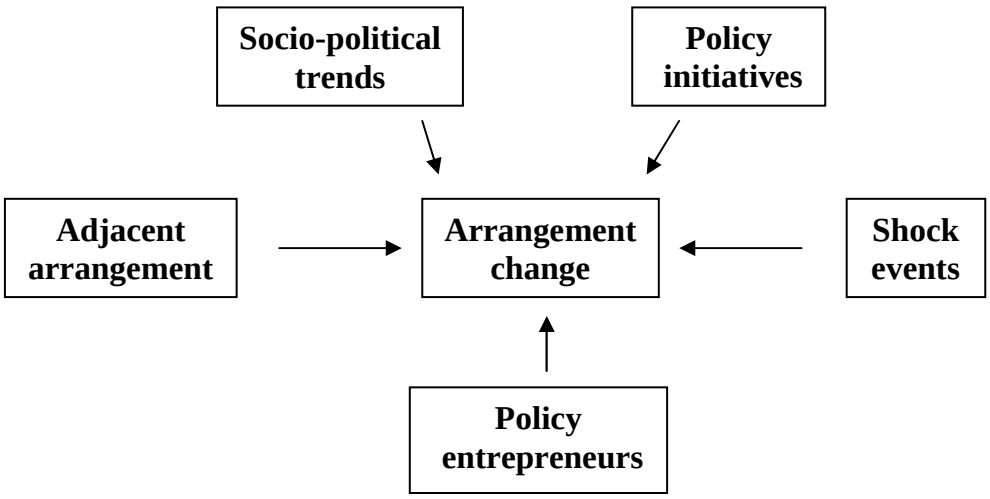

Figure 2.5: Explanatory factors to understand arrangement change (adapted from Arts and Leroy, 2006b)

2.3.2 The governance puzzle in terms of modes and shifts

In this final section, the three possibilities embedded in the governance puzzle, i.e. the shift, the reversed shift and the non-shift (see section 1.2.2), are briefly addressed in terms of the modes of governance discerned in this theoretical framework.

It can be argued that the neo-corporatist situation that is at the heart of the *non-shift in governance* closely resembles the ideal typical closed co-governance mode. Consequently, the third more deterministic possibility that is embedded in the governance puzzle implies that, over the years, closed co-governance is continually apparent. Following this train of thought, closed co-governance is a timeless mode of governance, appearing both at the start of the analysis in the early 1990s and at its end in the late 2000s (see Figure 2.6).

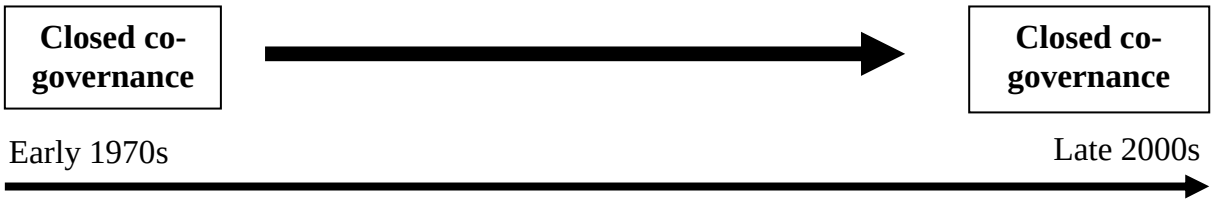

Figure 2.6: The non-shift in governance

In relation to the *shift in governance* thesis, it can be argued that, following the terminology of Peters (2000), both hierarchical governance and closed co-governance are old modes. For example, Van Tatenhove et al (2000b) place both etatism (hierarchical governance) and corporatism (closed co-governance) in the first stage of modernity, visible in the 1960s and 1970s. These two modes are the point of departure for a shift in governance.

From this claim it logically follows that open co-governance and self governance are the new modes that appear at the end of the shift. Van Tatenhove et al (2000b) claim, for example, that liberal arrangements (closely related to open co-governance) are characteristic for the current stage of modernity. This implies that, if a shift in governance takes place, the cases will show hierarchical and/or closed co-governance at the start, to be

replaced by open co- or self governance towards the end of the analysed time span (see Figure 2.7).

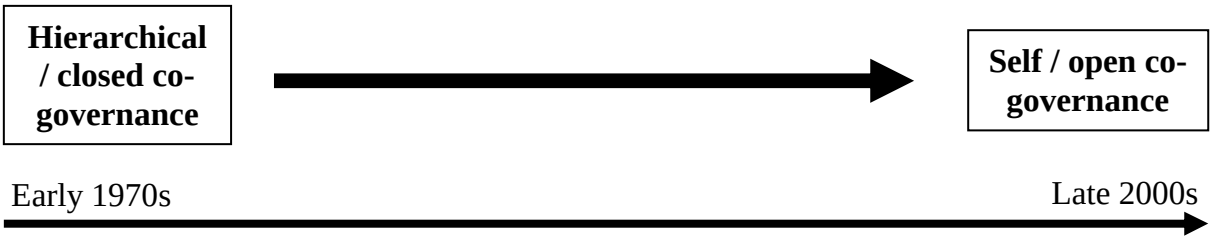

Figure 2.7: the shift in governance

A *reversed shift in governance* would then look precisely the opposite. In such a case, open co- or self governance would be visible in the early 1970s. Over the years, government involvement would gradually increase, and the visible nature policy arrangements would become characterized by hierarchical governance and closed co-governance, replacing the open co- and self governance modes of the early 1970s (see Figure 2.8).

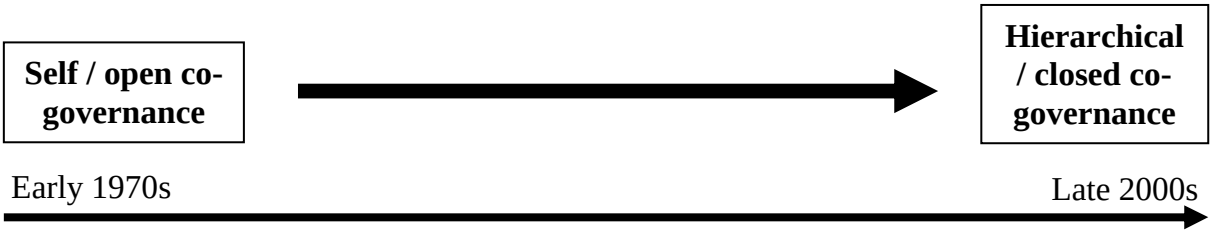

Figure 2.8: The reversed shift in governance

It essentially remains an empirical question as to which of these three patterns will or will not appear in Dutch nature policy. To answer this question, a trail of developing nature policy arrangements and subsequent shifts in governance patterns is reconstructed for two Dutch regions, Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant, and presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. First, however, in Chapter 3 the methodological choices that have been made to realize such an enterprise are outlined.

Chapter 3 Methodological account

This chapter outlines the methodological choices made for the purpose of this thesis. The research strategy, i.e. the case study, is introduced in section 3.1. In section 3.2, the selection of the regions Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant as the two main cases is elaborated. Section 3.3 deals with the implications of studying a particular time span. Section 3.4 focuses on the process of data selection and collection. Finally, in section 3.5 the research questions presented in section 1.3 are rephrased in terms of the theoretical and methodological chapters.

3.1 Research strategy: the case study

The selection of a research strategy depends on the questions that need to be answered and on the situation at hand (Yin, 1994). A case study strategy should be selected when a "how" or "why" question is asked that addresses a set of events that occurs beyond the control of the researcher. In addition, it is widely recognized that case studies are suited for studying a few complex phenomena that require in-depth analysis (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Strategies such as surveys and archival analyses are more suited for "who", "what", "where", "how many" and "how much" questions. Experiments and historic analyses also deal with "how" and "why" questions but are preferable when the investigator can manipulate a set of events (in case of the former) or focuses on the "dead" past (in case of the latter) (Yin 1994).

On the basis of these criteria, a case study seems the appropriate research strategy. The research questions presented in section 1.3 mainly focus on the "how" and "why" of governance shifts in Dutch nature policy. Moreover, it is the aim of this thesis to unravel two very complex phenomena, i.e. the nature policies that appear in the two selected cases. Their complexity shows, for example, in the wide range of actors, resources, rules, internal and external change factors, and nature-related concepts and strategies that are likely to be covered. Because the events studied can be considered contemporary – even though this thesis covers events spanning several decades (see section 3.3) – a historic analysis is not suited. Carrying out an experiment is not an option either, because this thesis addresses a set of events that has already passed.

Addressing external and internal validity and reliability

The case study approach is often criticized for its lack of external and internal validity, and its ailing reliability (Swanborn, 1987; Hutjes and Van Buren, 1992; George and Bennett, 2005). External validity refers to the extent to which the results of a study can be generalized. It is argued that case studies cannot be used for generalization purposes because they only deal with single examples. Internal validity deals with the accuracy of research outcomes. Case studies allegedly score poorly on this point because they create context-dependent knowledge; an investigator generally depends on the interpretations of other people (a phenomenon referred to as *double hermeneutics*, Giddens, 1984). Moreover, case investigators are allegedly biased to argue towards the verification of a particular desired outcome. This latter argument is also used in relation to reliability, which addresses whether a repetition of the study would result in similar outcomes. In addition, the reliability of a case study is supposed to be low because of the large range of explicit and implicit choices a case investigator makes, thus increasing the risk of subjectivity.

Flyvbjerg (2006) tackles these accusations quite convincingly. On the point of external validity, he argues that too much value is assigned to enumerative generalization. It is very possible to generalize on the basis of one case. This phenomenon is referred to as *analytical generalization* (see also Van Bommel, 2008) and is related to Popper's emphasis on falsification. Popper (1959) argues that, if just one observation does not fit with a theoretical proposition, the entire theory must be revised or rejected. He uses the metaphor of white and black swans; the claim that all swans are white is refuted when one black one is found.

It could be argued that this thesis focuses on the "governance shifts in Dutch nature policy swans", which may have a different colour when compared with the white "shift in governance swans". The remainder of this research is dedicated to investigating whether this really is the case, and why (or why not). This does not mean that this study aims at the rejection or acceptance of the appearance of a shift in governance in contemporary society as a whole. It does mean, however, that this thesis critically assesses the shift in governance claim and pinpoints why, or why not, such a shift is visible in one particular policy field. From this train of thought it follows that possible theoretical generalizations,

for example on the appearance of the modes of governance distinguished in Chapter 2, will focus on said policy field (see section 6.4).

On the issue of internal validity, Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that, in the social sciences, all knowledge is context dependent in the first place. This implies that it is useless to continue with the search for predictive theories in this branch of science and that more attention should be given to *"the force of example"* (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 228). A case study is the most suited approach to do so, because it analyses the selected examples in their full complexity to gain insight into the how and why of a particular phenomenon. To avoid the bias towards verification, the case investigator should be intent on falsifying not only a particular theory, but also his assumptions about this theory. Flyvbjerg's (2006) argument that many case investigators have such intentions counteracts the abovementioned bias towards verification.

In relation to these arguments, it should be emphasized that this thesis does not search for any truth claims. It merely intends to provide a well argued and plausible account of a certain interpretation (i.e. my own) of other people's interpretations. To achieve this, the empirical chapters have been discussed with respondents and colleagues inside and outside Wageningen University (see section 3.4). This results in a nuanced picture of governance shifts in two Dutch regions (see section 6.3), generalized to Dutch nature policy in general and confronted with the three claims that constitute the governance puzzle (see section 6.4).

To ensure reliability, Flyvbjerg (2006) calls for the creation of so-called thick descriptions – well elaborated and detailed accounts of the phenomena under study. The choice to separately focus on policy arrangements in Chapters 4 and 5 and governance modes and shifts in Chapter 6 (see section 2.2.3) is partially inspired by the desire to provide such thick descriptions. Through this separation, maximal justice can be done to the two cases. For example, it has enabled a detailed account of the contents of the arrangements under study, which otherwise would likely have been overshadowed by the focus on organization (i.e. governance modes). For the same reason, in Chapters 4 and 5 first a descriptive story will be told. After that, this story will be interpreted in terms of the PAA.

In addition, Yin (1994) argues that, to increase reliability, the narrator needs to provide maximal transparency when it comes to explaining the steps he has taken to come to the presented end result. In other words, how has the study been carried out, which choices have been made and why has this been done in this fashion? These questions are addressed in the remainder of this chapter.

3.2 Selection of the cases

In section 1.3, the intention was stated to study governance shifts in Dutch nature policy by means of a focus on the developments in two Dutch regions, the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant. In this section, the selection of these two regions is defended.

3.2.1 Reasons for choosing two regions

The governance puzzle presented in section 1.2.2 is specific to Dutch nature policy. Therefore, it can be argued that it would have been possible to select Dutch nature policy in general as a case. An analysis would then have focused on the undertakings of governmental and non-governmental actors on the *national* level, or in other words, on policy arrangements and governance modes and shifts in the overview presented in section 1.1.2.

Such an approach was not chosen because it would have provided an analysis situated too far away from nature policy at its most basic level. The selection of regions as the main cases enables a focus on nature policies as they materialize *in the field*, for example including concrete measures to protect nature (through management activities or nature development). More strategic nature policy debates at the national (or European) level definitely are important for the governance of Dutch nature at a regional level, but in a more indirect fashion; they may materialize as policy initiatives that affect the stabilization and change of the nature policy arrangements and governance modes and shifts that appear in the regions (see section 2.3.2).

In this train of thought, however, it could also be argued that studying the governance of nature in a single natural area, for example a National Park, would be more

sensible than focusing on an entire region. Another option would be to focus on the protection of species rather than areas. The reason for not doing this is that it would provide too narrow a scope. As argued in section 2.3.2, what happens in a nature policy arrangement is closely intertwined with what happens outside such an arrangement. Since the boundaries between a phenomenon at the core of a case study and its context are blurred (Yin, 1994), it is important not to narrow down this context too much. A focus on one National Park or on the protection of particular species would constitute the unacceptable risk of excluding relevant context-related developments. It remains an empirical question as to how nature policy and its context are precisely separated and interrelated.

The choice to focus on regions does have some important consequences. First, what a region means in this study needs to be demarcated. A region is hereby defined as a coherent portion of the Dutch rural area, distinguished as such by common societal consent. It can constitute several types of areas, but nature has to feature strongly. Urban areas are excluded. For each case, a further demarcation is provided in the introductory sections of the empirical chapters (4 and 5).

Furthermore, when a regional focus is selected, it is possible, if not likely, that the nature policy arrangements discerned in the case analyses will be complemented with adjacent arrangements from other policy fields. It has already been argued that developments in such arrangements are regarded as external change factors (see section 2.3.2). However, they are not explicitly elaborated in terms of the policy arrangement approach (PAA), nor in terms of governance. Such exercises are only carried out in relation to *nature* policy arrangements, to avoid carrying out an analysis with too broad a focus.

A next question that needs to be addressed concerns the number of regions to be studied. It could be argued that this research requires only one carefully selected region within which there is need to address governance shifts in stabilizing and changing nature policy arrangements. This would imply a single-case design (Yin, 1994) in which a so-called extreme or critical case is studied (Flyvbjerg, 2001, 2006; George and Bennett, 2005). However, since this thesis has the ambition to say something about Dutch nature policy in general, more than one region should be taken into account in order to add to the

external validity of this thesis. This allows various contexts to be considered (see section 3.2.2) and enables a comparative study of governance shifts in Dutch nature policy.

The decision to focus on two regions (instead of three or four) is based on pragmatism. Owing to the relatively extensive size of the cases (among other things due to the considerable time span covered) it seemed more prudent to focus in depth on two regions rather than studying three or four, with the risk of not being able to conclude an in-depth analysis due to time constraints.

3.2.2 Why Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant?

Now that it has been outlined why this thesis focuses on two Dutch regions, the process of selecting suitable areas needs to be discussed. At this point, it is important to mention that the two cases (the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant regions) were also selected for the purpose of the GoFOR project, an international EU-funded research project that took place in the first three years of this PhD research (www.boku.ac.at/gofor). In line with the requirements of this project, the two cases were selected at the end of 2005. A map of the two selected regions and their location in the Netherlands is presented in Figure 3.1.

To ensure that the selected cases would be suitable, the GoFOR project started with a pre-assessment phase that allowed for the screening of several possible cases. It was decided to opt for four regions, narrowing this down to two cases that would be used for the GoFOR main assessment, and eventually this PhD thesis. Besides the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant, the Veluwe and the Sallandse Heuvelrug were considered. It was decided to focus on the former two because of their interrelation; these two regions showed the most interesting variety in the selection criteria. Both during and after the selection process, the cases were discussed within the Forest and Nature Conservation Policy (FNP) chair group and in a GoFOR Workshop in Norway (February 2006). The final confirmation that the cases were suitable came in December 2006 at a meeting between the FNP GoFOR team and two members of the GoFOR National Advisory Panel, one the director of the *Bosschap* (the main forestry-related interest

organization), the other a high ranking official of the *Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving* (Environmental Assessment Agency: PBL).

Figure 3.1: The two selected regions and their location within the Netherlands

The case selection procedure was based on several criteria (for an overview see Table 3.1). Because we wanted to take into account as many differences as possible, we decided to maximize variety between the two cases (George and Bennett, 2005), with the exception that we looked for regions of roughly the same size. A first criterion was the location of the region within the country. In addition, attention was paid to whether a region was considered a coherent entity or not. Thirdly, we looked at the types of nature that could be found in the considered regions. Subsequently, the regions were judged on the number of discernable nature-related policies, to ensure that there were enough interesting developments. In addition, the regions had to contain one or more adjacent policy fields in order to be able to study the effects of adjacent arrangements on Dutch nature policy. Finally, the actors involved in the regions were taken into account, with a focus on their governmental or non-governmental status and their landownership.

Case selection criteria
Location
Regional coherence
Types of nature
Nature policies
Adjacent policy fields
Actor involvement
Landownership

Table 3.1: Case selection criteria

In the pre-assessment stage, it was discovered that the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, situated in the centre of the country, was considered a coherent region, even though it was situated in two provinces (Utrecht and Noord-Holland, see section 4.1.1). In addition, the region, constituting mainly of forests, had many nature policy initiatives. For example, it was demarcated as a nature core *Ecologische Hoofdstructuur* (Ecological Main Structure:

EHS) area, it had a National Park in the south, an extensive de-fragmentation project in the middle and a separate program for the north. In addition, there was a comprehensive vision for the entire region. Furthermore, it was evident that forestry and military use were important additional policy fields. Also, it was striking to see that, besides several governmental actors (especially the province of Utrecht), non-governmental actors played an important role. Private owners had taken the lead in the National Park, whereas nature conservation organizations (NCOs) had been involved in the latter three policy initiatives. Finally, the region was mainly owned by NCOs, *Staatsbosbeheer* (the State Forest Service: SBB), the Ministry of Defence and private owners (see Table 3.2).

On the other hand, Midden-Brabant, situated in the south of the country, turned out not to be as coherent as the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. Many other names were circulating, for example *de Meierij* or *Groene Woud*, and the boundaries of the region were disputed. However, the region, which mainly constituted heath lands, forests, swamps, peat areas situated among a traditional man-made landscape, did provide ample nature-policy-related initiatives. For example, the region was designated as a National Landscape, parts were demarcated as EHS and Natura 2000 areas, it had had a *Waardevol Cultuurlandschap* (Valuable Man-made Landscape: WCL) and LEADER + status in the past, and included many other *Geïntegreerd Gebiedsgericht Beleid* (Integrated Area Specific Policies: GGB) initiatives. Furthermore, it was discovered that agriculture, in particular, was an important adjacent policy field, having dominated the region throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, it was evident that the province of Noord-Brabant and especially the municipality of Boxtel were important actors, and many NCOs and agrarians were also active. Finally, NCOs and SBB mainly owned land in the centre of the region. Around that, most of the land was still owned by agrarians (see Table 3.2).

Selection criteria	Utrechtse Heuvelrug	Midden-Brabant
Location	Centre of the country	South of the country
Regional coherence	High	Low
Types of nature	Forests	Heath land, forest, swamp, peat

Selection criteria	Utrechtse Heuvelrug	Midden-Brabant
Nature policies	EHS, National Park, defragmentation project, northern program, coherent vision	National Landscape, EHS, Natura 2000, WCL, LEADER, GGB
Adjacent policy fields	Forestry, military use	Agriculture
Actor involvement	Province, NCOs, private owners	Province, Boxtel, NCOs, agrarians
Landownership	SBB, NCOs, private owners, Ministry of Defence	SBB, NCOs, agrarians

Table 3.2: Case selection criteria applied to the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant

3.3 Studying change: a diachronic–synchronic analysis

In Chapters 1 and 2 it was explained that a relatively long time span would have to be studied to adequately address the governance puzzle. Such an approach to a case analysis is often referred to as *longitudinal* (George and Bennett, 2005). Hay (2002) argues that a longitudinal case study calls for either a *synchronic* or a *diachronic* approach. The former introduces the "snapshot" metaphor; a picture of a process is taken at a certain point in time. This picture is then equated with what happens in an entire period. The latter approach emphasizes the entire change process and requires an empirical investigation of the developmental path and the pace of change. A diachronic analysis is the metaphorical equivalent of a video panning shot that follows the motion of the object in question.

Both approaches are adopted in this thesis. It can be argued that, to understand how and why governance shifts over time in stabilizing and changing nature policy arrangements, it is very important to emphasize the entire process. This calls for a diachronic approach. However, at the same time, some measuring points are needed, moments in time at which it is necessary to ascertain what mode or modes of governance are manifest. This requires an element of the synchronic approach. To stick with the metaphorical terminology: this thesis aims at creating a video, but when it is being watched afterwards, this video should be paused at several points to characterize the situation at that moment in time.

Therefore, the case analyses in Chapters 4 and 5 are compartmentalized into four successive periods. The demarcation of these periods is further elaborated in said chapters, but they follow a roughly similar pattern. It is important to point out that these periods are derived from the empirical chapters in an iterative way; they have not been established beforehand. The first period commences in the early 1970s, when the government more explicitly engages in nature policy (see section 1.1.2). The second period roughly deals with the first six or seven years of the 1990s, covering a sudden rush of government attention to nature policy. The third period commences after that, generally covering the late 1990s and early 2000s, when new integral and comprehensive initiatives appear. The fourth period continues until July 2008, at which time it was no longer feasible to add new data to this research.

There are thus five different measuring points (in the early 1970s, in 1990, in the mid/late 1990s, in the early 2000s and in 2008), representing a starting point, a finish and three linking pins situated in between. Note that the boundaries between the periods are quite broad, i.e. not determined on the basis of one day (for example 27 April 1990) but on the basis of a certain year (for example 1990) or even a cluster of years (i.e. the early 1990s). This implies that the turning points should be regarded rather as turning trajectories. For each period, relevant nature policy developments are outlined. These are subsequently characterized in terms of the PAA. This results in an overview of arrangements evident at five points in time, and the changes in between these points in time are elaborated as well. In Chapter 6, these arrangements and changes are characterized in terms of the four ideal typical governance modes. This results in a fivefold governance shift pattern (see Figure 3.2) that can be used to address the governance puzzle.

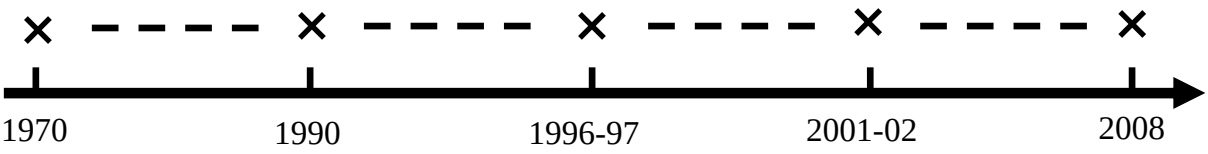

Figure 3.2: Measuring points for the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant cases

3.4 Data collection

In this section, attention is paid to the data acquired for the case analyses. First of all, a description is given of the sources used and how access to these sources was gained. Subsequently, the process of collecting and processing these data is outlined.

3.4.1 Sources and techniques

In a case study, generally three kinds of techniques can be used to gain access to three types of information (Verschuren and Doorewaard, 2001; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). First of all, with in-depth interviews, access is gained to the ideas and memories of people that have been involved in the case in question. Secondly, by carrying out a document analysis, a researcher can tap into the contents of relevant plans, memos, reports, etc. Thirdly, through observation, an investigator can interpret the interactions of relevant actors, for example by observing a stakeholder meeting. In this thesis, all three of these techniques have been used. Through this process of so-called data triangulation (Yin, 1994), the relatively large variety of information gathered for this research increases the internal validity of this study.

According to Verschuren and Doorewaard (2001), in an in-depth interview, the people questioned can be regarded as informants or as respondents. In the former case, they provide information about a certain phenomenon; in the latter case, they are asked for an opinion about said phenomenon. In this thesis, from now on the latter term will be used, since information provided by an interviewee will always be coloured by this person's opinion. The respondents were selected through the snowball method (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, see section 3.4.2). For each case, a key player was approached first. By asking this respondent to suggest additional names, other relevant respondents were found. This way, a representative list was made, covering all respondents that were considered relevant (see Annex III).

The interviews with these respondents were carried out in two sessions (see section 3.4.2), in a semi-structured way, based on a so-called interview guide, a topic list comprised of several open questions (Verschuren and Doorewaard, 2001). Because it had already been decided at an early stage that the PAA would be used as the analytical

framework, the interview guide was structured in terms of the four PAA dimensions, although no explicit reference was made to the PAA terminology because of its rather abstract policy science connotation. All interviews took place at a venue selected by the respondent and were taped with an MP3 recorder. The length of the interviews varied from one hour to two and a half hours. Subsequently, each interview was transcribed and sent back to the respondent in question, with an explicit request for a reaction. Some respondents replied with comments, others claimed that they had nothing to add and again others, albeit a relatively small number, did not reply at all. In such a case, it was assumed that they agreed with the transcript in question.

The documents that were perused related to information on the selected regions, or on national and/or international processes and/or events that affected these regions. These documents also were interpreted in terms of the PAA. They comprised policy plans, vision documents, internal memos, transcripts of meetings, advisory reports, scientific publications, statistical data, promotion material, annual reports, newspaper clippings, letters and website articles. Access to these documents was gained by using the search engines and libraries of Wageningen University, Radboud University Nijmegen and Utrecht University, the internet in general (and more specifically the websites of the actors involved in the cases) and the provincial archives in Den Bosch and Utrecht. In addition, relevant documents were occasionally presented by helpful respondents who sometimes kept a personal library on relevant policy processes.

Compared with the other two techniques, observation was used to a relatively limited extent. The main reason for this was that too extensive an application of the observation strategy would have increased the risk of overvaluing the present while undervaluing the past. It seemed improper to use observation extensively as a technique during the last few years of the studied time span when, at the same time, this technique could not be applied to the years that had already passed. Therefore, for each case, only one observation was orchestrated. In the utrechtse Heuvelrug, a field trip was attended in April 2006. Here, the main policymakers in the south of the region were observed as they participated in a discussion on nature management styles in the National Park. In Midden-Brabant, an important meeting of policymakers was attended in June 2008. In this meeting, the merging of several regional boards was discussed. This provided important

confirmatory information about the roles and positions of the main players in Midden-Brabant nature policy.

3.4.2 Gathering and processing data: two phases

The abovementioned data were gathered and processed in two main phases. The first phase took place from November 2005 (when the GoFOR pre-assessment commenced) to February 2007 (with the conclusion of the GoFOR main assessment). As already mentioned in section 3.2.2, the cases were selected in the last months of 2005. For both the Midden-Brabant and Utrechtse Heuvelrug cases, one in-depth interview with a key respondent was held, in both cases an official of the provincial nature department, responsible for provincial nature policy in the respective regions. In addition, several basic policy plans were collected and the websites of the main landowners were consulted.

After the GoFOR pre-assessment, the main assessment commenced. From this moment on, more documents about the two regions were gathered, and the variety was increased as well. In addition, a first interview session was held, from April to June 2006. To find respondents for this session, in a new interview, the key respondent that had been questioned before was asked for additional information and for the names of other potential respondents. Eventually, this resulted in 14 interviews for each case, i.e. 28 in total (see Annex III).

Based on the gathered documents and interview transcripts, the GoFOR main assessment report was written. In this report, the PAA terminology was not explicitly used (see Arnouts et al, 2007). As outlined in section 3.2.2, the case report was discussed with the members of the GoFOR National Advisory Panel, who generally confirmed the described developments and the main conclusions. The Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant main assessment reports were eventually presented, discussed and approved in a GoFOR Workshop in Budapest in February 2007.

After the conclusion of the GoFOR main assessment, the incentives behind this PhD thesis were elaborated, a process that had already started but now could be intensified. Consequently, the months of April, May, June, July, August and September of 2007 were spent on the first versions of Chapters 1 and 2. In this period, it was decided to

complement the PAA with Kooiman's ideas, inspired by the governance puzzle that was beginning to take shape. The first versions of the ideal typical governance modes (three at that time, not yet four) were confronted with the case reports as presented in the GoFOR main assessment.

In February 2008, the second phase of data gathering and processing commenced. It became apparent that to solve the governance puzzle additional data were required. On the basis of the gaps in the re-written main assessment report, the search for relevant documents was renewed. More importantly, in a new session of interviews, several of the respondents questioned in the first phase were confronted with these gaps. Some extra interviews were dedicated to the 1970s and 1980s, and to adjacent policy fields such as forestry, agriculture and recreation. Therefore, besides the already familiar respondents, several new ones were contacted. This resulted in an additional 14 interviews for each of the cases, i.e. another round of 28 interviews (see Annex III). These interviews, and the search for new relevant documents, were carried out in April, May, June and July 2008. The newly gathered data were embedded into the case chapters from August to October 2008. Throughout 2009 and 2010, in an iterative fashion, the seven chapters of this thesis were rewritten and attuned to one another.

This means that, overall, the case chapters are based on 56 interviews. In addition, about 100 documents were consulted, all of them included in the bibliography at the end of this thesis. In the empirical chapters (4 and 5), these documents are referred to when relevant. Quotes from both documents and interviews are used to illustrate the points made. All the quotes in Chapters 4 and 5 have been translated by myself.

3.5 Rephrased research questions

In section 1.3, the research questions at the core of this study were presented:

- How have governmental and non-governmental actors over time been involved in shaping Dutch nature policy?

- Which types of governance are visible over time in this shaping process?

- If visible, why do changes in these types of governance occur?

- To what extent do these changes tally with the respective claims of a shift in governance, a reversed shift in governance or a non-shift in governance?

Examination of these research questions in the light of the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 and the methodological account outlined in this chapter reveals several adjustments and additions that need to be applied. Research question 1 is rephrased as follows:

1. Which nature policy arrangements institutionalize in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant from the early 1970s until the late 2000s?

The question now addresses the stabilization of nature policy arrangements in the two cases, covering the selected time span. This question is partially answered in Chapter 4 (which covers the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case) and in Chapter 5 (where the Midden-Brabant case is addressed). Research question 2 then becomes:

2. Which modes of governance appear over time in these nature policy arrangements?

The question connects the four ideal typical governance modes to the nature policy arrangements constructed in Chapters 4 and 5. This question is addressed in section 6.1 (for the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case) and 6.2 (for the Midden-Brabant case). Research question 3, addressing governance shifts, now reads:

3. Which change factors are responsible for the shifts that appear over time in these modes of governance?

This question distinguishes the five factors elaborated in section 2.3.2. Research question 3 is also addressed in sections 6.1 and 6.2, again based on Chapters 4 and 5. To

adequately tackle the final research question, an additional question should be inserted first, dealing with the comparative character of the case analyses:

4. Which differences and similarities are visible between the governance modes and shifts that have appeared in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant, and why have these occurred?

By answering this question, the governance shifts that appear in the two cases are compared with one another. This is discussed in section 6.3. On the basis of this comparison, the final research question (which now becomes question 5 instead of 4) can be addressed. This final question is rephrased as follows:

5. What does the occurrence of these differences and similarities mean for the general manifestation of governance modes and shifts in Dutch nature policy?

Chapter 4 Utrechtse Heuvelrug

This first empirical chapter deals with the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case. First of all, in section 4.1 the case is introduced. In sections 4.2 to 4.5, the main developments are discussed, in four successive periods. Per period, these developments are characterized as changing and stabilizing nature policy arrangements in terms of the policy arrangement approach (PAA). An analysis in terms of governance follows in Chapter 6 (section 6.1). This chapter partially answers the first research question:

1. Which nature policy arrangements institutionalize in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant from the early 1970s until the late 2000s?

4.1 Introduction

In this section, first of all some background information and the map of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug are presented (section 4.1.1). In addition, the four successive periods and the empirical focus of this chapter are outlined (section 4.1.2).

4.1.1 The Utrechtse Heuvelrug: a geographical and historical sketch

The Utrechtse Heuvelrug (from now on also referred to as Heuvelrug) is a region of about 20,000 hectares, located east of the city of Utrecht. It stretches from the city of Huizen in the north to the city of Rhenen in the south and is 55 kilometres long and 3 to 15 kilometres wide. In the relatively flat country of the Netherlands, it is a unique rolling landscape, a result of the pushing force of a large glacier in the penultimate ice age. When human inhabitation and the use of cattle increased, the forested area changed mainly into heath land and drift sand. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Utrechtse Heuvelrug was reforested, though occasional drift sand and heath land areas were left (Buro Hemmen, 2003). A map of the region is presented in Figure 4.1.

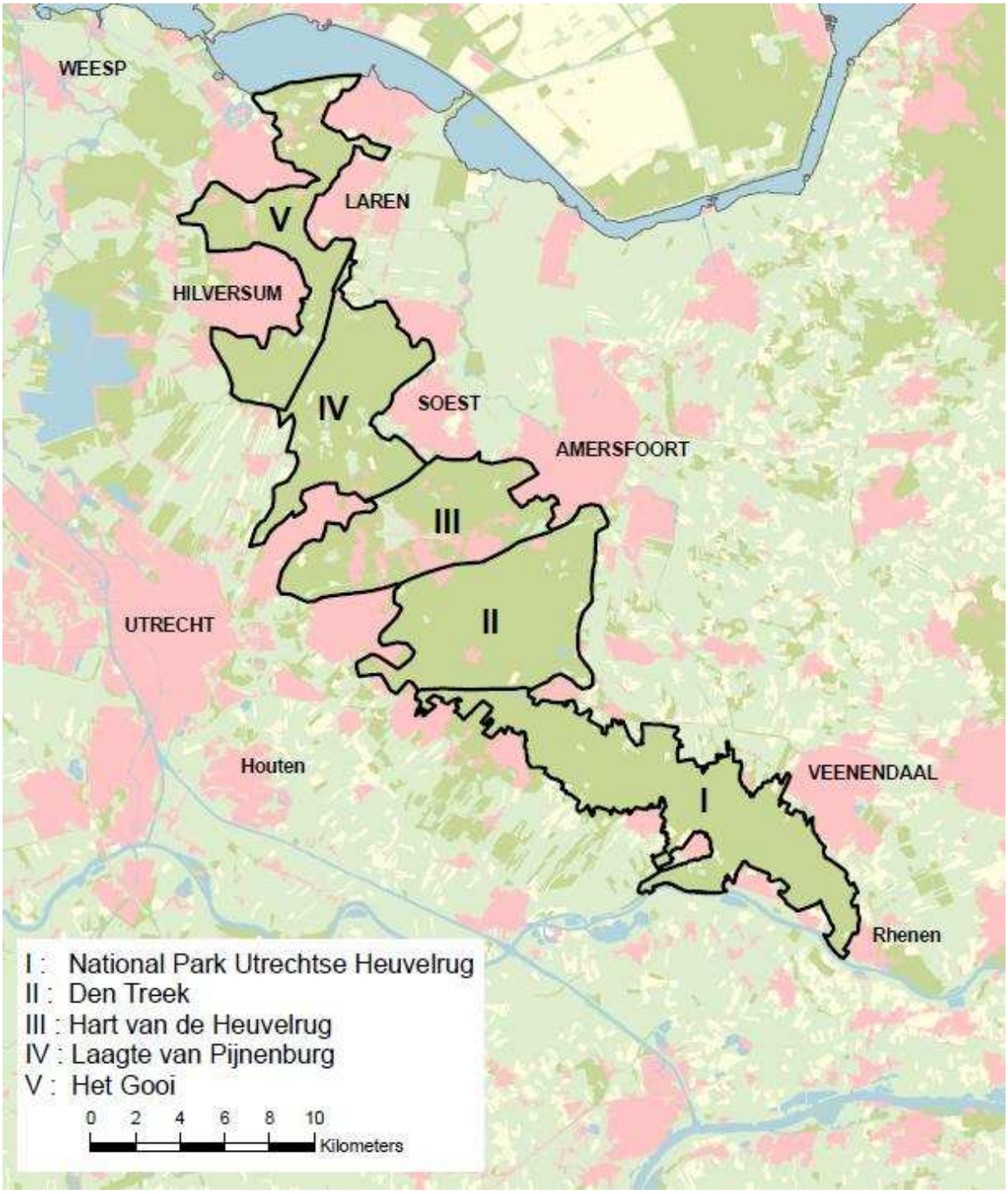

Figure 4.1: The Utrechtse Heuvelrug region and its five sub-regions

The Utrechtse Heuvelrug can be roughly divided into five sub-regions. The National Park is located in the south, below the A12 highway (see Figure 4.1). This area lies in the

municipalities of Utrechtse Heuvelrug (the result of a recent merging of Amerongen, Driebergen-Rijsenburg, Doorn, Leersum and Maarn), Veenendaal, Woudenberg and Rhenen. Nowadays, almost half of the area is owned by private estate owners, but this proportion used to be significantly larger (see section 4.2.2). The rest is divided between *Staatsbosbeheer* (the State Forest Service: SBB) and the nature conservation organization (NCO) *Het Utrechts Landschap* (The Utrecht Landscape: HUL) – one of the Provincial Landscapes (see section 1.1.2) – and *Natuurmonumenten* (Nature Monuments: NM) (Buro Hemmen, 2003).

North of the National Park, in between the A12 and A28 highways, there is an area that is as yet relatively underdeveloped in terms of nature policy; it is situated in the municipalities of Zeist, Utrechtse Heuvelrug, Woudenberg and Leusden. Unlike the other sub-regions, this area does not yet bear the name of a main policy initiative, principally because it mainly constitutes a very extensive privately owned estate (*Den Treek*, covering about 2,200 hectares, see Figure 4.1). SBB also owns a considerable amount of land in the area.

Above the A28 highway, the area known as *Hart van de Heuvelrug* (Heart of the Heuvelrug) is located (Stichting HUL, 2001, see Figure 4.1). This central part of the Heuvelrug falls under the municipalities of Amersfoort, De Bilt, Leusden, Soest and Zeist. The area is owned by HUL, several large healthcare institutions and the Ministry of Defence (which has practice ranges and a military airport there). In the north, the area is demarcated by the railroad from Utrecht to Soest and by the provincial road between these cities (the N234).

Right above the *Hart van de Heuvelrug* area, the *Laagte van Pijnenburg* (Valley of Pijnenburg) is situated, located in the municipalities of Baarn, Soest, Bilthoven and Hilversum. This area is largely owned by private estate owners and SBB, and HUL and NM have relatively small landholdings here. For a long time, it is not included in any particular nature policy. Only in 2005 is it incorporated in an initiative orchestrated by HUL (Stichting HUL, 2005).

Finally, the upper part of the Heuvelrug is known as the *Noordelijke Heuvelrug*. Unlike the other four sub-regions, this area is entirely situated in the province of Noord-Holland. The provincial border separates it from the *Laagte van Pijnenburg*. The sub-

region is also referred to as *het Gooi*. The natural areas are owned by one NCO, *Het Goois Natuurreservaat* (The Gooi Nature Reserve: HGNR), and are situated in the municipalities of Blaricum, Bussum, Hilversum, Huizen, Laren and Naarden (Stichting HGNR, 2003).

4.1.2 Demarcating the time span and the empirical focus

As outlined in section 3.3, the case analysis comprises four successive periods demarcated by so-called turning trajectories. The first period begins in 1970, when nature policy still has a relatively subdued character. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, however, nature policy stabilizes significantly. The second period commences in 1990 when, on the national level, the *Natuurbeleidsplan* (Nature Policy Plan: NBP) and subsequent *Ecologische Hoofdstructuur* (Ecological Main Structure: EHS) are introduced (see section 1.1.2). The third period begins in 1996, when in the south of the region a form of cooperation arises that eventually leads to the establishment of a National Park there. The fourth period commences in 2001, with the launch of the *Hart van de Heuvelrug* initiative in the centre of the Heuvelrug.

Furthermore, although the governance of nature is at the core of this thesis, relevant developments in other policy fields are also taken into account. Such fields have been conceptualized as adjacent arrangements that can affect nature policy and governance shifts. One adjacent policy field, forestry, is dealt with in this particular case. In the 1970s and 1980s in particular, developments in this sector are important for what happens in terms of nature policy.

Other adjacent policy fields are not dealt with as explicitly, because their effect on Heuvelrug nature policy is not as great. They are now briefly highlighted. First of all, parts of the Heuvelrug have a military function. After the Second World War, the Ministry of Defence develops several practice ranges, mainly in the central part of the Heuvelrug. The military airport close to Soesterberg, covering about 500 hectares, is modernized. The Ministry of Defence has its own nature management organization, *Dienst Vastgoed Defensie* (Defence Real Estate Agency: DVD), to take care for its own land.

Other policy fields claim a smaller amount of land, but involve expansion activities that infringe on the region. First of all, municipalities try to expand their towns and villages. The Heuvelrug is a very popular living and working environment, and consequently many houses and business establishments have been built there over the years (Reeskamp, 1971; Provinciaal Bestuur van Utrecht, 1965). The effect of such expansions has been greatest in the centre of the area, where the large municipalities of Utrecht, Zeist and Soest are growing towards each other.

In addition, over the years a lot of infrastructure has been constructed. Railways are improved and expanded (for example those from Utrecht to Arnhem and from Utrecht to Soest and Amersfoort), and several large provincial roads are built (for example the N224 from Woudenberg to Zeist, the N225 from Driebergen to Rhenen and the N237 from Utrecht to Amersfoort). Moreover, the A12 and A27 highways have been created. The extension of the A27 highway through the estate of *Amelisweerd* is infamous, and met with a lot of resistance in the 1960s and early 1970s, but was constructed nevertheless (De Soet, 1969).

Furthermore, some large healthcare institutions have been drawn to the Heuvelrug, lured there by the green character, quietness and vicinity to the heavily urbanized west of the country. They are mainly located in the centre of the Heuvelrug. Large examples include *Dennendaal* and *Sanatorium* close to Zeist, *Sterrenberg* near Huis ter Heide and *Willem Arntzhoeve* near Den Dolder (Buro Maas, 1985).

The Heuvelrug encompasses also many recreational areas and campsites, for example *Laag Kanje* near Maarn and *het Grote Bos* and *Doornse Gat* close to Doorn (Garthoff, 1964). Over time, recreational entrepreneurs, organized in *Vereniging van Recreatieondernemers Nederland* (Society for Dutch Recreational Entrepreneurs: RECRON), have tried to expand their enterprises, but this has become more difficult (Van Vuurde and Van Wolfswinkel, 2007). In addition, to guide the increasing stream of one-day visitors, the *Vereniging Utrechtse Heuvelrug* (Association for the Utrechtse Heuvelrug) was created in 1959. In 1975 it was subsumed into the *Recreatieschap*. This latter organization is responsible for maintaining general recreational facilities (Bergmans and Hokwerda, 1997).

Finally, there is some small-scale agricultural activity on the Heuvelrug. As outlined above, the Heuvelrug consists mainly of forests, but in between these forests there are patches of agricultural land. Because these patches are relatively small, the effect of agricultural activities on the Heuvelrug is only very marginal. Consequently, agrarians or agricultural interest organizations play only a limited role (Buro Hemmen, 2003).

4.2 Period I (1970-1990): nature out of the shadow of forestry

In this period, eventually a stable nature policy arrangement institutionalizes, closely related to the parallel decline of an adjacent forestry arrangement. Section 4.2.1 sketches the situation at the start of this period. Section 4.2.2 focuses on the main developments in the 1970s and 1980s. In section 4.2.3, both these developments and their starting and finishing point are analysed in terms of the PAA.

4.2.1 Setting the scene: the Utrechtse Heuvelrug in the early 1970s

In the early 1970s, several actors are active in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. A rough division can be made between those who focus on preserving the natural qualities of the Heuvelrug forests and those who opt for utilizing these forests for economic purposes. Interaction between the different actors is relatively limited.

Nature policy: NCOs purchase some natural areas with government money

At the start of the first period, Heuvelrug nature policy is carried out mainly by two non-governmental NCOs. These actors value the natural qualities of the Heuvelrug forests. They argue that these values should be kept safe and that this can best be realized by purchasing separate forested areas. After purchase, these areas are managed to protect and strengthen their natural qualities. At the start of the period, both NCOs have long since been carrying out this twofold form of nature policy and therefore already possess some land on the Heuvelrug.

The first NCO is HUL (see section 4.1.1), founded in 1927. This actor owns for example the *Ridderoordse Bos* (approximately 250 hectares), acquired in 1933 and

situated in the north. In addition, it owns areas close to Lage Vuursche and Bilthoven in the centre of the region, and *Moersbergen* (approximately 200 hectares) in the south, acquired in the 1950s and 1960s. HUL operates only within the territorial boundaries of the province of Utrecht (Provincie Utrecht, 1984).

The second NCO is NM. As already mentioned in section 1.1.2, NM is a nationally organized non-governmental actor; this means that its focus is broader than just the province of Utrecht, or the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. On the Heuvelrug, it owns the *Kaapsche Bossen* (approximately 4,425 hectares), situated in the south, between the villages of Doorn and Maarn. This area is acquired in 1957. In other parts of the Heuvelrug, NM owns only some small patches of land (PPD Utrecht, 1984b).

The activities of HUL and NM are partially enabled by wealthy beneficiaries who donate land or money. A more substantial contribution, however, comes from the government. Both NCOs receive subsidies to cover their management and administrative expenses. Moreover, from the mid 1960s onwards, there is an agreement between NM, HUL, the *Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk* (Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work: CRM) and the province of Utrecht, arranging the reimbursement of the NM and HUL purchases with government funds provided by the province and CRM, on a fifty-fifty basis.

Despite this agreement, generally only a small amount of land is bought. Respondents claim that the purchase of natural areas is not a government priority; the government only sanctions the purchase of land that is explicitly offered for sale, therefore taking a reactive stance. The same respondents state that the reimbursement agreement is not only installed to protect nature; it is also meant to prevent the Heuvelrug being bought by people that want to start all kinds of business activities (Provinciaal Bestuur van Utrecht, 1965).

Forestry as a major economic activity

The relatively limited attention paid to nature policy is closely related to the important position of forestry. In the early 1970s, the forests on the Heuvelrug generally have a monoculture composition and are managed to increase their economic value. Harvesting takes place through clear cut, i.e. the removal of a large patch of forest in one stroke, to be

replanted afterwards. All forest owners are engaged in this, even the NCOs NM and HUL, who use their logging activities to supplement their not very extensive budgets.

The main forester is SBB (see section 1.1.2), a large government organization that employs many people in the field and possesses a considerable amount of forestry-related expertise. Officially, SBB also has a nature protection objective, but in practice it does not really prioritize this. On the Heuvelrug, there are four districts, i.e. de Vuursche (in the north of the area, about 1,200 hectares), Austerlitz (in the middle of the Heuvelrug, 835 hectares), and Leersum and Amerongen (both in the south of the area, respectively 500 and 1,200 hectares). Each district has its own foresters, supervised by a Heuvelrug coordinator. Like NM and HUL, SBB is also involved in the purchase of forests that are offered for sale.

SBB belongs to the *Ministerie van Landbouw en Visserij* (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: L&V), which pays the SBB's operating and purchase costs. L&V guides SBB's logging activities with forest policy plans such as the *Nota Bosbouw en Bosbouwbeleid in Nederland* (Memorandum on Forestry and Forest Policy in the Netherlands) issued in 1969 (Veenman et al, 2009). In this policy plan, the ministry calls for an increase in Dutch self-sufficiency in timber consumption. Consequently, L&V provides the *bosbijdrageregeling*, a subsidy that compensates forest owners for their management activities and encourages them to increase their production. L&V also subsidizes replanting activities, even though this is paid for by the *Ministerie van Economische Zaken* (Ministry of Economic Affairs: EZ).

Private estate owners form another important group of actors engaged in forestry (Provincie Utrecht, 1989). Examples of large privately owned estates are *Pijnenburg* (730 hectares), *Den Treek* (around 2,000 hectares), *Maarsbergen* and *Prattenburg* (each around 400 hectares). Most private owners have an emotional connection to their estates, which often have been in the family for generations. They use their estates for leisure activities such as hunting. Timber production is a main source of income, but the private owners also depend on the aforementioned government subsidies and on the fiscal advantages received in exchange for opening the estates to the general public, arranged in the *Natuurschoonwet* (Beauty of Nature Act: NSW). This dependency on the government is

heartily disliked, because, in general, private owners prefer to act as independently as possible (Reeskamp, 1971).

Furthermore, there are three other groups of actors that need to be briefly mentioned. Firstly, several Heuvelrug municipalities, especially Zeist and Soest, own some forests (in total 1,500 hectares, Reeskamp, 1971). Secondly, the province of Utrecht addresses forest policy in its spatial plans (Provinciaal Bestuur van Utrecht, 1965). Thirdly, there is the *Bosschap*, the main forestry-related interest organization. However, several respondents point out that these actors have played only a limited role in Heuvelrug forest policy.

Little interaction: forest owners keep to their lands, purchases occur separately

In the early 1970s, there is little interaction between the various forest owners. The private owners and the NCOs are not really interested in what is happening in any forest but their own. The only obvious activities are bilateral meetings between individual private owners and SBB, in which the latter advises the former on forest management matters. In addition, SBB and L&V control whether the forest owners (and also the NCOs) properly carry out their forest management obligations, in order to be eligible for the government management and replanting subsidies.

Nature-policy-related interactions are even scarcer. They are only evident when land is explicitly offered for sale, and this rarely occurs. When land is available, NM or HUL take action to acquire it, and discuss this with CRM and the province. CRM checks whether the NCOs have followed the right procedure. The provincial civil servants that attend these discussions generally follow CRM's lead in this. Several respondents point out that attempts undertaken by the NCOs to more explicitly engage the government in nature protection are to no avail.

It has already been mentioned that SBB also engages in purchase activities, but that it discusses this separately with L&V. In the late 1960s, however, SBB, NM and HUL got together to establish a rudimentary spheres of influence map (Provincie Utrecht, 1984), an agreement in which they decided to each focus on those areas nearest to the territories they already owned. They did so to avoid targeting the same areas and consequently driving up land prices. It was determined that HUL would be first in line to buy

Heuvelrug lands, with SBB in second place. NM's sphere of influence was located elsewhere in the province.

4.2.2 From 1970 to 1990: trying to purchase the entire Heuvelrug

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the existing but rather subdued form of nature policy undergoes an important boost, enabled by the fact that many privately owned estates are offered for sale. Moreover, the government begins to play a more proactive role in Heuvelrug nature policy. All this is closely related to the parallel decline of the forestry sector.

A schism in forest management

In the mid 1970s, some first signs appear of cooperation between the various forest owners. Private owners, the municipalities, and HUL and NM found a *bosgroep* (forest group) to clear up the damage caused by two large storms that hit Heuvelrug in 1972 and 1973. Eventually, through this group, the participating forest owners engage in joint harvesting and wood-selling activities, and discuss forest management issues. The group is financially supported by the Ministry of L&V (Provincie Utrecht, 1989). SBB does not join, arguing that it has its own timber-selling network, and logging expertise and capacity.

In addition, the two storms have a second and less bonding effect on Heuvelrug forestry. Sparked by the heavy damage caused by the storms, a national debate commences on the general vulnerability of Dutch forests, and whether incompetent forest management is to blame for this (Van der Windt, 1995). Increasingly, voices are heard demanding a change in the existing management style. Over time, the vulnerability argument is complemented with the argument that the natural qualities of forests should be improved, and this requires a different forest management style. This latter argument in turn derives from an increase in the attention paid by societal and political actors to nature and the environment.

The debate eventually leads to a schism in forest management style. SBB, the leading Heuvelrug forester, is not inclined to change its style, nor to turn its attention to

nature protection. Therefore, when the Ministry of CRM complements SBB with so-called nature consultants, the Heuvelrug foresters act like nothing has changed and ignore the advice of their new colleagues. One respondent, an SBB forester at that time, argues that *"eventually, the men who marked the trees for harvesting decided what happened. And these men were still old school foresters, and they refused to change their ways"*. The private owners, depending mainly on SBB's forest management expertise and advice, follow a similar course.

Contrary to SBB, however, the NCO HUL does start to work with a new forest management style, i.e. *Geïntegreerd Bosbeheer* (Integrated Forest Management: GB), which is co-developed by a HUL employee. GB is based on the principle of creating gaps in the forest, while depending on natural rejuvenation to partially fill these gaps, which will allegedly result in a higher natural quality, less vulnerability and a more attractive forest. Initially, NM does not follow HUL's lead, but throughout the 1980s it follows suit. The schism in forest management styles between NM and HUL on the one hand, and SBB and the private owners on the other, remains in evidence throughout the entire period.

The rise of the purchase deliberations

At the same time, towards the mid 1970s the first signs of more explicit government engagement in Heuvelrug nature policy begin to show. An important event in this context is the establishment of the *Provinciale Natuurdienst* (Provincial Nature Department: PND) in 1974, driven, according to one respondent, by the aforementioned general increase in societal and political attention given to nature and the environment. Like HUL and NM, the PND takes the stance that buying natural areas is the best way to protect nature. It therefore begins to internally promote the purchase of such areas, emphasizing amongst other things the value of the Heuvelrug.

The PND's internal lobbying finds fertile ground. In 1977, it leads to the issuing of the *Plan Aankoopwaardige Gebieden* (Plan for Purchase-Worthy Areas: PAG), in which the PND provides an overview of areas that are to be bought; large parts of the Heuvelrug are incorporated (Provincie Utrecht, 1977a,b). Moreover, when a new provincial spatial plan is issued in 1978, the PAG is mentioned as a new provincial policy initiative, with very ambitious targets. No less than 20,000 hectares of privately owned

land are to be purchased (Provincie Utrecht, 1978). This figure represents the purchase target for the entire province of Utrecht, not just the Heuvelrug, but the plan indicates that a large portion of these hectares is situated on the Heuvelrug.

Parallel with the issuing of these new policy plans, a group of actors starts to get together to further discuss the new purchase ambitions (Provincie Utrecht, 1984). This group constitutes NM, HUL and SBB representatives, PND civil servants, the CRM nature consultant, an L&V forestry consultant and a representative of the *Recreatieschap*, a recreational interest organization, although this latter actor only plays a marginal role. This means that SBB and L&V on the one hand, and NM, HUL and CRM on the other, no longer have their own meetings.

In the early 1980s, these purchase deliberations have become a regular phenomenon, taking place every few weeks. The state of the art in land availability is discussed, along with the plans of NM, HUL and SBB to buy these lands. The reimbursement agreement is maintained, so the province and the Ministry of CRM keep on funding the new purchases. HUL remains the most important candidate to buy Heuvelrug lands – a point emphasized when the spheres of influence map is further formalized (Provincie Utrecht, 1988). The fact that the Ministry of L&V takes over the responsibility for nature policy from CRM in 1982 (Van Kleef, 2004) does not change this way of doing things.

A good time for Heuvelrug nature policy, a tough time for the private owners

Several respondents argue that, although the purchase deliberations do not focus only on the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, this region very often is the subject of the discussions that are held. This is emphasized by a PND civil servant who, when contemplating the purchase ambitions, claims that *"it looked like we were trying to buy the entire Utrechtse Heuvelrug in those days"*.

This focus on the Heuvelrug is caused by a very significant increase in land availability, materializing from the mid 1970s. This increase is closely related to the predicament of many Heuvelrug private owners, who are seriously affected by the generally bad economic situation and more specifically by a falling demand for Dutch timber (Zevenbergen, 2003), with the result that their forestry activities are no longer

economically viable. As a consequence, many privately owned estates experience a change in ownership (Provincie Utrecht, 1989).

The forests that are offered for sale are mainly acquired by HUL (Stichting HUL, 2007). This means that this NCO manages to considerably increase its control over the Heuvelrug region and consequently is able to further strengthen its role in the purchase deliberations. Several respondents mention that HUL takes the lead when Heuvelrug purchases are discussed, mainly teaming up with the PND to convince *Gedeputeerde Staten* (Provincial Executive: GS) and CRM (later L&V) to provide the funds necessary to take action. SBB is also able to expand its territories, but not as significantly.

According to several respondents, the remaining private owners feel rather frustrated about this trend, for example venting this in *bosgroep* meetings. They claim that HUL and SBB are unjustly supported with government money to acquire lands that for generations have been in the hands of private owners. Moreover, the private owners resent not being seen as real nature managers. In turn, the NCOs claim that private owners cannot be trusted with the protection of natural values, because they lack the necessary expertise and because they have other priorities, such as forestry and hunting.

Mainly because of this latter point, the private owners are not involved in the purchase deliberations. However, according to a PND civil servant, another factor in their non-involvement is that the private owners are badly organized; they generally operate alone and do not have an overarching interest organization. The same civil servant argues that *"the pieces of the cake were divided between SBB, NM and HUL. The private owners were excluded; they were not seen as nature conservationists and were not able to build up a countervailing force"*.

Purchase deliberations continue despite the call for safeguarding

From the mid 1980s, the extensive purchase activities become increasingly criticized. Besides the private owners, who remain opposed and continue to resent their exclusion, members of the *Provinciale Staten* (Provincial Parliament: PS) and the *Provinciale Planologische Dienst* (Provincial Planning Department: PPD) start to attack the purchase policy. Their main argument is that the ambitions in the 1978 spatial plan are unrealistic and too expensive (Provincie Utrecht, 1984).

Pressurized by these actors, in 1984 the PND presents the *Nota Veiligstellingsbeleid Natuur en Landschap* (Memorandum on the Safeguarding of Nature and Landscape: NVNL, Provincie Utrecht, 1984). In this plan, the term purchasing is replaced with the broader concept of safeguarding. The PND states that *"lately, it has been stressed internally that the purchase policy should be placed in a broader context. […] Purchase is only one means of protecting natural areas […]. Partially because of financial reasons, reconsideration is desired"* (Provincie Utrecht, 1984, p.1).

Gradually, safeguarding is further emphasized. In 1988, a concept version of the *Plan Veiligstelling Gebieden* (Plan for the Safeguarding of Natural Areas: PVG) is issued. In this plan, the term safeguarding is elaborated, constituting several alternatives to purchase, for example nature protection through planning and through subsidizing nature management by private owners and agrarians (Provincie Utrecht, 1988). In the 1986 provincial spatial plan, safeguarding is also introduced. It is moreover evident that, in comparison to its 1978 predecessor, considerably less attention is paid to the purchase of natural areas (Provincie Utrecht, 1986).

However, several respondents argue that, despite this new official focus, the purchase deliberations continue unhindered. The PND and HUL keep on opting for new purchases, and GS and L&V keep on providing the necessary financial means. This continuing practice is possible because land availability remains high. Therefore, according to one provincial official, *"eventually, even though there sometimes were objections, all areas that were offered for sale were bought anyway"*. Many respondents especially acknowledge the role of the HUL director in this matter. One of them claims that *"the HUL director had an excellent feeling for buying land. As soon as an estate was offered for sale, he took action, visiting the owner, taking a GS member with him, convincing this official how important it was to buy the property"*.

Forest utilization further loses ground

Meanwhile, towards the late 1980s, the forestry sector continues to lose its prominence. As mentioned, the economic importance of forestry has been decreasing due to the falling demand for Dutch timber. On top of that (and partially because of this), the Ministry of L&V, having taken over the responsibility for nature protection from CRM in 1982, more

and more begins to regard forests as nature (Provincie Utrecht, 1984). One respondent states that *"you could tell that, towards the late 1980s, the ministry did not care so much about forest policy anymore. When a Heuvelrug forester quit his job, he was not replaced, or someone with a nature background took his place"*.

This new course is evident in several ways. For example, in the 1986 *Meerjarenplan Bosbouw* (Multi-year Plan on Forestry, Ministerie van L&V, 1986), L&V partially abandons its focus on self sufficiency. Moreover, it cancels its traditional subsidies and stops supporting *bosgroep* activities (Provincie Utrecht, 1989). Furthermore, in 1987, SBB is radically reorganized; it remains responsible only for practical forest management issues (Buis and Verkaik, 1999). The Heuvelrug districts are merged, accompanied by an extensive cut in personnel. In practice, this means that SBB loses its advisory capacity and abandons its proactive role in shaping Heuvelrug forest policy. Moreover, SBB has to adopt the GB principles, changing its forest management style. The private owners gradually follow suit.

In an attempt to stop this decline, in the second half of the 1980s the PPD and SBB try to give forestry a boost. They issue a Heuvelrug forestry study (PPD Utrecht, 1984a), translate this into a forestry section in the aforementioned new provincial spatial plan (Provincie Utrecht, 1986) and elaborate this section in the *Regionaal Bosplan Utrecht* (Regional Forestry Plan Utrecht) in 1989. However, the impact of their exploits is small. Respondents claim that the proposed measures are neither realistic nor supported sufficiently financially. Consequently, the initiative exists on paper only, and the forestry sector continues to decline.

4.2.3 The 1970s and 1980s: stabilization of a nature policy arrangement

In the first period, the unstable nature policy arrangement initially visible in the early 1970s stabilizes profoundly; this is closely related to increased provincial involvement and the parallel decline of the adjacent forestry arrangement.

The early 1970s: an unstable 'purchase arrangement'

In the early 1970s, there is already a Heuvelrug nature policy arrangement (for an overview see Table 4.1). In terms of discourse, this arrangement includes the concept of sectoral nature protection, to be realized through the strategy of purchasing forested areas that have important natural values. This so-called 'purchase arrangement' is propagated by two NCOs, the province and the Ministry of CRM. The latter two provide the former two with the financial resources needed to pursue the purchase strategy. Of the two NCOs, HUL has first call on buying nature areas on the Heuvelrug. These ways of doing things are embodied in two rules of the game: the spheres of influence map and the reimbursement agreement.

However, the 'purchase arrangement' is rather unstable. The nature-policy-related discourse is overshadowed by a competing economic forestry discourse that reflects the concept of self sufficiency in timber consumption and the strategies of monoculture planting and clear cut harvesting. This discourse is embedded in a stable adjacent forestry arrangement, mainly advocated by SBB, the Ministry of L&V and the private estate owners.

In addition, sparse interaction between the actors involved in Heuvelrug nature policy prevents the unstable nature policy arrangement from institutionalizing further. The few nature-policy-related meetings that occur focus on the purchase of available privately owned lands, discussed by the NCOs, CRM and the province. Because such meetings only occasionally take place, it is a step too far to claim that there is an explicit coalition between these actors. Moreover, the NCO HUL, which tries to operate as a policy entrepreneur, is only to a limited extent able to do so.

Furthermore, although HUL is the most important actor in Heuvelrug nature policy, it lacks the power to extensively apply its purchase strategy; it is too dependent on resources that are controlled by others. The lands that HUL intends to acquire are controlled by private estate owners. These actors, engaged in the adjacent forestry arrangement, are not inclined to sell their properties. Moreover, HUL is not able to mobilize government resources to change this situation, because the government only facilitates HUL activities when land becomes explicitly available. This reactive

government attitude is grounded in the fact that the government supports the adjacent forestry arrangement.

Therefore, the visible rules encapsulate the limited role of all actors except (to a certain extent) HUL. CRM and the province leave the responsibility for Heuvelrug nature policy to this latter NCO, while espousing a reactive role themselves. The other NCO, NM, focuses on other parts of the province and is not very prominently engaged either. All this is laid down in the reimbursement agreement and the spheres of influence map. Attempts undertaken by HUL to get the government more actively involved in Heuvelrug nature policy are to no avail.

Early 1970s	**Purchase arrangement (unstable)**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	Protection through purchase - nature protection - purchase individual natural areas
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	CRM, province (governmental); HUL, NM (non-governmental) - not visible - HUL (only marginally)
Power **- resources** **- influence**	HUL's purchase capacity is limited by private owners, CRM and province - budget (CRM and province); land (private owners) - HUL occasionally acquires small amounts of land
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Leave the lead to HUL - ad hoc involvement of CRM and province - with HUL, government facilitates

Table 4.1: Unstable purchase arrangement in the early 1970s

The 1970s and 1980s: rise of the 'purchase arrangement'

Throughout the remainder of the 1970s and the 1980s, the unstable 'purchase arrangement' begins to institutionalize very deeply. First of all, the protection through purchase discourse importantly gains in strength. This is closely related to the decline of the adjacent forestry arrangement in which the competing economic forestry discourse is embedded. This decline is in turn triggered by two shock events (large storms) and by two

socio-political trends (the decline of commercial forestry and the increased societal and political attention paid to nature and the environment). As a consequence, the government no longer supports the economic forestry discourse as extensively; this in turn further stimulates the decline of the adjacent forestry arrangement.

In addition, and related, interaction among the actors involved in Heuvelrug nature policy becomes much more common. In particular, the engagement of the government increases, mainly through the PND, a new provincial department introduced as a response to the aforementioned trend of increasing societal and political attention paid to nature and the environment. Both this actor and the NCO HUL start to operate as policy entrepreneurs, establishing a coalition in which NM, SBB, GS and CRM (later on L&V) are also involved. The regular purchase deliberations between the coalition members replace the ad hoc meetings of the early 1970s.

Furthermore, these changes are enabled by the availability of a large amount of land. The availability of this pivotal resource derives from the significant decline of the adjacent forestry arrangement that forces many private owners to sell their properties. The government provides the funding to acquire these properties. The NCO HUL therefore still depends on resources controlled by others, but it is increasingly able to mobilize these, assisted by the PND. The lobbying exploits of the HUL director, who over time creates and utilizes an extensive network of useful contacts, are especially important in this context. The private owners for two reasons do not have the power to prevent this from happening: they are weakened by the decline of the adjacent forestry arrangement and they are poorly organized.

Finally, new interaction rules appear that enable the increased engagement of several actors, especially the PND, in the purchase deliberations, alleviating the role of HUL, which no longer shoulders the responsibility for Heuvelrug nature policy on its own. Moreover, very ambitious purchase targets are set. The PND enshrines these new rules in government policy plans such as the 1978 spatial plan and the PAG. At the same time, a more informal access rule gives the new way of working together a tightly knit connotation; it determines that only coalition members can get involved. Actors such as PS, the PPD and the private owners are sidestepped. This prevents, for example, the installation of the alternative safeguarding strategy that is embedded in the 1988 PVG

concept. Meanwhile, the spheres of influence map and the reimbursement agreement also continue to exist.

An overview of the arrangement as it appears in the late 1980s is given in Table 4.2, and Figure 4.2 visualizes the institutionalization process, along with the main events. Note that the dashed nature of the top left textbox and of the left part of the horizontal arrow reflect the initial unstable character of the 'purchase arrangement'. Table 4.3 presents the way in which the various change factors discerned in Chapter 2 affect the aforementioned developments.

Late 1980s	**Purchase arrangement**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	Protection through purchase - nature protection - purchase individual natural areas; safeguarding (competing)
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	PND, L&V, SBB, GS (gov); HUL, NM (non-gov) - purchase deliberations - HUL and PND
Power **- resources** **- influence**	Purchase capacity of HUL and PND is large due to private owners' predicament - budget (GS and L&V); land (private owners); contacts (HUL) - HUL and PND regularly acquire large amounts of land
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Working together in a tightly knit fashion - only purchase deliberations coalition is involved - coalition members together orchestrate extensive purchases

Table 4.2: Stable purchase arrangement in the late 1980s

Change factors	**Manifestation**	**Effect**
Policy entrepreneurs	- HUL and PND	- install new coalition and rules; mobilize extensive government resources to apply purchase strategy
Policy initiatives	Not visible	Not visible
Adjacent arrangements	- adjacent forestry arrangement declines	- increased resource availability (land); government withdraws from forestry, engages in nature policy

Change factors	Manifestation	Effect
Socio-political trends	- increased attention for nature and environment - decline of commercial forestry	- appearance of new governmental actor (PND); decline of the adjacent forestry arrangement - decline of the adjacent forestry arrangement

Table 4.3: Manifest explanatory factors for policy change in the 1970s and 1980s

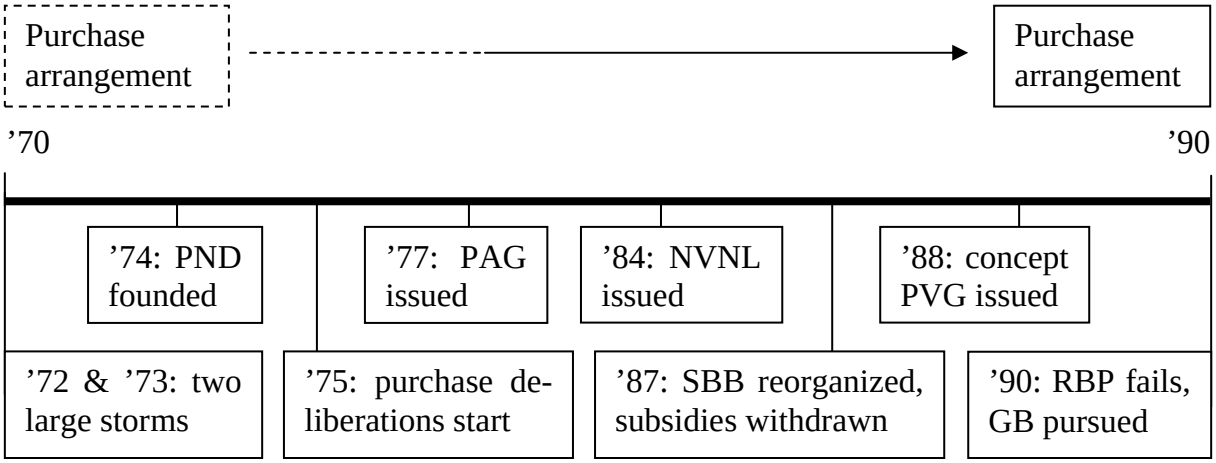

Figure 4.2: Timeline of the first period with a stabilizing arrangement and some important events

4.3 Period II (1990 - 1996): towards a low point in nature policy

In the second period, the 'purchase arrangement' destabilizes significantly. At the same time, the establishment of a National Park in the south of the Heuvelrug fails. Consequently, eventually a low point in Heuvelrug nature policy becomes apparent. The main developments are outlined in section 4.3.1, and an analysis in terms of the PAA is presented in section 4.3.2.

4.3.1 From 1990 to 1996: no more purchases, no National Park

In the first half of the 1990s, initially the purchase of Heuvelrug lands continues quite unhindered, not affected by the turmoil caused by the national introduction of the NBP

and EHS. Eventually, however, the purchases diminish. At the same time, an attempt to install a National Park in the south of the region fails, due to a clash between the government and the private owners.

National initiatives enter provincial nature policy

As mentioned in section 1.1.2, 1990 marks an important point in Dutch nature policy because of the introduction of the NBP and the subsequent EHS. In the aftermath of their introduction, it is agreed that the provinces will take a leading role in realizing the new policies. Within the province of Utrecht, however, this does not lead to significant reorganizations, because nature policy already has an important place, thanks to the exploits of the PND in the 1970s and 1980s. The PND immediately commences by elaborating a provincial version of the NBP.

Utrecht thus is the first province to finish its own provincial NBP. Early in 1992, the concept version of the *Beleidsplan Natuur en Landschap Utrecht* (Utrecht Nature and Landscape Policy Plan: BNLU, Provincie Utrecht, 1992a) is presented. This plan sketches a rudimentary map of the provincial EHS, which is to be elaborated in a new version of the PVG. This means that the formalization of the 1988 concept PVG is delayed (Provincie Utrecht, 1992a). In the BNLU it is argued that especially nature development areas and ecological connection zones will have to be purchased. For nature core areas, purchase is a last resort; first, other possibilities have to be pursued, such as stimulating nature management activities by private owners and farmers, and protecting natural qualities through a stricter planning regime.

The first version of the BNLU is severely criticized, however, mainly by agrarians, who are afraid that the creation of nature development areas and connection zones will hamper their activities (Provincie Utrecht, 1992b). As a result of their extensive lobbying activities, the importance of the BNLU is downgraded. The plan gets the status of a sectoral policy, instead of that of a more comprehensive provincial spearhead, as was the intention. A PND civil servant claims that *"the BNLU became a plan without any real strength; its main value was the clear formulation of sectoral provincial nature policy"*. This is also clear when in 1994 a new provincial spatial plan is issued. Here, the BNLU and the provincial EHS are only obliquely mentioned (Provincie Utrecht, 1994).

Not much is happening on the Heuvelrug: purchase deliberations continue

On the Heuvelrug, the turmoil caused by the introduction of the NBP and EHS passes by rather unnoticed. Several respondents claim that from the beginning it is clear that the Heuvelrug, perceived as an old and perennial forested area, should be designated as a nature core area. The PND and LNV discuss this with the other actors involved in the purchase deliberations, especially the NCOs and SBB, who are of a similar opinion. Therefore, the Heuvelrug EHS is more or less silently introduced, based on the existing PAG and concept PVG maps (Provincie Utrecht, 1977a, 1988, 1992a).

The only Heuvelrug-related controversy is the continuing grudge of the private owners, who want recognition and financial compensation for their nature management activities. However, despite the fact that the BNLU does emphasize nature management by private owners in nature core areas, several respondents claim that, in the early 1990s, the actors involved in the purchase deliberations do not take this option seriously. The PND for example states that *"to prevent fragmentation of nature management, the province does not aim at supporting actors other than SBB, NM and HUL in the management of natural areas"* (Provincie Utrecht, 1992b, p. 40).

The result is consequently that, overall, the new BNLU and subsequent introduction of the EHS do not change the existing Heuvelrug nature policy situation; the purchases and the purchase deliberations continue quite unhindered. This continuation of existing policy is exemplified by the fact that, at the beginning of the 1990s, HUL buys several relatively large areas on the Heuvelrug (Stichting HUL, 2007).

Another nationally orchestrated initiative appears: the VCNP comes to the fore

Meanwhile, in the early 1990s an initiative is taken to install a National Park on the Heuvelrug. Since as far back as the 1970s and 1980s, the region has been referred to as a potential National Park (Ministerie van CRM, 1975), but for a long time nothing has happened. A HUL representative claims that *"once in a while, somebody shouted that we needed a National Park, but these calls were never acted upon"*. In 1991, however, the *Voorlopige Commissie Nationale Parken* (Interim Committee on National Parks: VCNP) (see section 1.1.2) visits the Heuvelrug to investigate the possibilities of creating such a park (Provincie Utrecht, 1992a).

This government committee decides to focus on the south of the region (see section 4.1.1) because this is a uniform area, and because the A12 highway and the accompanying railroad are a formidable barrier. The VCNP bases its investigation on the guidelines set by the Ministry of LNV in the *Structuurschema Groene Ruimte* (Structure Plan for the Rural Area: SGR), issued in 1993. A PND civil servant states that his department was not involved in these investigations; he claims that *"the National Park mainly was a LNV story"*. Neither does the committee interact much with regional actors. Landowners who own more than 75 hectares are occasionally asked for an opinion, but these opinions are not really taken into account, as several of these landowners point out.

In 1995, the VCNP finishes its study. It argues that the south of the Heuvelrug definitely has the potential to be a National Park and publishes a conceptual advice on how best to establish one (VCNP, 1995a,b). Because the establishment of a National Park is a voluntary process, it requires the consent and cooperation of the various landowners, who need to sanction the VCNP proposal. Therefore, in March 1995, the VCNP organizes a formal consultation meeting, inviting the municipalities, provincial and LNV officials, a water board, representatives of the private owners, HUL, NM and SBB, the *Recreatieschap* and an agricultural representative.

The infamous consultation meeting: private owners reject the National Park

This consultation meeting, however, does not at all provide the result that the VCNP has anticipated. The private owners mainly are responsible for this. In the mid 1990s, these actors have recovered from the (for them) disastrous 1980s, due to an improved economic situation. Moreover, in the early 1990s, favourable new fiscal inheritance regulations are introduced. In addition, a new LNV subsidy, the *functiebelonging*, is issued. One private owner states that *"basically, the government still left us struggling, but those of us that remained were able, albeit barely, to keep our heads above the water"*. Also, the private owners have organized themselves in a new interest organization, the *Utrechts Particulier Grondbezit* (Utrecht Association for Privately Owned Land: UPG). Consequently, the private owners are much more alert to their surroundings, instead of merely focusing on their own estates.

The VCNP consultation meeting functions as the spark that brings the private owners to the fore in Heuvelrug nature policy. First of all, the composition of the VCNP causes disgruntlement among this group of actors. The committee is seen as a group of haughty outsiders, imposed upon the area, with no emotional connection at all to the region. Secondly, the private owners are annoyed by the VCNP's lack of transparency in the years of its study. One of them states that *"between 1991 and 1995, the VCNP ignored all kinds of critical signals, forcing through its own ideas"*. Moreover, quite a lot of private owners, i.e. those with holdings smaller than 75 hectares, have not been asked for comments at all.

In addition, the anger of the private owners focuses on the substance of the VCNP advice. First, the VCNP states that about 875 hectares of privately owned land (about one third of the private estates) constitute exotic trees that will have to be replaced by domestic species. Second, the VCNP wants to disallow those hunting activities that are not necessary for proper management of the area (VCNP, 1995a). For the private owners, these two components are unacceptable because they hamper the autonomy that private owners value above all else. One of them states that *"we want to be left alone to manage our estates as we have always done. We want to hunt and to care for the exotic trees that often have been planted by our grandfathers"*.

The atmosphere in the consultation meeting is therefore very tense. The private owners quickly get annoyed by the VCNP presentation. They reject point-blank the VCNP proposal and refuse to participate in any form of cooperation based on it. They are eventually supported by HUL and NM, who reason that there is no point in going on without the private owners and their lands. This means that SBB is the only main landowner that supports the National Park. In the end, the VCNP has to draw the conclusion that at the moment a National Park in the south of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug is not an option. The committee members depart from the Heuvelrug in low spirits.

Purchase policy and deliberations grind to a halt

As outlined above, the purchase policy and deliberations meanwhile have continued quite unhindered. However, in the mid 1990s, this begins to change. As mentioned above, in regions where nature development areas and ecological connection zones are situated,

nature conservationists clash with agrarians. On top of that, these regions draw up all kinds of new policies that emphasize the integration of agricultural and natural interests. This means that, eventually, the spotlight is directed to these other regions, and away from the Heuvelrug. One PND civil servant states that *"gradually, a lot more attention was given to other regions. The Heuvelrug already seemed to be a green and healthy region. Moreover, there were no sectors to integrate. As well, in the past, a lot of money had already been invested in the region. Therefore, many people felt that now it was time to focus on regions such as de Venen and the Gelderse Vallei instead"*.

This change in focus has important consequences for the composition and character of the purchase deliberations. The provincial government, having been accorded new nature-policy-related responsibilities through the 1994 decentralization impulse (see section 1.1.2), no longer supports the existing activities of HUL and the PND. Instead, a new governmental implementation agency, the *Dienst Landelijk Gebied* (Government Service for Land and Water Management: DLG), is put in charge of the deliberations. GS and LNV give this new actor the explicit task of restricting the amount of land that is to be purchased on the Heuvelrug, instead focusing the purchase activities on nature development areas situated in other regions.

HUL and PND representatives claim not to have been happy with these changes. The introduction of DLG in the purchase deliberations is accompanied by a considerable increase in bureaucracy. One of them states that *"when DLG civil servants took over, we lost our grip, because the DLG way of working was incomprehensible. It felt like the government was interjecting an entire new layer between us and the field. Because of that, we lost a lot of opportunities to act"*. As a result, in the mid 1990s, some large areas are still being bought, but they will prove to be the last big Heuvelrug purchases (Stichting HUL, 2007).

At the same time, in the mid 1990s the amount of land that is offered for sale on the Heuvelrug has diminished significantly. As elaborated above, the remaining private estate owners meanwhile have recovered from the decline of the forestry sector that characterized the 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, the lands of the "weakest" private owners, i.e. those affected most significantly by the hardships of the first period, have already been bought by HUL and the PND. As one HUL representative claims, *"of course the changing*

government focus in the mid 1990s bothered us. However, the limits of the old Heuvelrug purchase policy were reached anyway. We had bought all that there was to buy".

Shift to safeguarding introduced but not put into practice

The restriction of the Heuvelrug purchase policy is finalized with the eventual introduction of safeguarding as a new approach to Heuvelrug nature policy. As elaborated in section 4.2.2, as far back as the mid 1980s, there were calls to adopt such a perspective, for example visible in the concept PVG. In the BNLU, safeguarding is again emphasized (Provincie Utrecht, 1992a). As mentioned above, though, in the first half of the 1990s, the actors involved in the purchase deliberations are able to ignore these calls. After DLG is put in charge, however, safeguarding is emphasized after all.

This becomes manifest when in 1996 the PND presents the delayed finalization of the PVG (Provincie Utrecht, 1996). Although the new plan respects the spheres of influence map and the reimbursement agreement, it introduces much stricter regulations on purchases in nature core areas. In addition, it arranges that Heuvelrug private estate owners can play a role as nature managers and opts for the protection of the Heuvelrug through stricter planning regulations. A PND civil servant points out that the focus on safeguarding is explicitly emphasized by GS. He recalls that *"the responsible GS member told us that, in the new PVG plan, the word 'purchase' could no longer be mentioned. He did not care if we had to rewrite the entire draft we already had; the term 'purchase' was no longer in vogue"*.

However, the guidelines of the new PVG are only to some extent pursued. Only the restrictions on the purchase activities are put into practice by DLG, but nature management by private owners is not yet put in place. As mentioned, through the *functiebelonging* subsidies issued by LNV, the compensation private owners receive has increased somewhat, but not very significantly. Also, a stricter planning regime is not elaborated either. For example, the EHS is not incorporated into the provincial spatial plan, even though in the PVG it is emphasized that this should happen.

All in all, in the mid 1990s, the attention paid to Heuvelrug nature policy has reduced significantly. This is exemplified by the grinding to a halt of the purchase deliberations (now called safeguarding deliberations). A high ranking provincial civil

servant, involved in these deliberations in the 1980s and 1990s, claims that "*we were eventually compelled to focus on safeguarding. However, it was never made clear how we should do this. Moreover, the enthusiasm for the Heuvelrug disappeared. Basically, after the mid 1990s, the deliberation structure in which Heuvelrug nature policy was discussed was significantly downgraded*".

4.3.2 The mid 1990s: decline of the nature policy arrangement

In the second period, the 'purchase arrangement' destabilizes considerably, while at the same time undergoing a partial transformation in relation to discourse. In addition, an attempt to realize a National Park in the south of the Heuvelrug does not institutionalize. All this leads to a low point in Heuvelrug nature policy.

The 'purchase arrangement' transforms and destabilizes

In the first few years of the 1990s, the 'purchase arrangement' evolves quite unhindered. It initially is not affected by a national policy initiative that introduces a new concept. This new concept, ecological networks, relates mainly to regions where nature development areas and ecological connection zones are situated. The Heuvelrug, however, is entirely demarcated as a nature core area. A new provincial policy plan, the BNLU, does not bring about an important break with the past, even though it suggests alternative strategies for nature core areas.

However, in the mid 1990s, the 'purchase arrangement' significantly destabilizes (see Table 4.4). This change originates from the discourse dimension. The fact that the new ecological networks concept does not tally with the existing form of Heuvelrug nature policy does have an important effect after all. Due to two socio-political trends, i.e. a regionalization process and a decentralization operation, the provincial government decides to prioritize regions where ecological networks are an issue. The purchase strategy is reserved for such regions. Because on the Heuvelrug ecological networks are not an issue, here an alternative strategy is introduced, i.e. safeguarding. Hence, the 'purchase arrangement' transforms into the 'safeguarding arrangement'. This alternative

strategy constitutes three sub-strategies, i.e. purchase, private nature management and planning. However, only the latter two are emphasized; the former is disallowed.

As a consequence of this discursive change, the arrangement deteriorates considerably. Because a new governmental actor, DLG, is introduced at the head of the existing coalition, HUL and the PND are not able to continue their proactive role. The coalition starts to discuss the application of the safeguarding strategy instead of maintaining its traditional focus on the purchase of Heuvelrug forests. However, quite soon the safeguarding deliberations between the various coalition members diminish. It turns out that the entrepreneurial roles of the PND and HUL are not taken over by DLG, nor by any other actor.

Furthermore, parallel to their introduction of the safeguarding strategy, LNV and GS also use their authority to withdraw the budgets that they used to provide for Heuvelrug nature policy, investing these in other regions. DLG has to ensure that the government money for the purchase strategy is no longer used for Heuvelrug purposes. Government also uses its power to introduce new sub-strategies connected to safeguarding, but these are only marginally supported. The PND and HUL, until quite recently the most influential actors in Heuvelrug nature policy, are not able to stop these developments, mainly because they depend on the government resources that are needed to support their activities.

At the same time, however, it has to be emphasized that the high level of land availability that enabled the stabilization of the ‘purchase arrangement’ in the former period and at the beginning of this period is no longer evident. Because the remaining private estate owners are no longer in the position of having to sell their estates, land availability decreases, and this also constrains the purchase activities of HUL and the PND. Therefore, not only have the government resources needed for the application of the purchase strategy disappeared, but also the lands that are required for this have again become very much scarcer.

Eventually, towards the end of the second period, the interaction rules that for a long time have characterized Heuvelrug nature policy change as well. The reimbursement agreement and the spheres of influence map still exist, but due to the intervention of LNV and GS, DLG has gained access to the (until recently) closed off deliberation process.

Moreover, private estate owners are recognized as nature managers as well, even though their involvement remains limited. These developments are already hinted at in the BNLU policy plan and further elaborated in the new PVG, which emphasizes the safeguarding strategy. However, the expanded deliberations that materialize do not have the same proactive character as before. Instead, they are very half-hearted; no one really takes, or is able to take, responsibility for Heuvelrug nature policy.

Mid 1990s	**Safeguarding arrangement (unstable)**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	Protection through safeguarding - nature protection - safeguarding
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	DLG, LNV, GS, PND, SBB (gov); HUL, NM, private owners (non-gov) - safeguarding deliberations - not visible
Power **- resources** **- influence**	HUL and PND purchase capacity is constrained by DLG, LNV, GS and private owners - authority, budget (DLG, LNV, GS); land (private owners) - HUL and PND are no longer able to acquire a lot of land
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Half-hearted expanded deliberations - expanded to include DLG and private owners - not really taken any longer

Table 4.4: Unstable safeguarding arrangement in the mid 1990s

Failed National Park attempt and a general low point in Heuvelrug nature policy

In the first half of the 1990s, in the south of the Heuvelrug there is an attempt to establish a National Park. This attempt is grounded in a second nationally orchestrated policy initiative, i.e. the establishment of National Parks in the Netherlands. A governmental committee, the VCNP, is responsible for preparing for the installation of such a park.

However, the VCNP fails to reach its goal, due to several interrelated reasons. First of all, it barely interacts with regional actors. Secondly, it quite strictly pursues the discursive guidelines set by the Ministry of LNV. Consequently, a large group of Heuvelrug landowners, i.e. the private estate owners, dislike this lack of transparency and

fundamentally disagree with the contents of the National Park concept. The VCNP finds this out the hard way, when the private owners refuse to participate, and more importantly, are able to put a halt to the entire initiative. The private owners capitalize on their landownership to achieve this.

This means that the National Park does not go beyond the planning stage because the private owners for the first time show their teeth in relation to Heuvelrug nature policy. At the same time, as elaborated above, the 'purchase arrangement' has transformed and diminished considerably, resulting in the appearance of the unstable 'safeguarding arrangement'. Therefore, all in all, after years of stabilization, Heuvelrug nature policy finds itself at a low point in the mid 1990s. Table 4.5 sums up the change factors that have affected these developments, and Figure 4.3 visualizes them. The failed National Park attempt is not put in a textbox, since a National Park arrangement does not appear. The dashed nature of the textbox on the right and of the right part of the horizontal arrow refers to the unstable character of the 'safeguarding arrangement'.

Change factors	Manifestation	Effect
Policy entrepreneurs	Not visible	Not visible
Policy initiatives	- ecological networks - National Parks	- leads to a different strategy for, and the withdrawal of resources from, Heuvelrug nature policy - limited due to the rejection of the private owners
Adjacent arrangements	Not visible	Not visible
Socio-political trends	- Decentralization - Regionalization	- empowers GS, LNV and DLG - leads to a different strategy for, and the withdrawal of resources from, Heuvelrug nature policy
Shock events	Not visible	Not visible

Table 4.5: Manifest explanatory factors for policy change in the first half of the 1990s

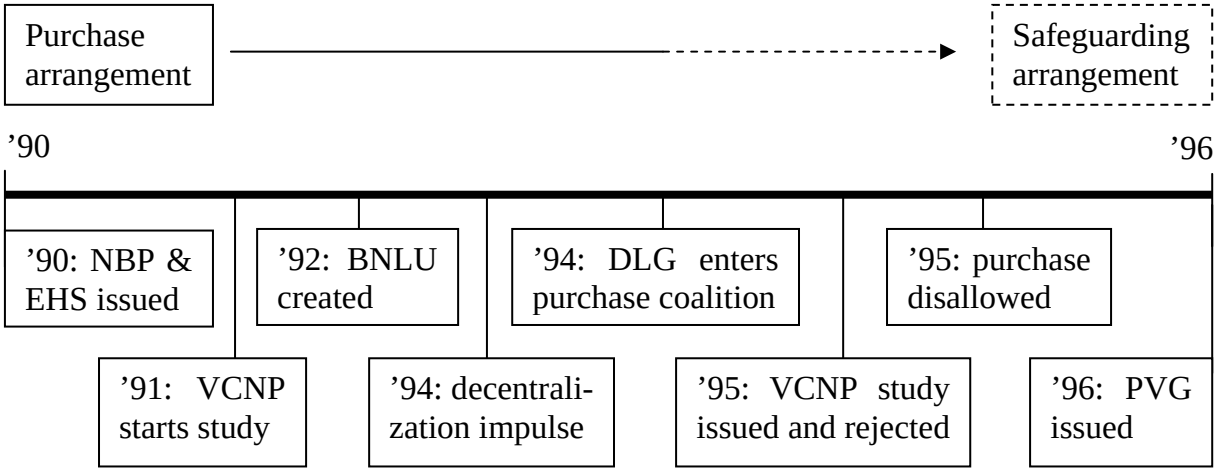

Figure 4.3: Timeline of the second period with a destabilizing arrangement and some important events

4.4 Period III (1996-2001): two entirely new policies

In the third period, the destabilized 'safeguarding arrangement' disappears into the background. Instead, two new policies appear. In the south of the Heuvelrug, a National Park is established after all. In addition, a new comprehensive approach to Heuvelrug nature policy is launched. The main developments are outlined in section 4.4.1, followed by an analysis in terms of the PAA in section 4.4.2.

4.4.1 From 1996 to 2001: National Park and comprehensive approach

At the start of this period, the private owners decide to get involved in Heuvelrug nature policy in a more enduring fashion, and as a result of their involvement a National Park is established in the south of the region. Meanwhile, HUL begins to look at the Heuvelrug as a whole, and this leads to the launch of a comprehensive regional policy.

Private owners look beyond their boundaries and opt for cooperation

In the previous section it was outlined how the private estate owners in the south of the Heuvelrug rejected the VCNP National Park proposal. In the aftermath of this rejection, however, these actors start to feel that, by engaging in Heuvelrug nature policy, they are

able to have a say in what is happening in their part of the region. A respondent claims that *"the private owners realized, and this was quite an eye-opener, that they could not keep on turning their backs on ongoing societal developments. They decided that they together wanted to get involved, rather than abstain and remain isolated, as was for example the case in the 1980s"*.

Consequently, the private owners are prepared to engage in a form of cooperation in the south of the Heuvelrug after all, for the first time looking beyond the boundaries of their own estates. They emphasize, however, that, if a form of cooperation is to be established, it should be based on the Heuvelrug landowners' terms, since *"only these people, and not a government committee, have the right to determine what happens with their own properties"*, as one respondent puts it.

This means that, from around 1996, the private owners take the lead in the south of the Heuvelrug. They approach the other actors present in the VCNP consultation meeting and ask them to engage in a renewed discussion, to eventually come to some form of cooperation after all. These others initially are hesitant to get involved, the failure of the first attempt fresh in their minds. However, in the end they agree to work together with the private owners. A committee is formed to elaborate the terms of the new cooperation, and the province is asked to adopt a facilitative role.

The second attempt: private owners set the course, HUL mediates

Respondents claim that the province at first is not very willing to get involved. Also in this case, this is due to the abject failure of the VCNP proposal. However, GS nevertheless decides to comply. The regional committee gets a more formal status as *Gebiedscommissie Utrechtse Heuvelrug* (Regional Committee for the Utrechtse Heuvelrug: GCUH). Participants are GS, the municipalities of Leersum and Amerongen, the regional LNV directorate, UPG, HUL, SBB, NM, RECRON, *Recreatieschap* and the *Land- en Tuinbouw Organisatie* (Organisation for Agriculture and Horticulture: LTO, an agricultural interest organization) (GCUH, 1997). A PND civil servant is appointed to coordinate the interactions within the new committee.

The GCUH takes the VCNP proposal as its starting point and begins to adapt it to its own preferences. In 1997, it issues its own proposal (GCUH, 1997). Content-wise, the

offending passages on hunting and exotic trees have been removed. In addition, it is stated that the various forest owners are free to manage their forests as they see fit. If the economic potential of the Heuvelrug forests is affected, the forest owner in question has the right to ask for compensation. Furthermore, although nature is the leading function, attention is also paid to other themes, such as recreation, education, cultural history and infrastructure.

In terms of organization, the new plan explicitly addresses the voluntary character of the eventual cooperation, which means that no one can be forced to participate, but neither can participating actors be prevented from terminating their cooperation. It is also emphasized that future decisions will have to be based on consensus within a to-be-established sub-regional deliberation board.

Several respondents have claimed that the GCUH proposal strongly bears the signature of the private owners. Basically, these actors have tried to arrange it that they will have a say in everything that happens, making sure that they can retain their independence, consolidating the ability to stop undesirable changes. One private owner emphasizes this by stating that *"we, as private owners, are stewards of the past. We will never allow ourselves to be guided by whims that change every day. Removing all exotic trees is such a whim. When the government tries to force through such ideas, we will not accept it and rise in revolt"*.

In addition, several respondents point out that HUL has played an important mediating role. The way in which the private owners set the terms of the new plan causes some disgruntlement. HUL makes sure that the atmosphere in the committee remains good. It is able to do so because it has quite a good relationship with many private owners and with SBB and NM. Partially because of the mediating efforts of HUL, some trust is built among the members of the GCUH, and eventually it is decided that cooperation is possible after all.

Taking it up with LNV and the VCNP again: National Park after all

As a next step, the status of the new form of cooperation has to be decided. Since the GCUH proposal still overlaps quite a lot with the original VCNP proposal, the GCUH asks the province to support the establishment of some sort of provincial nature park.

However, the province rejects this idea. It argues that it would be very peculiar to create such a park when at the same time there are opportunities to have a National Park with national appeal and subsequent national support. Therefore, GS suggests that the GCUH should talk to the Ministry of LNV and the VCNP. Because the private owners in particular are reluctant to do so, GS promises to support them in their efforts.

Consequently, a Heuvelrug delegation starts negotiations with LNV and the VCNP, to see whether the establishment of a National Park in the south of the Heuvelrug may be possible after all. The VCNP is still disgruntled about the rejection of its own proposal and initially is not very happy that the region has taken matters into its own hands, but eventually, urged by LNV, in 1998 the VCNP decides that, although parts of the GCUH approach are unprecedented, the status of National Park can be granted after all (VCNP, 1998).

The newly found vigour of the private owners is visible in these negotiations. Around the time that the GCUH delegation, LNV and the VCNP discuss the National Park, a new law is prepared, the *Flora- en Faunawet* (Flora and Fauna Act: FFW) (see section 1.1.2), which amongst other things includes National Park criteria. In the concept versions of the FFW, it is stated that leisure hunting activities are prohibited in National Parks. This is unacceptable to the Heuvelrug private owners. So eventually, as a result of extensive lobbying by the UPG, the offending passage is removed. Three respondents from different organizations (HUL, PND, UPG) separately confirm this story.

Eventually, in October 2000, LNV assigns a preliminary National Park status to the southern Heuvelrug. The GCUH is transformed into the *Overlegorgaan Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug* (Deliberation Board National Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug: ONPUH). New actors are the *Natuur- en Milieufederatie Utrecht* (Nature and Environmental Federation Utrecht: NMU, an umbrella organization for local NCOs), the *Instituut voor Natuurbeschermingseducatie* (Institute for Nature Protection Education: IVN) and a water board. The ONPUH will be the body that in the future will decide about National Park matters. It starts to elaborate a management and implementation program to further concretize the GCUH proposal. The province provides a civil servant who functions as the National Park secretary.

HUL broadens its scope: a comprehensive approach to Heuvelrug nature policy

Meanwhile, from around 1996, the NCO HUL, trying to regain its prominent role in Heuvelrug nature policy, begins to look at the Heuvelrug in a more comprehensive fashion. The idea that nature should be approached coherently is introduced by the NBP and EHS, but as outlined above, the Heuvelrug has always been perceived as coherent. Therefore, it was entirely demarcated as a nature core area, with no attention being given to ecological connection zones and nature development areas (see section 4.3.1). HUL starts to question this coherent Heuvelrug image.

As a first step, the NCO launches an ecological investigation to study the ecological coherence of the Heuvelrug. This leads to quite a shocking conclusion; one HUL representative claims that *"when we really began to look more closely, the fact that the Heuvelrug was functioning well as an ecological entity proved to be a myth; it was not true at all"*. Consequently, HUL starts to more openly advocate a broader scope for Heuvelrug nature policy, with the entire region as the main focal point, in fact arguing for a delayed application of the EHS principles. Fragmentation, until now not really regarded as problematic, becomes the main problem to be solved.

Subsequently, HUL approaches a whole range of actors to jointly promote the new comprehensive approach. The landowners NM, SBB, UPG and DVD (see 4.1.2) are invited. In addition, the NMU and HGNR (an NCO that operates in the Noord-Holland part of the Heuvelrug, see section 4.1.1) are asked to become involved. This latter actor joins enthusiastically. It regards the comprehensive approach as an opportunity to gain more support for its activities; after all, the province of Noord-Holland pays only little attention to the Gooi area. The PND and LNV, however, only adopt an advisory role. PND and LNV civil servants point out that the initiative officially was not adhered to by the government. One of them states that *"we did participate, but you will not find our name anywhere. We did not want that. After all, the initiative was not sanctioned by our superiors"*.

The newly gathered group of actors engages in so-called Heuvelrug deliberations. In these deliberations, the comprehensive Heuvelrug vision is further elaborated, based on the idea that the Heuvelrug should be an ecological and political entity. Although the cooperation is very pleasant and according to a HUL participant *"involves many joint*

drinks and pizzas", it turns out that there is some difficulty in coming to an agreement. There are different ideas on the ambition level of the new vision, and several details are disputed. In particular, the incorporation of a large number of wildlife crossings (ecoducts), an ambition of HUL, is criticized. At one point therefore, HUL decides to finish the work on its own, and the others take up an advisory function. This means that the vision is mainly a HUL story, although it is presented as a joint product of the entire group.

Heel de Heuvelrug* launched in the *Week van het Landschap

When the vision is finished, HUL looks for a way to bring it into the spotlight. It decides to connect the presentation of the new idea to the *Week van het Landschap* (Week of the Landscape: WvhL), an annual HUL event. HUL representatives claim that such weeks were usually organized to try and involve the general public in HUL activities and consequently were never focused on influencing the political agenda before. However, the HUL director decides to take a chance and give the WvhL a new character.

In the 1998 WvhL, the new comprehensive vision is therefore presented under the heading *Heel de Heuvelrug*. A HUL representative claims that this heading serves two purposes. First of all, it refers to the coherent character of the Heuvelrug; second, it relates to the necessity of de-fragmenting the region (*Heel de Heuvelrug* in Dutch means both "the entire Heuvelrug" and "heal the Heuvelrug", RA). It is argued that bureaucratic and political boundaries should follow geographic boundaries. Several respondents again emphasize that *Heel de Heuvelrug* in fact is a postponed elaboration of the EHS that until now has been neglected because the Heuvelrug is seen as already coherent and because the government is focusing on other regions.

In the discussion that ensues after the presentation, the invited government officials state that they are enthusiastic about the new vision. One respondent who attended the meeting claims that *"for the first time, the government officials where confronted with the fact that they were actually dealing with a natural area that stretched from Rhenen to Huizen"*. The province promises to take the vision into account in the future.

Several respondents claim that the WvhL is generally seen as a success, because the coherent approach to Heuvelrug nature policy has made an impression on the

government actors that attend the meeting. An elaborated version of the vision is later on published (Stichting HUL, 1999). The actors that have been engaged the Heuvelrug deliberations continue their regular interactions, to keep on discussing the progress of their common ambitions.

Heel de Heuvelrug not implemented due to a continuing focus on safeguarding

However, a few years later, it turns out that the officials that promised to take the *Heel de Heuvelrug* vision and ambitions into account have not translated this into concrete action yet, despite urgent calls by, especially, HUL and HGNR to do so. Several respondents claim that the government considers the comprehensive vision as rather vague. Moreover, it is also often mentioned that the government continues its focus on other regions, sticking to the safeguarding approach for the Heuvelrug. This latter point is illustrated by one PND civil servant, who claims that *"I never understood why Heel de Heuvelrug did not become an official provincial policy. I think it has to do with the fact that we focused on other regions. For the Heuvelrug, we already had the PVG, which was considered to be a good and clear policy plan"*.

Despite the continuing government emphasis on safeguarding, this latter approach to Heuvelrug nature policy still is not really implemented. The safeguarding deliberations continue but still have a very diminished character. Moreover, throughout the third period, the three components that constitute safeguarding are only to some extent put into practice. DLG occasionally purchases some new lands, but only very small patches (Stichting HUL, 2007). In addition, the EHS is still not incorporated into provincial planning policy. Respondents argue that, within the provincial organization, this latter incorporation meets with a lot of resistance. Several departments fear that the activities that they support will be constrained because of it.

The only exception is that, in 2000, nature management activities by private owners are more extensively subsidized, through the introduction of the *Programma Beheer* (Management Program: PB) (see section 1.1.2). In return, the private owners will have to live up to certain criteria, closely monitored by LNV. The private owners generally are happy with this new scheme. One of them claims that *"although we were already being taken more seriously, before the PB, we were still not fully appreciated as*

proper nature managers. After the introduction, we finally had the idea that our efforts were really being valued, even though we had to cope with extensive government monitoring activities".

4.4.2 From the mid 1990s: two new arrangements appear

In the third period, the unstable 'safeguarding arrangement' continues to exist but is no longer at the heart of Heuvelrug nature policy. It becomes overshadowed by a new arrangement, focused on the south of the region. A second new arrangement that arises covers the entire region but remains rather unstable.

Private owners initiate the rise of the 'southern National Park arrangement'

In the second half of the 1990s, a new attempt is undertaken to establish a National Park in the south of the region. This eventually leads to the rise of the 'southern National Park arrangement' (see Table 4.6). The discourse embedded in this arrangement differs from that in the other Dutch National Parks because it is attuned to the wishes of regional actors, especially the private estate owners (see below). As a consequence, nature protection is the predominant concept (as is usual), but it is approached somewhat more integrally; there is room for other functions (especially forestry and hunting). This is also reflected in the strategy of independent forest management to be carried out by the various landowners. The other strategy focuses on realizing the National Park through sub-regional cooperation between the involved actors.

These latter actors are organized in a newly established coalition, the ONPUH. Most of them were also involved in the GCUH, the predecessor of the ONPUH. The landowners, i.e. SBB, NM, HUL and the private estate owners, play an important role, especially the latter actors, who were responsible for the initiation of the GCUH coalition. Their entrepreneurial role is sparked by the policy initiative (i.e. the creation of Dutch National Parks) that materialized on the Heuvelrug in the first half of the 1990s (see section 4.3.2). GS, PND, LNV, several municipalities, a water board, RECRON, the *Recreatieschap*, LTO, IVN and NMU complete the coalition.

In theory, the various coalition members all have the capacity to decide to some extent what happens in the arrangement, since they all have a vote in the ONPUH. In practice, however, to date, the private estate owners are the ones that have exercised this power most. They are aware of the fact that, without their lands, an enduring form of cooperation is not possible, so by using their landownership as a main resource, they manage to dominate the deliberations, even on the national level. Consequently, they are the most influential actors. This is not always liked by the others, but these actors have no choice but to accept it. HUL plays an influential mediating role; by using its contacts with all the other landowners, it urges these parties to look beyond their differences. The province provides some capacity by installing a National Park secretary.

As a consequence, the rules that appear in the 'southern National Park arrangement' have a rather ambivalent character. On the one hand, it is the rule that the various actors involved in the ONPUH on a voluntary basis cooperate to create a flourishing National Park. Moreover, it is determined that they as one group are responsible for what happens; decisions should be based on consensus between all the ONPUH members. However, on the other hand, these rules have been embedded in the GCUH proposal by the private estate owners, who have done so to protect their own influential role. The private owners, for example, have enshrined the consensus rule to make sure that they have a say in all decisions. In addition, the voluntary character of the access rule gives the private owners the opportunity to opt out.

Early 2000s	**Southern National Park arrangement**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	National Park - integral nature protection - independent forest management, sub-regional National Park cooperation
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	GS, PND, LNV, SBB, municipalities, water board (gov); private owners, HUL, NM, RECRON, *Recreatieschap*, LTO, IVN, NMU (non-gov) - ONPUH (used to be GCUH) - private owners
Power **- resources** **- influence**	ONPUH members have the capacity to establish a National Park on their terms - land (private owners); contacts (HUL); capacity (province) - private owners determine the contents and rules of the National Park; HUL mediates; province facilitates

Early 2000s	Southern National Park arrangement
Rules	Working together on a voluntary basis while striving for consensus
- access	- actors can join and leave at will
- responsibility	- ONPUH members together are responsible and should opt for consensus

Table 4.6: Stable southern National Park arrangement in the early 2000s

HUL causes the hesitant rise of the 'cohesion arrangement'

In the shadow of the stabilization of the 'southern National Park arrangement', a second new arrangement begins to arise, covering the entire region. This arrangement includes the ecological networks concept derived from a policy initiative that appeared in the early 1990s (see section 4.3.2). It is the NCO HUL that connects this concept to the Heuvelrug in a comprehensive fashion, with the objective of creating an ecologically and politically coherent region. To achieve this, two strategies are introduced (de-fragmentation and a comprehensive form of regional cooperation), and HUL also gathers a new comprehensive Heuvelrug coalition.

However, this 'cohesion arrangement' remains rather unstable (see Table 4.7). In discourse terms, the new arrangement offers an alternative to protection through safeguarding. However, even though the existing arrangement that includes this latter discourse has very much destabilized (see section 4.3.2), throughout the third period it continues to constitute the official governmental approach to Heuvelrug nature policy. This means that the alternative interpretation of ecological networks, advocated by the NCO HUL, does not really find fertile ground, at least not with the government.

This is particularly evident if one looks at the actors that are involved. As mentioned, the NCO HUL provides the impetus for the rise of the new arrangement, introducing an alternative approach to Heuvelrug nature policy. In this way, it tries to regain the entrepreneurial role it used to occupy in the 'purchase arrangement' (see section 4.2.3). To realize its new ambition, HUL has gathered a comprehensive Heuvelrug coalition, involving all major Heuvelrug landowners and the NMU. However, the engagement of governmental actors such as LNV and the PND is very limited. These

actors are only off-the-record members of the coalition, and their involvement remains quite marginal.

As a consequence, the influence of the NCO HUL is limited. Through the mobilization of its expertise, this actor is initially able to gather support for its ideas. Moreover, through its WvhL, HUL manages to attract the attention of the PND and LNV. However, HUL's entrepreneurial role is not strong enough to bring its ideas further. For this, explicit government support is needed. Government actors, though, refrain from taking action, mainly because they are not amenable to the alternative interpretation of ecological networks advocated by HUL. Consequently, they continue to prioritize other regions – an approach that is also related to the continuing socio-political trend of regionalization. This means that, in a way, the policy initiative and socio-political trend that diverted government attention from Heuvelrug nature policy in the mid 1990s (see section 4.3.2) continue to have the same effect throughout the third period.

The rules that appear reflect the unstable character of the new 'cohesion arrangement'. Most actors that have gained access to the arrangement, especially the governmental ones, do not show real commitment to the new policy. Officially, these actors have pledged to together shoulder the responsibility for the new comprehensive approach, but in practice they mainly leave this to HUL; this is also influenced by the fact that this latter actor is more ambitious than the others. Overall, the interactions in the arrangement resemble rather abstract and loosely bound deliberations than concrete actions to take *Heel de Heuvelrug* further. The vision document that is created is seen as a nice but quite vague policy plan.

Early 2000s	**Cohesion arrangement (unstable)**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	Regional cohesion - ecological networks - de-fragmentation; comprehensive regional cooperation
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	SBB, DVD, LNV, PND (gov); HUL, NM, NMU, UPG, HGNR (non-gov) - comprehensive Heuvelrug coalition - HUL (to some extent)

Early 2000s	Cohesion arrangement (unstable)
Power **- resources** **- influence**	HUL has the capacity to launch a new policy but is not able to elaborate it - expertise, WvhL (HUL); political support (government) - HUL initiates *Heel de Heuvelrug* but fails to engage government support
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Abstract and loosely bound deliberations - many actors join but are hesitant to commit themselves - mainly left to HUL

Table 4.7: Unstable cohesion arrangement in the early 2000s

Meanwhile, throughout the third period, the 'safeguarding arrangement', which destabilized in the mid 1990s, continues to be visible. In this period also, this arrangement continues to be rather unstable; not much is happening in it. The only obvious activity is the further elaboration of the private nature management strategy (through the introduction of the PB in 2000). Therefore, this arrangement will no longer be explicitly dealt with. Instead, two new arrangements have appeared in this period. The 'southern National Park arrangement', in particular, overshadows the 'safeguarding arrangement'; the unstable 'cohesion arrangement' does not have such an overshadowing effect.

Table 4.8 outlines how the explanatory change factors affect the developments in this period. A visualization of these developments is presented in Figure 4.4. The continued unstable character of the 'safeguarding arrangement' is indicated by the dashed nature of the corresponding textbox and line. The same goes for the new 'cohesion arrangement'. The significant institutionalization of the 'southern National Park arrangement' is emphasized by the change from a dashed line to a straight arrow and subsequent textbox.

Change factors	Manifestation	Effect
Policy entrepreneurs	- Private owners - HUL	- initiate new 'southern National Park arrangement' - initiates new 'cohesion arrangement'
Policy initiatives	- National Parks - Ecological networks	- engages private owners in the south - inspires HUL's comprehensive approach; keeps the government focus on safeguarding

Change factors	Manifestation	Effect
Adjacent arrangements	Not visible	Not visible
Socio-political trends	- Regionalization	- causes the government to continue to prioritize other regions
Shock events	Not visible	Not visible

Table 4.8: Manifest explanatory factors for policy change in the second half of the 1990s/early 2000s

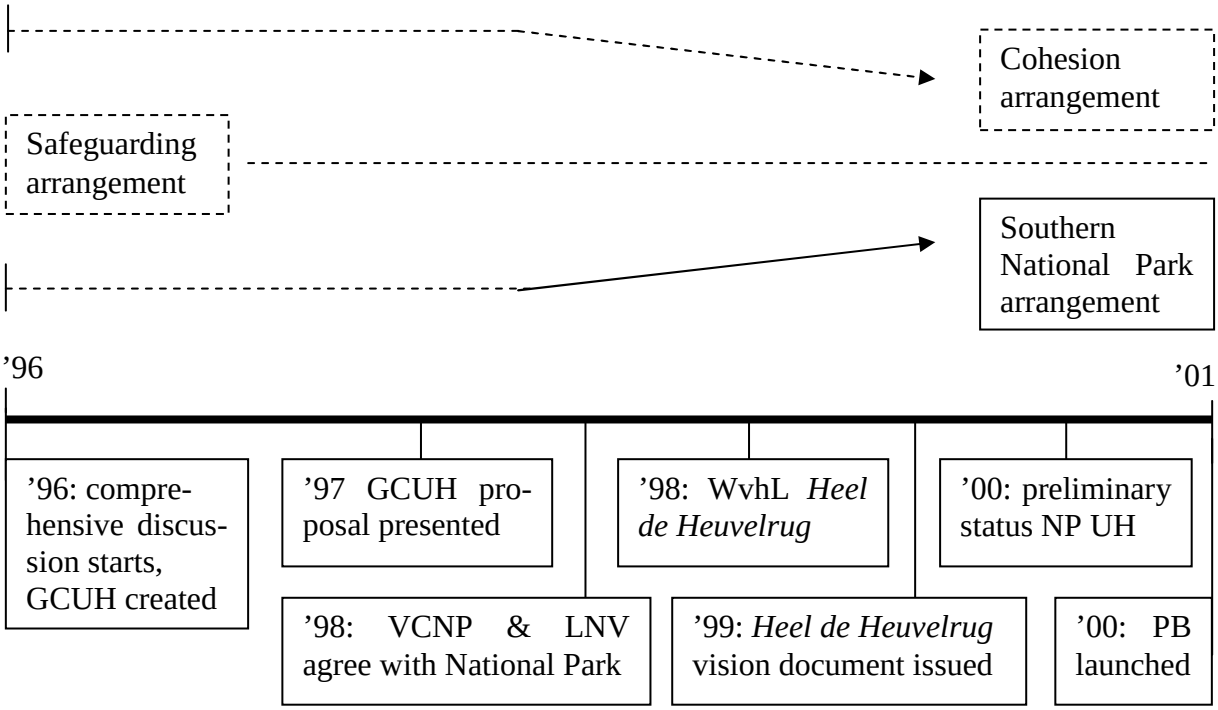

Figure 4.4: Timeline of the third period with changing arrangements and some important events

4.5 Period IV (2001-2008): focus on the centre and the south

In the last period, the 'southern National Park arrangement' further stabilizes, albeit in a rather uneasy fashion. In addition, a new initiative appears that focuses on the centre of the Heuvelrug. Meanwhile, the 'cohesion arrangement', already rather unstable,

disappears again. The main developments are sketched in section 4.5.1; an analysis in terms of the PAA is given in section 4.5.2.

4.5.1 From 2001 to 2008: working in three sub-regions

In the final period, Heuvelrug nature policy focuses on three sub-regions. In the centre of the region, a large scale de-fragmentation project is launched. In the south, the National Park further evolves. However, cooperation within the ONPUH is rather troubled. Furthermore, there are attempts to formulate a policy for the northern parts of the Heuvelrug. As a consequence of this focus on three sub-regions, attention is no longer paid to *Heel de Heuvelrug*. At the end of this period, however, there are signs that a comprehensive form of Heuvelrug nature policy may reappear on the agenda.

Focus on the centre: HUL launches *Hart van de Heuvelrug*

As mentioned above, many of the actors that have pledged themselves to the *Heel de Heuvelrug* vision have not translated their promises into actions. One of the reasons for this is the rather abstract character of the vision. In reaction to this critique, HUL starts to look for a way to make the de-fragmentation ambitions presented in *Heel de Heuvelrug* more concrete. It decides to narrow down its focus to the centre of the region. Here, there is a major barrier, caused by infrastructure, villages, military installations and healthcare institutions (see section 4.1). HUL argues that, to realize the *Heel de Heuvelrug* ambitions, this barrier should be tackled first.

The NCO therefore creates a plan that comprises the creation of two so-called green corridors, robust ecological connection zones. To realize these corridors, HUL conceives what it calls the chessboard model, which is based on a land exchange principle; when land that has been built upon (so-called red areas) is given back to nature, elsewhere, patches of nature (also referred to as green areas) can be used for expansion activities. HUL expects that two trends will provide the leverage to facilitate this. First of all, the Ministry of Defence plans to close down the military airport at Soesterberg. Secondly, several large healthcare institutions plan to close their doors, moving their activities to urbanized areas (Stichting HUL, 2001).

In 2001, in another WvhL, HUL presents its new plan under the heading *Hart van de Heuvelrug* (Heart of the Heuvelrug), referring to it as an elaboration of *Heel de Heuvelrug*. Many actors attend the presentation, partially because, over the years, the WvhL events have become well known and popular. A representative of HUL claims that "*most of our main successes actually are spin-offs of a Week van het Landschap*". In the discussion after the presentation, HUL urges the province to take up the challenge and engage in the realization of the plan.

The province takes up the challenge in the centre

In 2002, the province is truly galvanized by the *Hart van de Heuvelrug* initiative. The plan is adopted as one of the top priorities of provincial nature policy, and the provincial governor himself chairs the project. In addition, several GS members, provincial departments and newly appointed coordinators become involved. According to several respondents, this sudden provincial interest in Heuvelrug nature policy is closely related to the possibilities of the chessboard model: what is really appreciated is not so much the realization of the green corridors but rather the red expansion opportunities. One respondent claims that *"many politicians saw the Hart van de Heuvelrug project as an excellent opportunity to score, due to the opportunities it offered to expand red activities in addition to green ones"*.

To realize *Hart van de Heuvelrug*, the province also decides to enlist those actors with a specific interest in the proposed exchange processes. Besides HUL, the municipalities of Amersfoort, De Bilt, Leusden, Soest and Zeist, the provincial *Kamer van Koophandel* (Chamber of Commerce: KvK), the Ministry of Defence and the *Vereniging Gehandicaptenzorg Utrecht* (Utrecht Healthcare Association for Disabled People: VGU) are asked to participate. NM, SBB and the private owners do not get involved because they do not own land in the relevant area. Meanwhile, the project has attracted the attention of the national government also. Consequently, the Ministries of Finance, VROM, *Verkeer en Waterstaat* (Transport, Public Works and Water Management: V&W) and LNV join the project in an advisory capacity. Like their provincial counterparts, these actors value the opportunities of the chessboard model.

The participating actors are organized in the *Bestuurlijk Platform Hart van de Heuvelrug* (Management Platform Heart of the Heuvelrug: BPHvdH). This platform has to decide on the specific contents of the project, especially the balance between red and green activities. HUL is the only green actor, to a certain extent assisted by LNV and the PND. This latter actor does so in a facilitative capacity, as a member of a second platform in which civil servants and policy employees of the involved actors participate. This second platform prepares the decision making processes (BPHvdH, 2003).

***Hart van de Heuvelrug* proceeds despite extensive criticism**

Although many actors are enthusiastic about *Hart van de Heuvelrug*, there is a lot of criticism as well. One respondent even accuses HUL of *"having sold its soul to the devil"*. Adversaries claim that the project opens the door for all kinds of expansion activities, sacrificing existing patches of nature, but that it remains to be seen whether the two green corridors will eventually be realized. It is feared that HUL, as the only green actor in the BPHvdH, is not strong enough to resist the combined forces of the other participants, who basically all want to expand onto the Heuvelrug.

For this reason, the NMU, which is asked to become a member of the BPHvdH as well, decides not to take part. A representative states that *"we discussed with HUL whether we should participate too, but in the end we decided that it would be better to maintain an independent position; that way, we could criticize the project from the outside"*. As a consequence, local NCOs, responsible for most of the criticism, do not have access to the BPHvdH either. They try to urge the NMU into action, and some of them even go to court to try to stop what, in their eyes, are undesirable developments.

In response to the criticism, HUL and the PND reinforce the green character of the exchange process, although this takes some tough rounds of negotiations with the other BPHvdH actors. The *Gebiedsvisie Hart van de Heuvelrug* (Regional Vision Heart of the Heuvelrug: GHvdH), a new vision document issued in 2003 by the BPHvdH, contains three green rules. First, all exchange activities must improve the total quality of the area. Second, in sum, nature must be enhanced, both in quality and quantity. Third, all the profits from red developments must be invested in the realization of the two green corridors.

In 2004, the project commences when the participating actors sign the *Raamovereenkomst Hart van de Heuvelrug* (General Agreement on Heart of the Heuvelrug: RHvdH) in which actors pledge themselves to the targets and rules of the GHvdH (BPHvdH, 2004). It is decided that the exchange process will be carried out by implementing specific cluster agreements, the first of which is signed in 2005 by HUL and three large healthcare institutions. Such agreements constitute local implementation proposals with concrete measures to switch green and red patches of land, along with the necessary legal permits to accommodate this. The actors that sign these agreements promise to invest their own expertise, capacity and budgets, complemented with the facilitative means that are provided by the province (BPHvdH, 2005).

Uneasiness in the National Park

At the same time, the National Park in the south of the region is also evolving. In October 2003, it is formally established. At the same time, the *Beheers- en Inrichtingsplan* (Management and Development Plan: BIP, Buro Hemmen, 2003) is issued. This plan is a concrete elaboration of the GCUH proposal and functions as the main guideline for the ONPUH. It addresses, for example, nature management issues and measures to guide recreational activities. The plan also enables the initiation of National Park projects. The various ONPUH members are all required to invest time, money or expertise in the initiation and realization of these projects, and the various landowners are called upon to allow certain activities on their respective properties. Also, several specific committees are established, dealing with the National Park themes. The *Beheerscommissie* (Management Committee: BC) is the most important one, encompassing the main landowners and the PND.

In the BIP it is explicitly stated that the added value of the National Park lies in the teamwork that has arisen among the involved actors, a fact that many respondents indeed cherish. At the same time, however, people claim that the interactions within the ONPUH evolve rather uneasily. This is already the case in the deliberations leading up to the creation of the BIP, and it continues afterwards, for example in relation to the project proposals that are issued.

A frequently heard claim is that the private owners are very headstrong. They insist on being informed extensively about what is going on and want to be compensated if they concede a particular point. The private owners in turn argue that they have every right to be informed and compensated, since often it is their property that is at stake. They want to ensure that they alone are able to decide what happens on their lands. In this, they refer to the agreements that have been made in the past, for example concerning compensation, consensus-based decision making and the voluntary character of their participation. These agreements, also embodied in the BIP, continue to form the basis of the private owners' engagement.

A second and related claim is that the deliberations in the ONPUH are too reminiscent of lengthy negotiations, whereas a project is launched only occasionally. This is generally to the advantage of the private owners, who dislike too much change. Representatives of, for example, NM and SBB, on the other hand, complain that things move too slowly. On top of that, the private owners, NM and SBB continue to have different ideas about forest management. For example, NM starts to remove exotic trees from the *Kaapse Bossen*, an action that is not appreciated by the private owners. This leads to tough debates in the BC. HUL continues to act as a mediator by lobbying between the private owners and the other ONPUH members. In this, it is assisted by PND civil servants, who claim that the National Park absorbs much more of their capacity that was initially planned.

One respondent illustrates the uneasiness that characterizes the National Park deliberations as follows: *"actually, not that much progress is made in the National Park. The ONPUH talks a lot, but these talks are mainly fights. People only want to realize their own ideas, not really listening to the others. Agreements are made but just as easily abandoned again, and people can argue for months about the location of a parking spot, as a figure of speech. Meanwhile, the forest owners do what they want to do with their properties, often not liking the activities of their neighbours"*.

HGNR promotes the north, Utrecht actors react half-heartedly

While *Hart van de Heuvelrug* evolves in the centre of the region and the National Park policy proceeds in the south, one actor, the NCO HGNR, is trying to launch a new policy

initiative in the north of the Heuvelrug. In 2003, it presents an implementation program for this part of the region. SBB, NM and HUL have played an advisory role, but HGNR has taken the lead (Stichting HGNR, 2003).

By far the most important project in this plan concerns the creation of a large ecoduct near Crailo. As a relatively small actor with a limited budget, HGNR has to search for a lot of extra funds, provided by external parties. While gathering these funds, HGNR keeps on referring to the realization of *Heel de Heuvelrug*, using this as an important leverage point to gain support. One HGNR representative states that *"the ecoduct had been on our agenda for ten years already, but with Heel de Heuvelrug supporting us, we were able to put it in a broader perspective and therefore managed to pull it of"*. The ecoduct is eventually built, and opened by Queen Beatrix in 2005.

However, the enthusiasm for the connection of the Noord-Holland part of the Heuvelrug to the rest of the region is not as deeply rooted with the actors operating on the Utrecht side of the provincial border. The only response comes from HUL, which pays attention to the *Laagte van Pijnenburg*, the part of the Heuvelrug directly below the provincial border, in the 2005 WvhL (Stichting HUL, 2005). However, whereas in 1998 and 2001 the WvhL events proved to be successful catalysts for Heuvelrug nature policy, in 2005, this is not the case. The province of Utrecht does issue some project proposals for the north of the region, but a representative of the PND confesses that *"these projects have never been carried out; they got stuck in the preparation phase, mainly because our managers did not prioritize them"*.

***Heel de Heuvelrug* disappears into the background**

The lack of attention to the northern part of the Heuvelrug mainly results from the fact that, on the Utrecht side of the provincial border, actors first and foremost focus on the centre and south of the Heuvelrug. As mentioned, many actors are tied up in the *Hart van de Heuvelrug* project and in the National Park. This means that Heuvelrug nature policy focuses on sub-regions rather than on the entire region. Even though the *Heel de Heuvelrug* vision is explicitly mentioned in both the GHvdH and the BIP, in practice, not much attention is paid to it.

As a consequence of this sub-regional focus, roughly from 2004 the Heuvelrug deliberations started in the previous period come to an end. There are still contacts between the different actors, but mainly bilaterally, and not specifically focused on *Heel de Heuvelrug*. Although HGNR keeps reminding the other actors not to forget *Heel de Heuvelrug*, these others are not promoting it as actively as before. One PND civil servant claims that *"at a certain point, we were just quoting our agendas to each other in the Heuvelrug deliberations. We started to realize that this was not very useful, and therefore the Heuvelrug deliberations were more or less silently disbanded"*.

A prime example of the diminished attention given to *Heel de Heuvelrug* is a failed attempt to acquire a National Landscape status (see section 1.1.2) for the entire Heuvelrug. From the beginning, HUL, NM, SBB and both provinces do not participate in this lobby because these actors have other regions on which they want to focus – regions that are more susceptible to integral policies. Lobbying is mainly left to HGNR, NMU, a local NCO from Zeist and *Milieudefensie* (Environmental Defence), a nationally organized environmental organization. However, these actors are not able to convince the Ministry of LNV, so a National Landscape status is not assigned. As an alternative, the provinces of Noord-Holland and Utrecht promise to give the area a Provincial Landscape status, but this is never implemented.

Nature under pressure in *Hart van de Heuvelrug*

When in the last few years of this period the implementation of the *Hart van de Heuvelrug* project starts to get underway, the abovementioned criticism by local NCOs and the NMU turns out to be quite valid. Even though all BPHvdH members have pledged themselves to the realization of the green corridors in the GHvdH and RHvdH, both PND and LNV civil servants and HUL representatives claim that they continually have to put their foot down to make sure that these agreements are respected. The KvK in particular, but also some municipalities and the VGU, try to stimulate as many red expansion activities as possible, largely ignoring the realization of the green corridors. To achieve this, they present their own research, issue all kinds of expansion proposals and try to gather political support for their ideas. One PND civil servant illustrates this as follows: *"it was amazing to see that, when we opened the door for red activities only very slightly, all kinds of actors tumbled*

over each other to try and get their own plans sanctioned. The red was arranged before we could blink, but we had to wait and lobby and remind people endlessly about the green. Even within our own organization, there was often an inclination to tip the balance in favour of the former".

The Soesterberg military airport land in particular becomes the subject of fierce debate. Almost 600 hectares of land become available, and these are strongly disputed between red and green actors. Although the province from the start acknowledges that the airport is situated in the EHS, it nevertheless decides to allow other actors to make proposals on its future (BPHvdH, 2006). PND civil servants claim that they are not very happy about this, because it suggests that everything is possible. For a long time, the destiny of the airport remains unsure. Eventually, it gets a predominantly green designation, although red activities such as a restaurant and a museum are also allowed (www.hartvandeheuvelrug.nl).

The fact that nature is given a predominant place in the redevelopment of the military airport shows that, eventually, the green character of *Hart van de Heuvelrug* is maintained. This is mainly due to the negotiation exploits of the PND and HUL. They are assisted by the explicit protection of the EHS through the introduction of a new principle in the recently updated provincial spatial plan (Provincie Utrecht, 2005). This so-called "no, unless" principle disallows all expansion activities in or close to the EHS unless it is certain that such activities do not have a detrimental effect on nature or unless damage that is caused by them is compensated elsewhere. This means, by the way, that, after almost a decade, the promised, more extensive protection of Heuvelrug nature through planning is finally realized.

The situation in 2008: is *Heel de Heuvelrug* making a comeback?

As mentioned, throughout the fourth period, the comprehensive approach to Heuvelrug nature policy vanishes from the political agenda. At the end of the period, however, the *Heel de Heuvelrug* ideas are to some extent rekindled, this time initiated by government. In 2007, the province of Utrecht designates the entire Heuvelrug as a region of special attention. Moreover, in 2008, the province asks a special investigator to study the

possibilities of establishing a structural form of cooperation between all actors that have a stake in Heuvelrug nature policy.

Overall, however, respondents are sceptical about the chances of realizing a Heuvelrug-wide form of cooperation, despite the province's change of heart (it no longer seems to oppose a comprehensive approach to Heuvelrug nature policy). They argue that the various sub-regions have too different a character, and that many actors involved in them feel no connection to other sub-regions. Moreover, they often claim that the private owners in the south will never allow people from other sub-regions to determine what happens in their part of the Heuvelrug.

Therefore, at the time of writing, the five separate sub-regions (see section 4.1.1) are mainly considered in isolation from one another. In the Gooi region, HGNR continues to be active, still trying to connect to the other sub-regions. In the *Laagte van Pijnenburg*, however, nature policy has not really been applied yet. In the centre of the region, the exchange process initiated by *Hart van de Heuvelrug* is under way, but the green corridors are not yet finished. The part of the Heuvelrug situated in between *Hart van de Heuvelrug* and the National Park has not yet been addressed in any explicit policy plan. It is suggested, though, to include this part in the National Park. In this latter southernmost sub-region, things remain uneasy. At the time of writing, a prestigious project, the creation of a cycle path, has been temporarily halted due to a dispute between landowners and a legal claim by a local NCO.

4.5.2 The late 2000s: arrangements in the south and in the centre

In the fourth period, a second sub-regional arrangement appears, focused on the centre of the Heuvelrug. Initially, this arrangement evolves uneasily, but gradually it stabilizes. Meanwhile, the 'southern National Park arrangement' evolves further, but in a slow and rather uneasy manner. Partially because of the focus on these arrangements, the 'cohesion arrangement' disappears, although in the late 2000s a comprehensive approach to Heuvelrug nature policy is once more considered.

The 'central corridors arrangement': struggle between red and green

At the start of the fourth period, a new policy arrangement appears, this time focused on the centre of the Heuvelrug (see Table 4.9). In discourse terms, it includes a green corridors concept, to be realized through a green-for-red land exchange strategy. This can be considered as a narrowing down of the discourse embedded in the 'cohesion arrangement' of the late 1990s (see section 4.4.2). The NCO HUL is at the heart of this narrowing down. The leverage for realizing the planned green corridors is mainly provided by a socio-political trend, i.e. a military reorganization that frees up an extensive amount of land in the centre of the region.

Towards the end of the period, this 'central corridors arrangement' seems to institutionalize somewhat more deeply. However, initially its stabilization proceeds rather uneasily. This is grounded in the fact that the land exchange strategy can be interpreted in two ways: not only does it enable the realization of the two green corridors, it can also be used to carry out an alternative and competing concept, i.e. urban expansion activities. This difference in interpretation is the cause of a basic rift within the new arrangement.

The difference is evident, for example, if one looks at the actors involved in it. There are those that advocate a green interpretation of the predominant strategy, like HUL and the PND. Others, however, prioritize a red interpretation, especially KvK. Consequently, although the involved actors are united in one coalition (the BPHvdH), in practice two sub-coalitions appear, reflecting the green-red dichotomy. The PND and HUL operate as policy entrepreneurs in the former sub-coalition, the KvK does so in the latter one. It is up to HUL and the PND to maintain the intended green character of the arrangement (see below).

In the first years of this period, the members of the BPHvdH deploy their resources to compete for an interpretation of the predominant strategy that corresponds with their own respective interests. Severe competition therefore surfaces between the green and red sub-coalitions, in which both groups of actors mobilize their expertise, contacts and (sometimes) legal means to achieve their goals. As an outcome of this competitive process, HUL and the PND manage to maintain the green character of the arrangement. These actors are able to do so because of a provincial policy initiative, i.e. the installation of the "no, unless" principle in a new provincial spatial plan, which determines that urban

expansions are restricted in EHS areas. Eventually, the members of the BPHvdH do reach an agreement to together invest their expertise, capacity and budgets in realizing the two green corridors.

The main rule is that the actors involved in the BPHvdH work together to realize the two green corridors. However, in practice, the provincial decision to provide access to actors with both a green and a red interest causes significant problems. Actors with a red interest in particular are not very willing to take responsibility for the realization of the green corridors; they are much more interested in the urban expansions that the land exchange process enables. To try to resolve the disputes, halfway through the fourth period, the main rule is reinforced, embodied in two agreements (the GHvdH and RHvdH) that are meant to balance the trade-off between red and green in favour of the latter. These additional agreements are severely bargained about, but after a competitive process, the coalition members manage to find a compromise that is acceptable. Towards the end of the fourth period, therefore, the realization of the green corridors has commenced, captured in several cluster agreements.

Late 2000s	**Central corridors arrangement**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	Central green corridors - green corridors, urban expansion activities (competing) - green for red land exchange; red for green land exchange (competing)
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	GS, PND, prov. governor, prov. departments, municipalities, DVD, KvK, ministries (gov); HUL, VGU, NMU, local NCOs (non-gov) - BPHvdH; red and green sub-coalitions - HUL, PND, KvK
Power **-resources** **- influence**	Members of the BPHvdH have the capacity to realize two green corridors - expertise, contacts, legal means (red and green sub-coalitions); “no, unless” principle (HUL and PND); expertise, capacity, budgets (BPHvdH) - HUL initiates *Hart van de Heuvelrug*; HUL and PND maintain the green character; BPHvdH realizes the green corridors
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Work together in a competitive fashion - determined by the province - bargained for within the BPHvdH

Table 4.9: Stable central corridors arrangement in the late 2000s

The 'southern National Park arrangement' uneasily and slowly stabilizes

At the same time, the 'southern National Park arrangement' that arose in the mid 1990s, stabilizes further (see Table 4.10). This is exemplified by its formal installation in 2003. In discourse terms, the arrangement retains the same characteristics. The specific, somewhat more integral nature protection concept remains at the core of the arrangement, as do the strategies of independent forest management and sub-regional National Park cooperation. In addition, as a new strategy, the initiation of various projects is introduced to concretize the various goals of the National Park.

From an actor perspective also, a stable situation appears; the arrangement continues to largely comprise the same participants as in the third period. However, even though many of these participants claim that they value the teamwork in the 'southern National Park arrangement', interactions within the ONPUH coalition evolve uneasily. The private owners are still acting as policy entrepreneurs, but this is not always appreciated by other coalition members, mainly because of the pace of progress. Many actors argue that too few projects are launched, whereas the private owners maintain that things are moving fast enough as it is. Partially because of this, interactions are lengthy and troubled. On top of that, disputes are still evident between the different forest owners, now organized in a separate sub-coalition (the BC). These forest owners dislike each others' forest management styles.

Stability is visible in terms of power also. Formally, the various coalition members still have an equal amount of power vis-à-vis each other, given their equal positions in the ONPUH. For example, the extant National Park projects have been approved by all coalition members, who have together invested expertise, capacity and budgets or have provided access to their lands. However, it is also still the case that the private estate owners are the most influential actors. They continue to mobilize their landownership and the interaction rules that have been established (see below) as resources to carefully control the progress that is made in the arrangement, blocking developments that are undesirable in their eyes. As mentioned, this is not always liked by the other actors, but they have to accept it if they want to keep a National Park in the south of the Heuvelrug. Both HUL's mediating role and the province's facilitative efforts are also still visible.

The rules that characterize the arrangement also continue to be largely similar to those prevailing at the end of the third period. The actors that are involved still work together on a voluntary basis. Moreover, the rule still applies that responsibility is taken by consensus. These principles are embedded in the BIP, the National Park policy plan issued in 2003. However, as just mentioned, these rules are often mobilized as resources by the private owners, who use them to control the pace of progress, threatening to opt out if undesirable developments occur. Consequently, the rule that responsibility is taken based on consensus is regularly under strain; after all, it is often very hard to achieve such consensus. This means that, although a stable form of voluntary cooperation has institutionalized over time, the rules are also characterized by a stabilized form of uneasiness.

Late 2000s	**Southern National Park arrangement**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	National Park - integral nature protection - independent forest management, sub-regional National Park cooperation; initiating National Park projects
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	GS, LNV, SBB, PND, municipalities, water board, DLG (gov); private owners, HUL, NM, NMU, IVN, RECRON, *Recreatieschap*, LTO (non-gov) - ONPUH, thematic committees (such as BC) - private owners
Power **- resources** **- influence**	ONPUH members have the capacity to maintain a National Park on their terms - capacity, expertise, budget, land access (ONPUH members); land, interaction rules (private owners); contacts (HUL); capacity (province) - ONPUH members initiate national park projects, but private owners control the pace; HUL mediates; province facilitates
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Uneasily working together on a voluntary basis while striving for consensus - actors can join and leave at will - ONPUH members together are responsible and should try for consensus

Table 4.10: Stable southern National Park arrangement in the late 2000s

Focus on two sub-regions, *Heel de Heuvelrug* disappears… or not?

Meanwhile, the already quite unstable ‘cohesion arrangement’ that arose after the mid 1990s gradually disappears again, because most actors focus either on the centre or on the

south of the Heuvelrug. The NCO HGNR, operating in the north, is an exception, but, on its own, this actor is not able to keep the spotlight on *Heel de Heuvelrug*. In addition, the Heuvelrug continues to be uninteresting from a more integral perspective, so Heuvelrug nature policy still does not profit from the still-apparent socio-political trend towards regionalization. This is exemplified by the fact that the region is not designated as a National Landscape. Furthermore, for a long time, the government has continued to refuse to apply the ecological networks concept to the Heuvelrug, maintaining its focus on safeguarding.

Towards the end of the fourth period, however, it seems that in relation to this latter point the government is reconsidering its position. This is revealed by the fact that the government is starting to pay attention to the connection of the several Heuvelrug sub-regions. However, given the relative newness of these attempts, it is too early to state that a 'cohesion arrangement' is evident once more. Moreover, the question remains as to whether it ever will be, given the earlier disappearance of said arrangement and the significant differences between the various sub-regions.

The change factors that have affected these developments are presented in Table 4.11. The developments themselves, as well as several main events, are visualized in Figure 4.5. The disappearance of the 'cohesion arrangement' is indicated by the termination of the horizontal dashed line stemming from the top left dashed textbox. The stabilization of the 'central corridors arrangement' is indicated by the change from a dashed line to a direct arrow and subsequent textbox.

Change factors	Manifestation	Effect
Policy entrepreneurs	- HUL - PND and HUL - KvK - private owners	- initiates the 'central corridors arrangement' - maintain the green character of the 'central corridors arrangement' - embed red expansion activities in the 'central corridors arrangement' - cause the further (uneasy) stabilization of the 'southern National Park arrangement'
Policy initiatives	- "no, unless" principle	- enables entrepreneurial role of HUL and PND

Change factors	Manifestation	Effect
Adjacent arrangements	Not visible	Not visible
Socio-political trends	- military reorganization - regionalization	- provides the leverage for the land exchange strategy in the 'central corridors arrangement' - causes government to continue to prioritize other regions
Shock events	Not visible	Not visible

Table 4.11: Manifest explanatory factors for policy change from the early 2000s

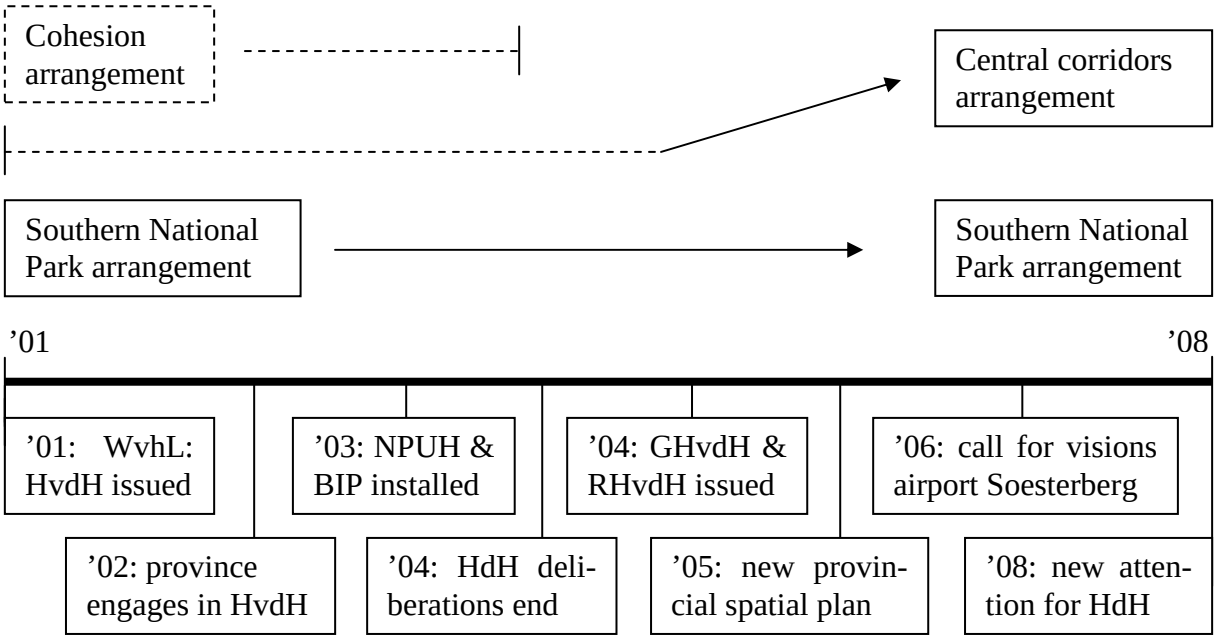

Figure 4.5: Timeline of the fourth period with changing arrangements and some important events

Chapter 5 Midden-Brabant

In this second empirical chapter, the Midden-Brabant case is presented. In section 5.1, the case is introduced. In sections 5.2 to 5.5, in four successive periods the main developments are discussed and characterized in terms of the policy arrangement approach (PAA). The case is analysed in terms of governance in Chapter 6 (section 6.2). Like the previous chapter, this chapter partially addresses research question one:

1. Which nature policy arrangements institutionalize in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant from the early 1970s until the late 2000s?

5.1 Introduction

This first section introduces the Midden-Brabant case. First, some background information and a map are presented (section 5.1.1). After that, both the four successive periods and the empirical focus of this chapter are outlined (section 5.1.2).

5.1.1 Midden-Brabant: a geographical and historical sketch

The Midden-Brabant region is located in the south of the Netherlands, in the province of Noord-Brabant, roughly situated between the three cities of Eindhoven, Tilburg and ‘s-Hertogenbosch. It includes parts of the municipalities of Best, Boxtel, Haaren, Oisterwijk, Oirschot, Schijndel, Sint-Michielsgestel, Sint-Oedenrode, Son en Breugel and Vught. The region is also known as *de Meierij* and as *het Groene Woud*. This latter name reflects the National Landscape status granted to Midden-Brabant in 2004. There are several large natural areas in the region: heath lands, forests, swamps and peat areas. The region also includes a man-made landscape with traditional small-scale agricultural plots, flowery grasslands and hedgerows (Grontmij et al, 2000). For a map of the region see Figure 5.1.

Midden-Brabant can be roughly divided into two parts. The aforementioned large natural areas are situated in its heart, forming a rough horseshoe-like shape around the village of Boxtel (see Figure 5.1). These natural areas used to be separated from each other, but over the last few decades they have increasingly expanded and become connected. This part, which covers approximately 7,500 hectares, is also known as the

Midden-Brabant nature core or inner layer and encompasses the areas Kerkeindsche Heide, *Oisterwijkse Bossen en Vennen, Kampina, Velders Bos, de Mortelen, de Scheeken* and *de Geelders*. Moreover, several streams cut through the nature core, i.e. the Dommel, Beerze and Reusel. The basins of these streams are important natural areas as well (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2007). The lands of the nature core are generally owned and managed by *Natuurmonumenten* (Nature Monuments: NM), *Staatsbosbeheer* (State Forest Service: SBB), *Het Brabants Landschap* (The Brabant Landscape: HBL, a sister organization of *Het Utrechts Landschap* – The Utrecht Landscape: HUL), and (although only marginally) private estate owners (Brinkhof and Van Ommen, 2004).

The second part constitutes the abovementioned man-made landscape, which surrounds the nature core (see Figure 5.1). This part of the region is also referred to as the agricultural hinterland or the second layer and is mainly used for agricultural activities, some of which over time have assumed a more sustainable and broader character. Although some parts of the second layer as mentioned still have a traditional small-scale character, other parts over time have been optimized for agricultural purposes; here, the traditional landscape is no longer visible. The agricultural hinterland is home to the villages of Sint-Michielsgestel, Den Dungen, Esch, Gemonde, Boxtel, Liempde, Schijndel, Olland, Sint-Oedenrode, Oirschot, Spoordonk, Moergestel, Haaren and Helvoirt (Bureau Omega and Grontmij, 2001).

In addition, recent Midden-Brabant nature-related policies also mention a third part, also called the urban triangle or the third layer, which refers to the three large cities Eindhoven, Tilburg and ‘s-Hertogenbosch in between which the region is situated (Grontmij et al, 2000). However, the involvement of the three cities in Midden-Brabant nature policy has been rather limited. Moreover, the third layer is not included in the National Landscape. This means that, for this thesis, the urban triangle is less relevant.

As a final point, it is clear that, whereas the boundaries of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug are rather fixed, in Midden-Brabant this is not the case. Although the nature core has become clearly demarcated over time, the shape and size of the second layer has been significantly disputed. The most recent border is the one that demarcates the National Landscape, which covers around 35,000 hectares (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2007). On the map presented in Figure 5.1, this latter border is followed.

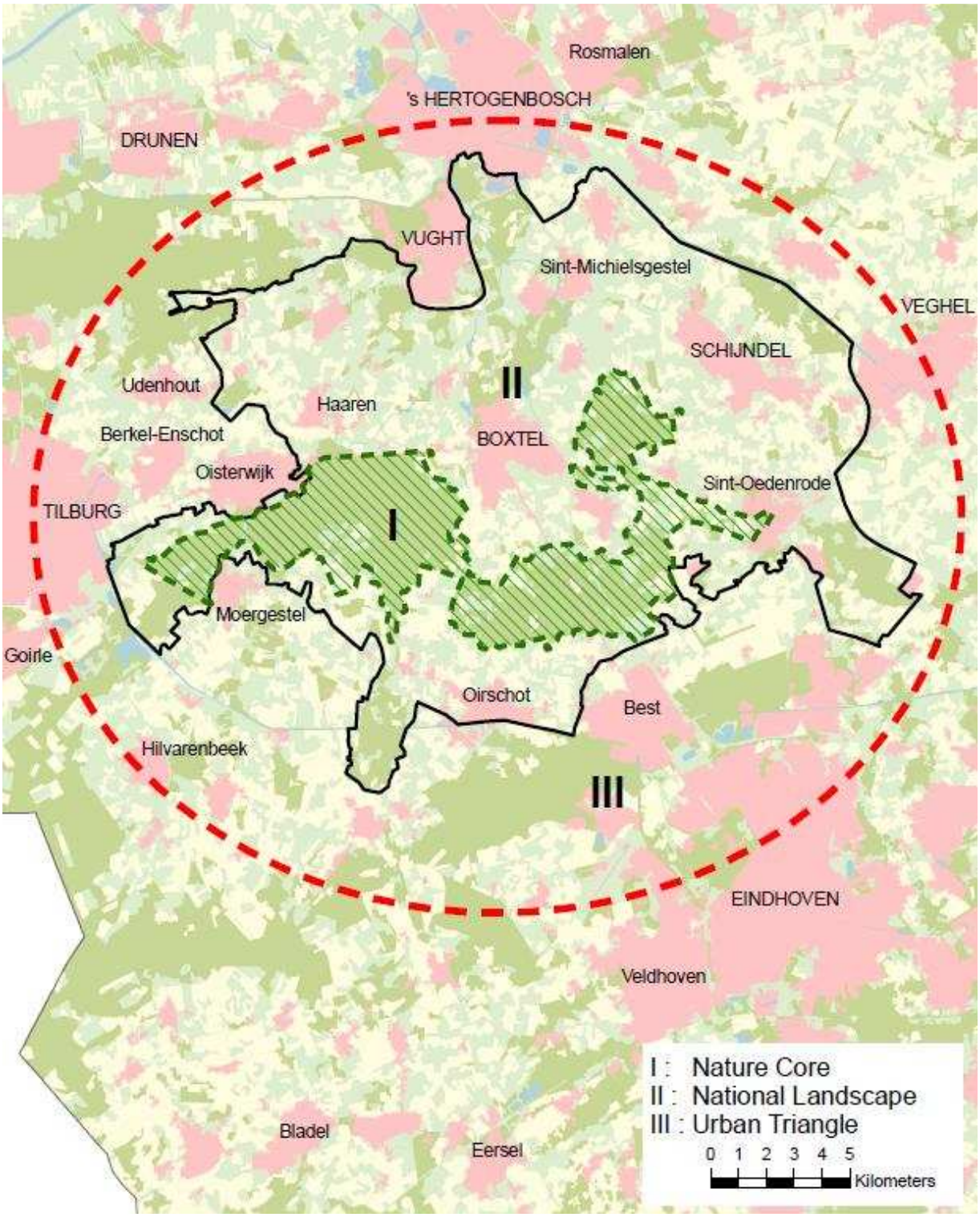

Figure 5.1: The Midden-Brabant region and its three layers

5.1.2 Demarcating the time span and the empirical focus

As outlined in section 3.3, the Midden-Brabant case is described and characterized in terms of the PAA in four successive periods that are separated from each other by turning trajectories. The first period commences in 1970, when the government to a limited extent begins to get involved in Midden-Brabant nature policy. The second period starts in 1990, when nature policy gets a boost through the initiation of the *Natuurbeleidsplan* (Nature Policy Plan: NBP) and the *Ecologische Hoofdstructuur* (Ecological Main Structure: EHS). The third period begins in 1997, when the *Groene Woud* policy first appears. In the final period, which commences in 2001, the *Reconstructie* policy (see section 1.1.2) begins in Midden-Brabant. At the same time, the *Groene Woud* policy evolves. In the end, there are attempts to merge these two policies.

As in the previous chapter, in this chapter also attention is given to adjacent policy fields that over time have affected nature policy. Such policy fields have been conceptualized as adjacent arrangements that can play a role as external factors (see section 2.3). In the previous chapter, forestry was the policy field of importance. In Midden-Brabant, the relevant policy is developments in the agricultural sector. This is visible throughout the entire time span covered.

Two major components of this adjacent agricultural arrangement are two large re-allotment projects that affect parts of Midden-Brabant. The first one takes place around the villages of Oirschot and Best, commencing in the 1960s, ending in the 1980s. The second one takes place around the village of Sint-Oedenrode, starts in the mid 1980s and comes to an end in 2007. This thesis uses mainly these two re-allotments to emphasize the importance of the agricultural sector in the 1970s and 1980s.

Besides agriculture, several other policy fields have influenced nature policy to some extent, but much less significantly. Therefore, these play a much less important role. First of all, forestry used to be quite an important activity in some parts of Midden-Brabant. Large rows of poplars were planted and managed, and the wood from these trees was used to manufacture clogs, for example in the village of Liempde. Moreover, forests of pine trees were exploited to provide wood for the mines in the south of the Netherlands. Logging activities were carried out by SBB, private owners and small farmers, who sold

timber as an additional form of income and/or used it on their farms. However, Midden-Brabant forestry has always been a relatively small sector and lost much of its prominence over time (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1965a).

In addition, Midden-Brabant has a recreational sector. In the 1960s, the province actively promoted this sector, providing leisure opportunities for its citizens (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1970a,b,c). Consequently, in the 1960s and 1970s many recreational enterprises sprang up, for example close to the village of Oisterwijk and the heath land area *Kampina* (IJkelenstam and Heester, 1976). The *Recreatieschap* and *Vereniging van Recreatieondernemers Nederland* (Society for Dutch Recreational Entrepreneurs: RECRON) represent these recreational entrepreneurs and activities, but have not played an important role in Midden-Brabant policies.

Furthermore, the region is being encroached by the expansion of cities and villages. The three large cities of ’s-Hertogenbosch, Eindhoven and Tilburg over time have become important urban areas, and, in addition, most of the Midden-Brabant villages have grown considerably. According to one respondent, a regional journalist, in current municipal spatial plans there are still quite a few parts of the second layer that are nominated to be annexed by expanding villages.

In addition, because mobility has increased over time, extensive infrastructural projects have been carried out. The most significant one is the construction of the A2 highway, and adjacent railroad, in the 1950s and 1960s, vertically splitting Midden-Brabant into two (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1965a).

Finally, after the Second World War, the province of Noord-Brabant initiated a process of large-scale industrialization. It established a so-called prosperity policy that focused on stimulating and guiding further industrialization, partially to provide jobs for people that were no longer needed in the rapidly modernizing agricultural sector. Therefore, all kinds of new industries were started (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1965a,b). However, because this industrialization is located mainly close to the larger cities and in the north and south-east of the province, the spatial claims of industry in Midden-Brabant have remained relatively small.

5.2 Period I (1970 - 1990): nature in the shadow of agriculture

Throughout the first period, the unstable nature policy arrangement that is visible in the early 1970s fails to significantly institutionalize, largely because of the strong position of an adjacent agricultural arrangement. Section 5.2.1 outlines the situation at the start of this period. In section 5.2.2, the developments in the 1970s and 1980s are described. Section 5.2.3 analyses both these developments and the situation in the early 1970s and late 1980s in terms of the PAA.

5.2.1 Setting the scene: Midden Brabant in the early 1970s

In the early 1970s, Midden-Brabant nature policy is carried out by two nature conservation organizations (NCOs). Their efforts are dwarfed, however, by extensive agricultural activities, exemplified by a re-allotment project in the south of the region. The government mainly supports these latter activities. NCOs and agrarians generally do not interact with one another.

NCOs and SBB purchase natural areas with government money

In the previous chapter, the NCOs HUL and (to a lesser extent) NM were introduced as the actors that were predominantly involved in nature policy in the early 1970s, engaged in the purchase and management of natural areas. In Midden-Brabant, a similar situation is visible. NM is active in this region as well; for example, it bought the *Oisterwijkse Bossen en Vennen* in 1915 (about 400 hectares) and *Kampinasche Heide* (or *Kampina*) in 1929 (approximately 1,200 hectares). As a consequence, NM traditionally is well represented in Midden-Brabant. These two purchases, amongst NM's earliest, have been enabled by wealthy beneficiaries.

The second NCO is HBL, as mentioned in section 5.1.1 a sister organization of HUL, operating within the territorial boundaries of the province of Noord-Brabant. Even though this NCO was founded back in 1932, in the first thirty years of its existence, it does not have the means to buy natural areas. At the beginning of the 1960s, however, a funding scheme is installed that guarantees the partial reimbursement of all NCO purchases (www.brabantslandschap.nl). This reimbursement agreement has the same

character as the one set up in the province of Utrecht (see section 4.2.1); half of the purchase costs are financed by the province, with the *Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk* (Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work: CRM) paying the rest.

Facilitated by this new agreement, HBL is able to start its Midden-Brabant purchasing activities in the late 1960s, copying NM's strategy, buying, for example, patches of *de Mortelen*, a swampy area with important natural qualities and historical landscape elements, and the estate *Nemelaer* (approximately 165 hectares). A representative of HBL claims that these areas are bought not only from a nature policy perspective, but also to create recreational facilities for 's-Hertogenbosch, Eindhoven and Tilburg. This is inspired by a desire on the part of the province to facilitate recreational developments (Provinciaal Bestuur Noord-Brabant, 1970a,b,c).

Besides NM and HBL, SBB is the third actor involved in the purchase and management of natural areas. However, as is the case in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, SBB mainly manages its lands for forest utilization purposes. Moreover, it owns only a relatively limited amount of land in Midden-Brabant. Its largest possession is a part of *de Geelders* (approximately 165 hectares).

As on the Heuvelrug, in the late 1960s, SBB, NM and HBL have determined a rudimentary spheres of influence map, an agreement on who buys where. A HBL representative claims that it is decided that NM will purchase lands close to *Kampina* and *Oisterwijkse Bossen en Vennen*, whereas SBB focuses on lands around *de Geelders* and parts of the Dommel basin. HBL focuses on *de Mortelen, de Scheeken* and other parts of the Dommel basin. NM and HBL discuss their purchases with CRM, and the province follows the lead of this ministry. SBB is not involved in these deliberations; it deals directly with the *Ministerie van Landbouw en Visserij* (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: L&V).

A strong agricultural sector: expansions and re-allotments

The above nature policy activities are generally overshadowed by the rapid and large-scale developments that take place in the agricultural sector, which is of the utmost importance to Midden-Brabant. Much of the Midden-Brabant workforce is employed in it,

even though this number is decreasing (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1965a,b). Moreover, the province and the Midden-Brabant municipalities generally support the sector because of the beneficial effect that the agricultural activities have on the regional economy, and because many municipal and provincial politicians and civil servants have an agrarian background (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1965a).

This means that Midden-Brabant agrarians are encouraged by the Ministry of L&V and by agricultural interest organizations to expand their activities, supported by the close cooperation of several high-ranking officials in the *Groene Front* (see section 1.1.2) and by a common agricultural policy orchestrated by the EU (Frouws, 1993). The expansions are mainly realized within individual agricultural enterprises. Such enterprises, for example, significantly increase their amount of livestock over the years while expanding their properties (Biemans, 1991).

In addition, agricultural expansions are realized through so-called re-allotment projects. Such re-allotments focus on optimizing the rural area for agricultural purposes through large physical interventions. They are organized by two government agencies, the *Centrale Cultuurtechnische Commissie* (Central Culture-technical Committee: CCC) and the *Cultuurtechnische Dienst* (Culture-technical Agency: CD). Local governments have to compare the re-allotment plans with their municipal spatial plans, and the province has to sanction them. These governmental actors work together with the largest agricultural interest organization, the *Noord-Brabantse Christelijke Boerenbond* (Northern Brabant Christian Agricultural Association: NCB) and with individual farmers. When the re-allotment has been sanctioned, it is implemented by a specifically mandated local committee (Van den Bergh, 2004).

In the early 1970s, there is a large re-allotment project going on in the south of Midden-Brabant, around the villages of Oirschot and Best. In the re-allotment plan it is argued that action is required to *"remove several physical barriers that stand in the way of further rationalization of agricultural businesses in the area"* (CCC, 1965, p. 2). The plan envisages physical interventions on 5,110 hectares of land in the south of Midden-Brabant. It is carried out by the CD and the *Plaatselijke Commissie voor de Ruilverkaveling Oirschot–Best* (Local Committee for the Re-allotment Oirschot–Best:

PCROB), which is comprised of municipal civil servants, individual agrarians, NCB members and a water board representative.

Midden-Brabant nature policy: limited scope, limited influence

Due to the dominant position of the agricultural sector, the NCO purchases have a relatively limited scope. The natural areas that are targeted are very often owned by agrarians, who have plans to optimize them for agricultural purposes. This means that these agrarians are not at all inclined to sell their lands, and this results in a low level of land availability. Moreover, despite the introduction of the reimbursement agreement in the late 1960s, the government explicitly supports the agricultural sector. Therefore, it is not inclined to proactively support the NCOs. Pleas by the NCOs to get the government more explicitly involved are to no avail.

An exception to this limited role of the NCOs occurs in *de Mortelen*, where HBL has recently started buying land. Through these activities, HBL manages to hamper the Oirschot–Best re-allotment. A HBL representative claims that *"from the early 1960s, we were buying patches of swamp everywhere in de Mortelen. As a result, a thorough physical intervention could no longer take place"*. The HBL activities are obliquely mentioned in the re-allotment plan as well. It is acknowledged that some of the re-allotment area is endowed with valuable landscape qualities that will have to be respected because of the non-agrarian ownership situation (CCC, 1965).

Generally, however, the NCOs are only marginally able to build up a countervailing force to the agricultural expansions and re-allotments. This leads to an uneasy relation between NCOs and agrarians who in the early 1970s on principle do not interact with one another. Representatives of both groups point out that, due to the fundamentally different view on what should happen with nature and the rural area, it is not done to *"fraternize with the enemy"*, as one of them puts it.

5.2.2 From 1970 to 1990: agriculture remains predominant

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, government increasingly pays attention to nature policy, leading to deliberations between the government, the NCOs and agrarians. In general,

however, the agricultural sector remains very predominant. This is exemplified by the start of a new re-allotment process.

Government focus on nature policy: the *Relatienota*

In the mid 1970s, on the national level, government increases its focus on nature policy somewhat, as evidenced by the issuing of three so-called green policy plans (Van Kleef, 2004). This is closely related to the increase in societal and political attention paid to nature and the environment (see section 1.1.2). In one of the new plans, Midden-Brabant is mentioned as a National Landscape park. Several studies are carried out to prepare the establishment of such a park (Van Lier, 1974; Werkgroep Methodologie, 1983). However, this initiative never leaves the planning stage. One respondent claims that *"all these studies remained academic and abstract exercises*".

A second green policy plan, the *Relatienota*, turns out to be more important for Midden-Brabant. It introduces two measures to protect agricultural land with high natural values. On the one hand, it provides the NCOs with funds to buy such lands. This increases the scope of the NCO purchases. According to a HBL representative, *"before the Relatienota, we could only buy natural areas, for example forests or swamps. Afterwards, we could also purchase agricultural lands with natural qualities"*. On the other hand, the *Relatienota* introduces a subsidy scheme meant to persuade agrarians to engage in nature management activities.

The *Relatienota* also draws the province into nature policy, since L&V and CRM delegate its implementation to the provincial tier (Driessen et al, 1995). The province realizes that, to apply the *Relatienota* successfully, it needs the cooperation of the agricultural sector. However, it is well aware of the fact that the *Relatienota* only offers a financial stimulus; this implies that agrarians cannot be forced to cooperate. Consequently, it establishes a committee, the *Werkgroep Uitvoering Relatienota* (Working Group on the Implementation of the *Relatienota*: WUR), to guide the implementation of the *Relatienota* (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1977).

The new WUR committee is made up of a *Gedeputeerde Staten* (Provincial Executive: GS) member, several provincial and CD civil servants, the CRM nature consultant, and representatives of the NCB, HBL, NM and SBB. It operates along a

specifically established procedure, the so-called WUR protocol. CRM and the CD point out which areas might be suited for *Relatienota* purposes. The provincial civil servants are to elaborate this further. Their proposals in turn are discussed by the NCOs, SBB, NCB and the individual agrarians whose lands are at stake. When agreement is reached, the lands in question can be purchased as nature reserves or designated as nature management areas.

It turns out that the Midden-Brabant region becomes an important target for the WUR deliberations. In the new provincial spatial plan, the province argues that the region should maintain its specific natural and historical value, and therefore it is especially susceptible to the *Relatienota* policy (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1977).

Saving *de Mortelen*, dreaming about connecting HBL and NM areas

That the introduction of the *Relatienota* has a positive effect on Midden-Brabant nature policy shows, for example, in the Oirschot-Best re-allotment. As mentioned above, in *de Mortelen*, the exchange process orchestrated by the PCROB cannot continue because of recent HBL purchases. To resolve the resultant deadlock, most of this area is designated as part of the *Relatienota*. Involved agrarians receive alternative lands elsewhere or receive financial compensation, and HBL eventually takes over the lands with high natural values that the farmers abandon. In addition, HBL is included in the land exchange process. This means that it is able to exchange the separate patches of land it owns to realize a larger and more coherent natural area. All of this is formalized in an amendment of the re-allotment plan (SBL, 1979).

Consequently, throughout the 1980s, *de Mortelen* is "*saved from the re-allotment*", as one HBL representative puts it. In addition, the preservation of *de Mortelen* gives rise to a new idea. HBL and NM begin to discuss the possibility of linking *de Mortelen* and several other recent HBL purchases such as *de Scheken* and *Paljaard* to NM's *Kampina* and *Oisterwijkse bossen en vennen*. One HBL representative states that "*in the mid 1980s, we first started discussing the possibilities of connecting our Midden-Brabant territories with those of NM. This was in fact the first reference to the contemporary nature core*". However, these ambitions are not taken very serious by other actors. Even HBL and NM consider them "*wishful thinking*", as an NM representative puts it.

The agricultural sector remains strong: re-allotment around Sint-Oedenrode

Around the same time, the agricultural sector in Midden-Brabant is faced with the negative side-effects of their activities. The NCOs and the *Brabantse Milieufederatie* (Brabant Environmental Federation: BMF) confront agrarians and the NCB about the detrimental effect that agricultural expansions have on nature and the environment. Moreover, within the government, the ongoing stimulation of agricultural expansions is criticized. Restrictions on manure production are introduced, and with the issuing of the *Landinrichtingswet* (Land Consolidation Act: LIW) (see section 1.1.2) a more integral re-allotment approach is installed. This also shows in the respective transformations of the CCC and CD into the CLC and LD (the L standing for *Landinrichting*, i.e. Land Use Planning, which suggests a broader approach than the C, which stood for *Cultuurtechnisch*, i.e. Culture-technical).

However, the strong agricultural lobby seems largely impervious to the growing criticisms (Frouws, 1993). This is visible in Midden-Brabant as well, where agrarians do not consider ceasing their expansion activities. They defend themselves against the accusations of the NCOs and the BMF by claiming that their activities are not illegal. Consequently, throughout the entire first period, agricultural production is still increasing steadily (Biemans, 1991).

The continuing predominance of the agricultural sector is exemplified by the launch of a new re-allotment process, in preparation since 1977. The new re-allotment is to take place around the village of Sint-Oedenrode, located in the east of the region. It covers 15,600 hectares, making it one of the largest of its kind (CLC, 1985; Van den Bergh, 2004). In 1987, the *Landinrichtingscommissie Sint Oedenrode* (Land Use Planning Committee Sint-Oedenrode: LSO) is installed, comprising agrarians, local NCOs, the water board and a municipality (Anema, 2007).

Officially, the new re-allotment process embodies a more integral focus. For example, explicit attention is paid to nature and landscape values, as exemplified in the approximately 1,200 hectares that are designated as *Relatienota* area (CLC, 1985). Moreover, HBL and BMF are consulted in the preparation of the re-allotment plan (Anema, 2007). In practice, however, agricultural interests are still predominant. The main goal of the re-allotment remains optimizing the agricultural suitability of the area (LD,

1986). In addition, in the LSO, actors with an agricultural interest are in the majority (CLC, 1985). Furthermore, according to a HBL representative, the number of *Relatienota* hectares was initially a lot higher (around 5,000) but is downgraded significantly after extensive NCB lobbying. Moreover, the fact that the re-allotment is allowed to start in the first place implies that physical interventions in the rural area, despite recent controversy, are still allowed in Midden-Brabant. One agrarian states that *"everyone knew that the re-allotment would eventually go through; the large agrarian enterprises really wanted it"* (Anema, 2007, p. 9).

Small-scale tugs of war: failure of the WUR method

The continuing importance of the agricultural sector can also be seen in the implementation of the *Relatienota*. With the exception of the abovementioned progress that is made in *de Mortelen*, the allocation of *Relatienota* areas via deliberations in the WUR committee is proceeding very slowly. A provincial civil servant, responsible for the allocation proposals at that time, claims that his suggestions generally are welcomed by the NCOs but rejected by the NCB. The civil servant in question claims that *"the NCOs wanted it, whereas agrarians did not want it. They were fighting continually. It seemed like each square metre was disputed, eventually without much result"*. Neither the province nor L&V take sides in these discussions because they have an interest in both agriculture and nature policy.

At the same time, the scope of the WUR proposals is very limited. Another respondent who was involved in the WUR states that *"implementing the Relatienota involved buying small patches of land, considered in their isolated status, but never in relation to one another. This created a picture of NCOs focusing on their own territories, trying to expand these by collecting small areas around their properties"*. He moreover points out that the few agricultural lands eventually purchased are not selected because of their high natural value, but because of their low agricultural value. Agrarians, provincial officials and L&V representatives consider it a waste to give up valuable agricultural land for nature policy purposes.

All in all, in practice, the way in which the province has organized the implementation of the *Relatienota*, i.e. the WUR method, does not seem to work, since it

results in a small-scale tug of war between NCOs and agrarians. The latter actors generally win this struggle because they cannot be forced to sell their lands or to engage in nature management activities. The NCOs are not able to change this, and the involved governmental actors do not take sides. Therefore, only very few lands are bought, and almost none of the Midden-Brabant agrarians engage in nature management activities (Biemans, 1991). This leaves the province to conclude that *"the application of the Relatienota is not yet a success. […] An intensification in the use of this instrument is urgently desired"* (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1984, p. 39).

5.2.3 The 1970s and 1980s: an unstable nature policy arrangement

In this section, the nature-policy-related developments presented in section 5.2.2 are analysed in terms of the PAA. It is clear that the unstable nature policy arrangement visible in the early 1970s only slightly institutionalizes, mainly because of a lack of government involvement and the continuing constraining presence of an adjacent agricultural arrangement.

The early 1970s: an unstable 'purchase arrangement'

The early 1970s' situation in Midden-Brabant nature policy greatly resembles the early 1970s' situation in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. In terms of discourse, the nature policy arrangement that is visible incorporates a sectoral nature protection concept and a strategy that envisages the purchase of individual natural areas. This 'purchase arrangement' is populated by two NCOs, HBL and NM, both of whom are entitled to buy natural areas in Midden-Brabant. The Ministry of CRM and the province of Noord-Brabant to some extent provide the NCOs with the financial resources needed to deploy the purchase strategy. All this is encapsulated in two rules that shape the interactions between the involved actors, i.e. a reimbursement agreement and a spheres of influence map.

However, like in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, the 'purchase arrangement' that is manifest in Midden-Brabant (see Table 5.1) is rather unstable, primarily because of the very significant overshadowing effect of a competing agricultural expansion discourse that reflects a modernization concept, realized through the strategies of individual

agricultural expansions and large-scale re-allotment processes. This discourse is embedded in a very stable adjacent agricultural arrangement and is advocated by the Ministry of L&V, the province, the Midden-Brabant municipalities, agricultural interest organizations and individual agrarians.

In addition, interactions amongst the actors involved in the 'purchase arrangement' are limited. The two NCOs are only very marginally able to operate as policy entrepreneurs, and in particular the interrelation between the two NCOs on the one hand and the two governmental actors on the other is limited. Only when a natural area is offered for sale, do the four actors get together. Because this happens only occasionally, an explicit coalition is not evident.

Furthermore, the two NCOs lack the power to effectively carry out their purchase strategy. Their capacity to do so is constrained by their dependence on resources that are controlled by others. The lands that they want to buy are owned by Midden-Brabant agrarians, who refuse to sell them because of their involvement in the adjacent agricultural arrangement. Moreover, the funding needed to purchase natural areas is only intermittently available. The government, also prioritizing the adjacent arrangement, does not allow the NCOs to expand their territories too much. Only in *de Mortelen* is significant NCO influence visible; here, the NCO HBL is able to hamper a re-allotment process.

The rules of the game encapsulate the limited role of particularly governmental actors. The reimbursement agreement and the spheres of influence map determine that the lead is left to the two NCOs, who each focus their purchase activities on different parts of Midden-Brabant. The governmental actors only get into the picture on an ad hoc basis, when the occasional NCO purchases need to be sanctioned. NCO attempts to get the government more explicitly involved are to no avail.

Early 1970s	**Purchase arrangement (unstable)**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	Protection through purchase - nature protection - purchase individual natural areas

Early 1970s	Purchase arrangement (unstable)
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	Province, CRM (gov); HBL, NM (non-gov) - not visible - HBL, NM (only marginally)
Power **- resources** **- influence**	HBL and NM purchase capacity is constrained by agrarians, CRM and province - budget (CRM & province); land (agrarians) - HBL and NM occasionally acquire small amounts of land
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	The lead is left to HBL and NM - ad hoc involvement of CRM and province - with HBL and NM, government facilitates

Table 5.1: Unstable purchase arrangement in the early 1970s

The 1970s and 1980s: the 'purchase arrangement' remains unstable

From the mid 1970s, the 'purchase arrangement' begins to institutionalize somewhat. However, it remains relatively unstable throughout the entire first period, mainly because of the continuing overshadowing effect of the agricultural expansion discourse, which constrains the purchase and agrarian nature management strategies. Even though the modernization concept and its subsequent strategies are increasingly criticized, they remain firmly embedded within the adjacent agricultural arrangement. This is exemplified by the start of a new and very large re-allotment project in the east of the Midden-Brabant region.

The signs of stabilization that do appear are reflected mainly in the increase in interaction. Whereas in the early 1970s such interactions occurred only rather infrequently, from the mid 1970s an explicit coalition is formed – the WUR – consequent to a national policy initiative (the *Relatienota*), which in turn is grounded in a socio-political trend, i.e. an increase in the attention paid to nature and the environment. In the WUR, the province, CRM (later on L&V), the CD (later on LD), the NCOs and the NCB are involved. Both the NCOs and the NCB operate as policy entrepreneurs, but from a different perspective (see below). The members of the coalition engage in structural deliberations on the implementation of the *Relatienota*. On an ad hoc basis, individual agrarians whose lands are at stake are involved.

The arrangement remains quite unstable because the persistent involvement of these actors does not lead to an extensive mobilization of the budgets allocated by LNV

and the province; very little land is acquired or designated as nature management area. This is due to the influence exerted by the NCB. Backed up by a very stable adjacent agricultural arrangement and by the support of the Midden-Brabant agrarians who are not inclined to relinquish control over the natural areas that they own, this actor is able to largely block the implementation of the *Relatienota*. Consequently, the NCB is the main policy entrepreneur, but with the objective to constrain rather than sustain Midden-Brabant nature policy. As a consequence, the influence of the NCOs is limited.

This results in rules that have a rather ambivalent character. Officially, the members of the WUR coalition work together because the province has asked them to together implement a nationally introduced policy initiative, the *Relatienota*. This is formalized into the so-called WUR protocol. In practice, however, only the NCOs take responsibility for Midden-Brabant nature policy. The actors with an agricultural interest have gained access to the arrangement to hamper its institutionalization from within. This results in a small-scale tug of war between NCOs and agrarians. The government does not take sides because it also supports the adjacent arrangement.

An overview of this arrangement as it appears in the late 1980s is presented in Table 5.2, and Figure 5.2 visualizes the institutionalization process, as well as several main events. The dashed nature of the two textboxes and the corresponding horizontal arrow indicate the instability of the arrangement. Table 5.3 outlines the manifestation and effect of the change factors that have appeared in the 1970s and the 1980s. Note that there are also factors that hamper change in stead of bringing it about.

Late 1980s	**Purchase arrangement (unstable)**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	Protection through purchase - nature protection - purchase individual natural areas; nature management by agrarians
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	L&V, province, LD (gov); HBL, NM, NCB (non-gov) - WUR - NCB; HBL and NM (only marginally)
Power **- resources** **- influence**	HBL and NM purchase capacity is constrained by the NCB and agrarians - budget (LNV, province); land (agrarians) - HBL and NM occasionally acquire small amounts of land

Late 1980s	**Purchase arrangement (unstable)**
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Small-scale tug of war - organized by the province; NCB and agrarians join to constrain - officially with all WUR members; in practice only with NCOs

Table 5.2: Unstable purchase arrangement in the late 1980s

Change factors	Manifestation	Effect
Policy entrepreneurs	- NCB - HBL and NM	- cause the purchase arrangement to remain unstable - mobilize limited amount of government resources to apply purchase strategy
Policy innovations	- *Relatienota*	- leads to more explicit government and agrarian involvement in nature policy
Adjacent arrangements	- agricultural arrangement remains very stable	- government involvement in nature policy remains limited; agrarians are able to resist NCOs
Socio-political trends	- increased attention for nature and environment	- leads to the issuing of the *Relatienota*; sustains the actions of the NCOs
Shock events	Not visible	Not visible

Table 5.3: Manifest explanatory factors for (a lack of) policy change in the 1970s and 1980s

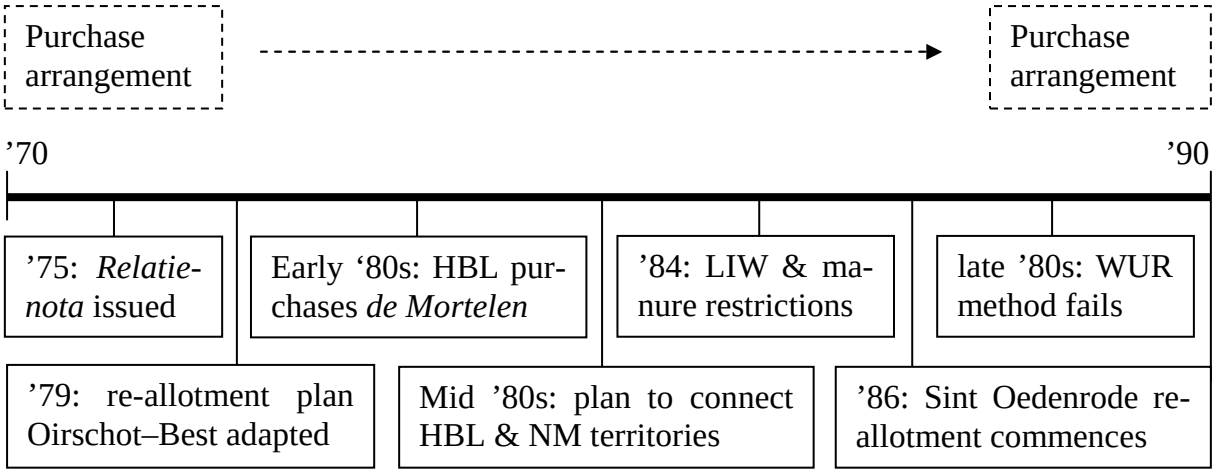

Figure 5.2: Timeline of the first period with a slightly stabilizing arrangement and some important events

5.3 Period II (1990 – 1997): the tables are turned

In the second period, nature policy begins to gain ground; the unstable arrangement that is visible transforms and stabilizes significantly. At the same time, the adjacent agricultural arrangement diminishes somewhat. Furthermore, a second more integral policy arrangement arises. However, this arrangement remains rather unstable. The main developments are outlined in section 5.3.1, and an analysis in terms of the PAA is presented in section 5.3.2.

5.3.1 From 1990 to 1997: a boost for nature policy

In the early 1990s, Midden-Brabant nature policy gets an important boost. The province becomes much more explicitly engaged, replacing the WUR protocol with a new approach. At the same time, the agricultural sector loses some of its prominence. Meanwhile, a comprehensive ecological perspective is developed for the nature core. Also, the province begins to experiment with integral and region-specific policies.

Provincial emphasis on a new and proactive kind of nature policy

In 1990, the province of Noord-Brabant is given new nature-policy-related responsibilities, mainly because of the introduction of the NBP and subsequent EHS, orchestrated by the *Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuur en Visserij* (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Fisheries: LNV), the successor of L&V. The ministry gives the Dutch provinces the task to further elaborate this. This is later on formalized in the so-called decentralization impulse (see section 1.1.2).

The province in turn decides to make nature policy one of its top priorities. As a first step, it expands its internal nature policy capacity. In the early 1990s, new civil servants are hired, complementing those that are already engaged in framing WUR proposals. These civil servants are eventually brought together in a new *Provinciale Natuurdienst* (Provincial Nature Department: PND). The PND starts to work on a provincial version of the NBP, which is presented in 1993 as the *Natuurbeleidsplan Noord-Brabant* (Nature Policy Plan Noord-Brabant: NNB, Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1993a,b,c). In addition, in 1992 the province issues a new spatial plan that explicitly

emphasizes the new provincial nature-policy-related ambitions (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1992).

The introduction of the EHS is an important break with the past; it gives nature policy a much more proactive connotation. From now on, nature is not only protected, but also connected and developed in order to create ecologically coherent natural areas. To realize this, the province wants to facilitate the purchase and transformation of a significant amount of agricultural land (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1992, 1993a,b,c). A PND civil servant states that *"before the EHS, we were thinking about separate patches of nature. Afterwards, we had to think about bringing natural areas together. Also, we could focus on agricultural land, all from an ecological perspective"*.

It is clear that in the new provincial nature policy Midden-Brabant holds an important place. The region acquires an important position in the provincial EHS and is referred to as *"a region with high actual and potential natural values, threatened by environmental degradation, intensive agricultural use and urban activity. In the future development of this region, we prioritize the maintenance of the specific quality of this highly valuable landscape"* (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1992, p. 16).

A tough time for the agricultural sector

For Midden-Brabant agrarians, the first half of the 1990s is a difficult time. The government issues more environmental restrictions, especially on the production of manure (Frouws, 1993). Also, due to international agro-economic developments, Dutch agrarians find it harder to produce for the world market (Boonstra, 2004). Furthermore, the EU common agricultural policy is reformed through the so-called MacSharry transformations of 1992 (RLG, 2000). This has a negative impact on the production capacity of Midden-Brabant agrarians, which fails to increase for the first time in 40 years (Biemans, 1991).

Although several respondents claim that these developments are much more detrimental to the position of Midden-Brabant agrarians than the new provincial focus on nature policy, the same respondents also point out that the agricultural sector resents the new emphasis on nature nevertheless; it is seen as an additional burden for a sector that is already under strain. This is evident in the agrarian reaction to the NNB and the new

provincial spatial plan. For example, a large group of farmers blocks the A2 highway and barricades the provincial office in 's-Hertogenbosch. Furthermore, agrarians comment extensively on the concept versions of both new plans, arguing that the new policy will hamper their activities (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1993b).

Even though the province maintains that it will listen to these objections, it nevertheless concludes that *"our position on the relation between the EHS and the agricultural sector will not be changed. […] We realize that this will restrict some agricultural activities"* (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1993b, p. 73). As a result, agrarians feel abandoned by a government that until quite recently had supported them. One Midden-Brabant farmer states that *"for years and years we had been told to increase our production. From the early 1990s onwards, all of a sudden this didn't count any more. No wonder that many farmers in Midden-Brabant felt betrayed by the government"*.

From WUR protocol to WEB approach

After the introduction of the NNB, the EHS needs to be demarcated in more detail. After all, the NNB only incorporates a very rudimentary EHS map. The province asks the WUR to do this, but in this committee, the small-scale tug of war of the late 1980s merely continues. One of the involved civil servants states that the NCB and the NCOs fight more than ever, and agrarians make hundreds of objections. He argues that *"if we had continued with the WUR protocol, it would have taken us 20 years just to demarcate the EHS"*.

Therefore, the province, led by a new GS member, develops a new region-oriented approach. This approach is based on the premise that, since agrarians own the lands that are needed and cannot be forced to sell these, the support, or at least the consent of the agricultural sector is needed to implement the EHS. Therefore, as a first step, it is decided to explain the consequences of the EHS on the local level, directly addressing the Noord-Brabant agrarians. To achieve this, the GS member and a team of civil servants travel through the entire province, also visiting Midden-Brabant. Several respondents mention that this is the first time that provincial officials *"leave the ivory tower in 's-Hertogenbosch"*, as one of them puts it.

As a second step, the province decides to replace the WUR committee with a new temporary committee, the *Werkgroep EHS Begrenzing* (Working Group EHS

Demarcation: WEB), made up of governmental actors only: the PND, LNV Zuid (the new regional LNV directorate) and the LD, which later on is transformed into the *Dienst Landelijk Gebied* (Government Service for Land and Water Management: DLG). The WEB prepares EHS demarcation proposals that are subsequently discussed in specifically established local deliberation boards, comprised of local NCOs, local agrarians and local NCB branches (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1993b,c). The province determines that in these debates so-called NIMBY (not in my back yard) arguments will not be tolerated. Second, the demarcations need to be supported with ecological data. Third, the fact that the EHS is going to be demarcated is not to be challenged. All these agreements are encapsulated in the WEB covenant, signed by the province, LNV Zuid, DLG, HBL, NM and the NCB.

Midden-Brabant EHS demarcation and implementation: toilsome but evolving

For Midden-Brabant, the EHS demarcation proves to be a toilsome task. In the local deliberation board set up in the region, over and over again meetings are held in which the atmosphere is often tense, *"with a lot of angry farmers and crying farmers' wives"*, as one respondent puts it. The WEB proposals are attacked by the NCB, by individual agrarians and sometimes also by NCOs, whereas WEB members defend and adapt them, at the same time moderating their ambitions. One respondent claims that *"the considerable resistance of the agricultural sector meant that the NCOs had to leave their ecological ideal picture behind"*.

However, the WEB approach happens to work out pretty well. By adopting it, the provincial government has shown its explicit commitment to nature policy. Moreover, it has ensured that agrarians are not able to constrain interaction, as was the case in the WUR deliberations. Furthermore, many agrarians appreciate the opportunity to discuss the new proposals locally. This makes them less hostile towards the new policy. At the same time, several respondents indicate that, due to the regulatory and market changes faced by the agricultural sector, the dominant position of the Midden-Brabant agrarians has eroded somewhat. This has diminished the traditional, almost monopolistic, influence of these latter actors.

When the demarcation proposals are finalized, they are put before the *Provinciale Commissie Natuur en Landschap* (Provincial Committee for Nature and Landscape:

PCNL), a new advisory body that has replaced the WUR, comprising LNV Zuid, DLG, NCB, HBL and NM. Because the proposals have been intensively debated on the local level, the PCNL has not much to add. One respondent states that *"because all Midden-Brabant EHS borders were discussed on a local level, the NCB and HBL and NM, the antagonists of the WUR, no longer had any grounds to keep on arguing. They could only agree, because their local counterparts had already done so"*. Many respondents claim to have been happy with the WEB approach, especially with the local deliberation boards and the provincial promotion campaign. The new GS member is often highly recommended for his efforts in this matter.

Consequently, at the end of the second period, the Midden-Brabant EHS implementation starts. Compared to the situation in the 1980s, the prospects are quite good as land availability is gradually rising, mainly because of the abovementioned problems in the agricultural sector. The EHS realization is carried out by DLG, HBL, NM and SBB. The latter three actors will eventually take charge of the lands that are purchased, in accordance with the spheres of influence map. The PND and LNV Zuid guide the EHS realization, and the Ministry of LNV and the province still bear the purchase costs, now also paying for the physical interventions required to develop agricultural land into nature and to create ecological connection zones.

The *Groene Woud* ideas: Midden-Brabant from an ideal ecological perspective

While working on the demarcation of the Midden-Brabant EHS, several PND civil servants start to feel curious about the ecological potential of the region. As just mentioned, in the WEB deliberations, the PND often has to leave its ecological ideal picture behind, but the civil servants in question nevertheless begin to wonder what Midden-Brabant would look like if this ideal picture could be realized. They are inspired by ideas of bringing back wild and unspoiled wilderness areas in the Netherlands, as for example ventilated in *Plan Ooievaar* (Plan Stork, De Bruin et al, 1987).

The civil servants in question discuss their ideas with representatives of HBL and with GS. HBL is very enthusiastic, because the realization of an ecological ideal type for Midden-Brabant seamlessly fits with the existing but low profile ambitions to establish a connection between HBL's and NM's largest Midden-Brabant territories (see section

5.2.2). GS in turn gives permission for the feasibility of these ambitions to be investigated and agrees to fund this investigation. Therefore, together with an ecological consultancy, the PND and HBL start to study the joining up of the largest natural areas in the heart of Midden-Brabant (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1993b).

The desk study is finished in 1994 (Rövekamp and Luiten, 1994) and is presented under the heading *Het Groene Woud* (The Green Woods), named after a small and picturesque café in the region. According to several respondents, the report can be regarded as the first explicit plan to consider the separate natural areas in the heart of Midden-Brabant as an entity, thus conceiving the idea of the nature core. The two largest barriers that have to be overcome to realize this nature core are the A2 highway and the adjacent railway, and *Banisveld*, an agricultural enclave of about 120 hectares situated between *de Mortelen* and *Kampina*.

However, for the time being, the desk study is kept low profile. Several respondents previously involved in it claim that, when the study is finished, the time is not yet right to bring it into the limelight. The report contains a quite radical ecological perspective that may not be appreciated by the Midden-Brabant agrarians who are already confronted with, and engaged in, the EHS demarcations. Therefore, the responsible GS member decides to keep it in his drawer for the time being. Throughout the remainder of the period, the report is used mainly as a background study for the demarcation of the EHS (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1993b).

Practicing with GGB in Midden-Brabant: WCL, NUBL and PIG

In the first half of the 1990s, the government also begins to pay attention to integral policies with a regional scope (also referred to as *Geïntegreerd Gebiedsgericht Beleid* – Integrated Area Specific Policies: GGB, see section 1.1.2). A first policy relevant for Midden-Brabant is *Nadere Uitwerking Brabant Limburg* (Further Elaboration Brabant–Limburg: NUBL), instigated by the *Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieu* (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Development and Environment: VROM). NUBL provides the provinces of Noord-Brabant and Limburg with the finance to experiment with integral rural area policies. In addition, with similar intentions, LNV

designates Midden-Brabant as a *Waardevol Cultuurlandschap* (Valuable Man-made Landscape: WCL), under its historic name *de Meierij* (Ministerie van LNV, 1993).

The province decides to further elaborate the WCL policy. It integrates the NUBL subsidies in WCL's budget and establishes a project group in which LNV Zuid, the NCB, the BMF, HBL, RECRON, a water board, the *Bosschap* (see section 4.2.1) and several municipalities take part (Laven, 1996). Together with this project group, the province writes a so-called *gebiedsperspectief* (area perspective) in which the goals of the WCL are presented. The idea is that, in a bottom-up fashion, tensions between agriculture, recreation, nature and landscape will be reduced while at the same time increasing regional coherence. The creation and implementation of WCL projects, preferably initiated by a large variety of local non-governmental actors, is seen as the best way to achieve this (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1995).

However, the WCL policy only leaves the drawing board to some extent. First of all, the project group does not function well, because most of the participants feel no real commitment to the Midden-Brabant region, basically advancing provincial or local interests. Moreover, they focus on their own sectors rather than on an integral perspective. In addition, they are not really used to each other yet, or have been engaged in conflicts in the past, as is for example the case with the NCOs and the NCB. In addition, the province and the Ministry of LNV do not really guide the WCL process (Kranendonk, 1997). All in all, the project group members do not invest a lot of time in carrying out the WCL policy, so regional coherence is not really created.

This means that in the end only a small number of WCL projects are launched. Moreover, those projects that are created are carried out by, for example, BMF, HBL, NM and RECRON, members of the project group that are all organized on the provincial level. A bottom-up process involving local actors is not in evidence. In addition, the projects often have a sectoral character instead of an integral one (Kranendonk, 1997). Furthermore, several members of the project group state that there is not enough government finance and capacity to realize the WCL ambitions. The Ministry of LNV and the province in turn argue that they are covering only a small part of the project expenses by way of a stimulus and that they expect the project initiators to invest funds of their own (Pleijte et al, 2000).

To try to give the WCL policy a boost, in 1996 the responsible GS member launches the *Project Integrale Gebiedenbeleid* (Project for Integral Rural Area Policy: PIG), a provincial initiative whereby civil servants are assigned to each Noord-Brabant region with the task of promoting GGB. From that moment on, the Midden-Brabant region has a coordinator who is assisted by two colleagues. These civil servants have to realize new projects, in cooperation with local actors, while applying the WCL and NUBL subsidies where possible. However, the efforts of these civil servants do not yet have much impact in this period.

5.3.2 Towards the mid 1990s: significant stabilization and transformation

The second period witnesses the stabilization of the unstable 'purchase arrangement', which also undergoes an important transformation in terms of discourse. On top of that, an additional, more integral arrangement appears. This second arrangement remains rather unstable, however.

From unstable 'purchase arrangement' to stable 'EHS arrangement'

In the first half of the 1990s, Midden-Brabant nature policy undergoes a significant change in terms of discourse. The existing rather defensive nature protection concept is replaced by a much more proactive concept that focuses on ecological networks. This concept percolates down to Midden-Brabant as a nationally orchestrated policy initiative. Moreover, the purchase strategy is complemented with two new strategies: nature development and the joining up of natural areas. This concept and these strategies are captured in the EHS policy. Consequently, the 'purchase arrangement' transforms into the 'EHS arrangement'.

Initially, the transformed arrangement does not really stabilize, mainly because the new concept and strategies are vehemently challenged by advocates of the agricultural expansion discourse that remains important in Midden-Brabant. However, it no longer has the same overshadowing effect that it had in the 1970s and 1980s. First of all, the agricultural modernization concept and its subsequent strategies are under strain. Secondly, the adjacent agricultural arrangement in which this concept and these strategies

are embedded is declining – a decline that is grounded in two socio-political trends, i.e. an agro-economic crisis and EU agricultural reforms, and in the abovementioned policy initiative (ecological networks) that has drawn government attention away from the agricultural sector and towards nature policy.

The province, charged with the elaboration of the EHS policy, has to deal with the resistance coming from the advocates of the agricultural expansion discourse. GS and the PND in particular start to play a proactive role, operating as policy entrepreneurs. Inspired by the socio-political trend towards regionalization, these actors decide to adopt a regional perspective on the EHS realization. They acknowledge that, before the new policy can be put into practice, the actors engaged in the Midden-Brabant region, especially those from the agricultural sector, will have to be pacified. Therefore, before the EHS implementation commences, its implications are discussed with a very large group of non-governmental Midden-Brabant actors, both NCOs and agrarians. This is organized by forming two temporary coalitions, the WEB and the local deliberation board.

Like in the late 1980s, the deliberations in and between these coalitions still have the character of a power struggle between agrarians and NCOs. However, this time the tables are somewhat turned. Because of the nationally orchestrated ecological networks policy initiative and the explicit support of governmental policy entrepreneurs (i.e. GS and the PND), the NCOs (albeit local ones rather than provincial ones) have the advantage. Also, ecological expertise, which the NCOs extensively possess, becomes an important resource; it is even considered more important than agricultural arguments. The Midden-Brabant agrarians, on the other hand, are on the defensive. Their powerful position is weakened by the diminution of the adjacent agricultural arrangement, which is in turn caused by several socio-political trends (see above). Moreover, they find themselves confronted with a government that no longer explicitly supports them. They are therefore no longer so able to constrain the stabilization of Midden-Brabant nature policy.

However, it turns out that the stabilization process is also significantly enabled by the interaction rules that result from the government attempts to pacify the Midden-Brabant agrarians. The government imperative to come, together with regional actors, to a well-tailored agreement on the consequences of the EHS introduction, encapsulated in the WEB covenant, is appreciated by both local NCOs and Midden-Brabant agrarians. In

exchange for their cooperation, these actors have been granted access to the EHS demarcation, and this has resulted in broadly carried demarcation proposals. As a consequence, these local actors have (albeit sometimes reluctantly) shouldered some responsibility for the realization of the new provincial nature policy that is embedded in the 1992 spatial plan and the NNB.

These new (though temporary) rules, the diminished power of the Midden-Brabant agrarians and the deliberations in and between the two new coalitions pave the way for the stabilization of the 'EHS arrangement' (see Table 5.4). A new coalition is put in charge of the EHS implementation, comprising HBL, NM, SBB, DLG and PND. LNV Zuid and the NCB are involved in an advisory capacity. The new coalition adopts an entrepreneurial role, starting to carry out the demarcation proposals by mobilizing its expertise and the new government budgets provided by the province and LNV, backed up by the regional support gained in the EHS demarcation process and by an increase in land availability that is caused by the decline of the adjacent agricultural arrangement. The rules determine that the members of the EHS coalition in a closed-off way are responsible for realizing the new Midden-Brabant nature policy, i.e. without outside interference. However, their cooperation is based on the regional agreements that are embodied in the demarcation proposals. At the same time, the two agreements of the late 1980s (i.e. the reimbursement agreement and the spheres of influence map) are still valid.

Finally, it should be pointed out that, in the margins of this stabilization process, a new and even more ecologically inspired concept is developed, i.e. the *Groene Woud*. This is orchestrated by several PND civil servants and HBL, and sanctioned by GS. However, this concept is being kept under wraps for the moment, given its rather sensitive contents. Consequently, the *Groene Woud* desk study merely functions as inspiration for the EHS demarcation process.

Mid 1990s	**EHS arrangement**
Discourse	EHS
- concept	- ecological networks
- strategy	- purchase individual natural areas; develop new nature; connect natural areas

Mid 1990s	EHS arrangement
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	GS, PND, DLG, LNV Zuid, SBB (gov); HBL, NM, NCB (non-gov) - EHS (HBL, NM, SBB, DLG and PND) - EHS coalition
Power **- resources** **- influence**	EHS coalition has the capacity to together implement the EHS policy - budget (government); expertise, regional support (EHS coalition); land (agrarians) - EHS coalition starts to acquire, develop and connect natural areas
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Closed-off cooperation with regional consent - restricted to EHS coalition and its advisers - EHS coalition is responsible for carrying out regionally determined demarcation proposals

Table 5.4: Stable EHS arrangement in the mid 1990s

WCL arrangement arises but remains rather unstable

In the mid 1990s, a second nature-policy-related arrangement appears in Midden-Brabant. This is related to a second policy initiative that percolates down from the national level, i.e. the WCL policy, reflecting a GGB character. This policy initiative is also grounded in a socio-political trend, i.e. regionalization. The new arrangement embodies an integral regional coherence concept, to be realized through a strategy of initiating local WCL projects. It constitutes a coalition, the WCL project group, that has to orchestrate these projects. For this purpose, the government has supplied a budget, to be complemented by the resources of the various project initiators. These initiators together are to take responsibility for the realization of the WCL policy.

In practice, however, the new arrangement – referred to as the 'WCL arrangement' – remains rather unstable (see Table 5.5). First of all, its integral discourse is not broadly carried among the members of the arrangement. Many actors prioritize their own sectoral interests, also because in the past they have had trouble with actors from other sectors (as is for example the case with the NCOs and the NCB). An integration of these sectoral interests seems to be premature. As a consequence, the predominant strategy of launching local WCL projects is applied on only a limited basis.

Furthermore, interactions within the new arrangement are not really evident, partially due to the abovementioned discursive differences among, and sectoral interests

of, the various participants. However, government involvement also remains limited. Governmental actors seem to regard the WCL policy as an experiment, as reflected in their commitment to the process. As a consequence, the coalition that is visible, the WCL project group, does not function very well. Explicit policy entrepreneurs are not in evidence.

The fact that few resources are mobilized is a determining factor in the relatively limited number of projects and the lack of interaction among the coalition members. The coalition members argue that the government has not provided enough finance and capacity to meet the costs of initiating a project. The government in turn argues that the resources that it has provided are only meant to stimulate the launching of WCL projects by the coalition members and by local actors. It argues that such actors should also invest resources of their own. However, only a few coalition members are prepared to do this, and moreover these actors often focus on sectoral projects. Therefore, in theory, the coalition members have the capacity to initiate WCL projects, but in practice, they only occasionally initiate such projects. This means that few actors play influential roles.

Consequently, the rules have an ambiguous character. Officially, the several coalition members have committed themselves to the WCL policy, which is encapsulated in the WCL area perspective. In this policy plan, it is also claimed that a bottom-up process is to be realized: local actors should be encouraged to initiate WCL projects, working together with the coalition members. However, in practice, these interaction rules are not in evidence. Rather, a half-hearted form of participation appears. The involved actors do not really take responsibility for the WCL policy, and the local actors needed to orchestrate the desired bottom-up process fail to gain access to the arrangement.

Mid 1990s	**Unstable WCL arrangement**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	WCL - integral regional coherence - realize locally orchestrated WCL projects

Mid 1990s	Unstable WCL arrangement
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	PND, GS, LNV Zuid, water board, municipalities (gov); HBL, NCB, BMF, RECRON, NM, *Bosschap*, entrepreneurs, local NCOs (non-gov) - WCL project group - not visible
Power **- resources** **- influence**	WCL project group lacks the capacity to initiate projects - budget and capacity (province); budget and expertise (WCL project group) - project group members only occasionally initiate WCL projects
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Half-hearted participation - WCL project group established by the province; local actors fail to gain access - not really taken; involved actors show limited commitment

Table 5.5: Unstable WCL arrangement in the mid 1990s

The second period has thus witnessed the transformation and stabilization of the 'purchase arrangement' into the 'EHS arrangement'. In addition, the 'WCL arrangement' has materialized. However, this latter arrangement has remained rather unstable, overshadowed by the stabilization of the 'EHS arrangement'. In Table 5.6, the factors that explain these developments are outlined. Figure 5.3 visualizes them. The dashed nature of the left and bottom right textboxes and the corresponding horizontal (partial) arrows indicate the respective unstable character of the 'purchase arrangement' and the 'WCL arrangement'.

Change factors	Manifestation	Effect
Policy entrepreneurs	- GS and PND - EHS coalition	- enable the start of the EHS implementation by mobilizing regional support - carries out the EHS implementation
Policy innovations	- ecological networks - GGB (WCL)	- engages the province in nature policy - engages the province in integral policy
Adjacent arrangements	- decline of adjacent agricultural arrangement	- increases land availability; engages government in nature policy; decreases agrarian resistance
Socio-political trends	- regionalization - EU agricultural reforms - agro-economic crisis	- results in introduction of GGB; leads to a regional perspective on EHS realization - affects the decline of the adjacent arrangement - affects the decline of the adjacent arrangement

Change factors	Manifestation	Effect
Shock events	Not visible	Not visible

Table 5.6: Manifest explanatory factors for policy change in the first half of the 1990s

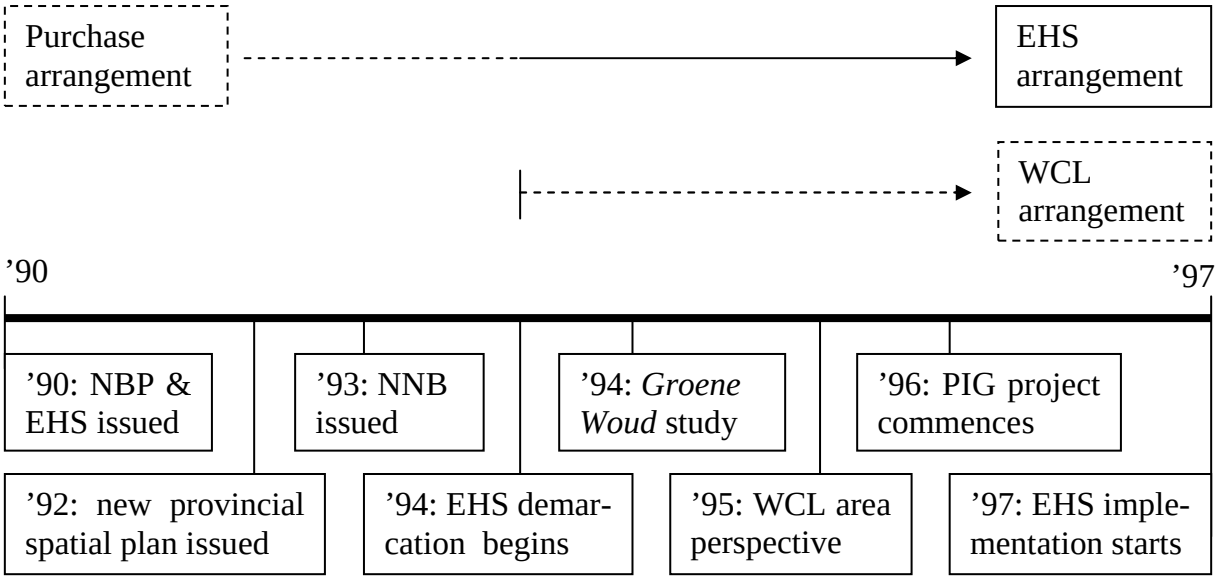

Figure 5.3: Timeline of the second period with changing arrangements and some important events

5.4 Period III (1997 - 2001): The Groene Woud rapidly arises

After 1997, the only recently stabilized 'EHS arrangement' undergoes a new significant transformation, while also incorporating the 'WCL arrangement'. Meanwhile, due to a major shock event, the adjacent agricultural arrangement comes further under strain. The government plans a major reorganization of the agricultural sector, but this has not yet commenced. The main developments are outlined in section 5.4.1, followed by an analysis in terms of the PAA in section 5.4.2.

5.4.1 From 1997 to 2001: The *Groene Woud* nature and landscape park

In the late 1990s, Midden-Brabant becomes known as the *Groene Woud*. The original *Groene Woud* desk study is further elaborated and broadened and a start is made to its realization. At the same time, on the national and provincial levels the *Reconstructie* policy is prepared (see section 1.1.2), but due to extensive delays this new policy is not yet launched in Midden-Brabant.

HBL brings the *Groene Woud* into the limelight

At the start of this period, while working on the EHS implementation, the NCOs HBL and NM begin to focus on the removal of the two most important *Groene Woud* barriers (see section 5.3.1). Rather sooner than expected, they are able to achieve this. The first important EHS purchase in Midden-Brabant is the agricultural enclave *Banisveld*, acquired by NM in 1997. Also, around the same time, HBL purchases a forested area close to the A2 highway, suitable for an ecoduct (wildlife crossing). Not long after that, the government decides to plan an A2 ecoduct at this location (Rijkswaterstaat, 1997).

In addition, the HBL director encourages a regional journalist to talk with the GS member about the *Groene Woud*. This GS member claims that *"by that time, the EHS was well on the agenda, so I decided to disclose the Groene Woud ideas"*. A few days later, a large article on the *Groene Woud* appears in a provincial newspaper. Many respondents point out that the publication of this article indicates the informal launch of the *Groene Woud* plan.

Spurred by these successes, HBL, NM and the province start to further elaborate the *Groene Woud* ideas. They are supported by the municipality of Boxtel, where in 1998 a new alderman has been appointed. This alderman is a fervent nature conservationist and has been involved in many regional initiatives, for example the local EHS deliberation board and the WCL committee. Moreover, he is already familiar with the 1994 desk study, which has been given to him by a PND civil servants. He claims that the *Groene Woud* study *"was the first thing I took with me into my new office"*. As a first step, he organizes a *Groene Woud* symposium, where Boxtel, NM, HBL, the BMF and SBB sign a first *Groene Woud* covenant.

Meanwhile, within the PND, the focus on the *Groene Woud* has diminished somewhat, because several people involved in the 1994 desk study have left. To rally new provincial support, the Boxtel alderman approaches the just appointed PIG coordinator (see section 5.3.1). HBL, through its director, is sustaining the efforts of the coordinator and the alderman from the outside, reminding the PND and GS to elaborate the *Groene Woud* ambitions. HBL itself further intensifies its cooperation with NM, SBB and the BMF (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1999a).

These lobbying activities seem to be successful. The province establishes a headline plan for the *Groene Woud* in which it explicitly states that *"we have been asked to make the Groene Woud a top priority of provincial rural area policy. […] We are taking the initiative to, in cooperation with other actors, further shape and strengthen the Groene Woud"* (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1999a, p.4). An informal *Groene Woud* platform is created in which several Midden-Brabant municipalities, the PND, the water board, HBL, NM, SBB, the *Zuidelijke Land- en Tuinbouw Organisatie* (Southern Organization for Agriculture and Horticulture: ZLTO, the successor of the NCB), RECRON, BMF and LNV Zuid participate, headed by GS.

While working on this headline plan, the involved actors begin to realize that the *Groene Woud* can be beneficial to the entire Midden-Brabant region, not only the EHS areas in the nature core. They claim that *"the Groene Woud is more like a philosophy, a guiding principle for the entire region"* (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1999a, p. 6). To emphasize the broadened ambitions, the so-called three layer model is introduced (see section 5.1.1) The inner layer includes the 7,500 hectares of EHS in the nature core, the second layer comprises the surrounding agricultural hinterland, the outer layer connects the region with the urban triangle 's-Hertogenbosch– Eindhoven–Tilburg. In addition, the platform promises to develop a vision on how to proceed with the *Groene Woud*. The NCOs and SBB take the lead in creating such a vision for the nature core, the province promises to develop one for the second layer.

LNV starts the *Reconstructie* process, Noord-Brabant uploads its own ideas

Around the same time, the problems for the agricultural sector have increased. On top of the bad agro-economic situation, in February 1997, the sector is hit by a massive outbreak

of swine fever. Even though respondents state that the pig farms in Midden-Brabant are not as large as in other regions, the unrest caused by the outbreak is severe. Agrarians lose a lot of income, or see their neighbours and friends suffer from the veterinary crisis. Many of them are no longer motivated to continue their activities (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2005). One farmer claims that *"the aftermath of the outbreak of swine fever was experienced as a very tough time, not only for the pig farmers, but for the entire sector"*.

While battling the outbreak, the Ministry of LNV, arguing that it wants to prevent such a catastrophe in the future, opts for a comprehensive rural area policy that includes existing GGB policies and the EHS implementation (Bleumink, 2007), under the heading *Reconstructie* (Reconstruction, see section 1.1.2), a to-be-established new policy with a GGB character. Quite soon after LNV commences with the preparation of this policy, the province of Noord-Brabant creates a platform to anticipate its pending introduction.

This platform, the *Provinciale Commissie Landelijk Gebied* (Provincial Committee for the Rural Area: PCLG), replaces the PCNL (see section 5.3.1) and comprises ZLTO, BMF, NM, HBL, SBB, several water boards, LNV Zuid, municipalities and various provincial departments. In 1998, these actors present their own *Reconstructie* agenda, the *Provinciale Uitgangspunten Nota* (Memorandum on Provincial Headlines: PUN, Provincie Noord-Brabant, 1999b).

The *Groene Woud* is kept ahead of the *Reconstructie*

The pending introduction of the *Reconstructie* policy has some consequences for the *Groene Woud* policy as well. Several proactive members of the *Groene Woud* platform, i.e. the HBL director, the Boxtel alderman and the involved GS member, start to stress the importance of commencing the *Groene Woud* implementation right away. They argue that, if they wait too long, the *Reconstructie* will be upon them, and that this may mean that there will not be enough leverage and capacity left to implement the *Groene Woud* policy.

At the same time, though, the responsible GS member argues that eventually, when the *Reconstructie* policy is well underway, the *Groene Woud* and the *Reconstructie* policies will have to be merged, since these policies overlap considerably. By allowing the *Groene Woud* to run ahead for the time being, the province hopes to establish a *"project*

engine", as one respondent puts it. The idea is that, at a later stage, this engine can then be used to stimulate the initiation of *Reconstructie* projects as well.

Within the province it is therefore decided that the PND for now will coordinate all *Groene Woud* activities, and not the to-be-established department that is going to prepare the launch of the *Reconstructie* (see below). Within the PND, in 2000 a new *Groene Woud* coordinator is appointed. This coordinator claims that when he begins his job, he is explicitly charged with stimulating the launch of new *Groene Woud* projects. Consequently, quite soon, the first *Groene Woud* projects get off the drawing board, focusing mainly on the nature core and orchestrated by various members of the *Groene Woud* platform – Boxtel and HBL foremost among them. These actors start to work together on the basis of a shared project idea, investing their expertise, capacity and – sometimes – money. They are free to act as they see fit, as long as they contribute to the realization of the *Groene Woud*.

In addition, the new PND coordinator supervises the completion of the nature vision, which is presented at the end of 2000. Different themes are elaborated, i.e. nature management, infrastructure, water, environment and recreation. Each theme relates to the nature core (Grontmij et al, 2000). Several respondents argue that this vision document even after several years continues to provide the inspiration for new *Groene Woud* projects.

Also, the implementation of the EHS, which is still being carried out by the select group of actors that started working on it in the mid 1990s (comprising SBB, NM, HBL, DLG and PND, see section 5.3.1) is gradually encapsulated in the *Groene Woud* policy as well, even though officially the EHS and *Groene Woud* remain separate processes. For example, the A2 ecoduct and the nature development activities in *Banisveld* are presented as key projects for the *Groene Woud* nature core and as elements of the EHS.

Furthermore, the province decides to integrate the WCL policy with the new and broadened *Groene Woud* ideas. The Boxtel alderman, asked to do so by GS, transforms the malfunctioning WCL project group into the *Innovatieplatform Duurzame Meierij* (Innovation Platform Sustainable Meierij: IDM), which he himself chairs. New members are approached, people from local NCOs or individual agrarians who all have a history in the field, share a connection to the entire region and have specific expertise. These actors

have to pledge that they will look beyond their own sectors and that they will invest a certain amount of time in IDM activities. The IDM is financially supported with the remaining WCL, NUBL and PIG budgets. Quite soon, various IDM members launch their first *Groene Woud* projects.

The *Reconstructie* is further prepared but still does not commence

Meanwhile, the *Reconstructie* policy still has not commenced. There are intensive debates between the provinces and LNV on the scope and implications of the new initiative. The province of Noord-Brabant, led by two GS members (one responsible for nature, already mentioned above, the other for planning and environment), plays a very proactive role, uploading several PUN ideas (Boonstra et al, 2007). One of the GS members argues that *"with our experiences in projects like NUBL, WCL and PIG we were able to develop insights that could now be applied in the Reconstructie"*.

When the implementation of the first *Groene Woud* projects has already started, GS decides to informally bring the *Reconstructie* policy a step further. A large new provincial department, the *Reconstructie Landelijk Gebied* (Reconstruction of the Rural Area: RLG) is established. Together with the PCLG (see above), the RLG starts to elaborate the abovementioned PUN into the so-called *Koepelplan* (Umbrella Plan), which is eventually issued in 2001 (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2001). In Midden-Brabant, however, the *Reconstructie* policy has not yet made its appearance.

Integral and comprehensive *Groene Woud* character is further elaborated

Towards the end of the period, the integral character of the *Groene Woud* policy is further elaborated. In 2001, the co-called environmental vision is presented, focusing on the second layer. This vision elaborates the spin-off that the nature core can have on the surrounding hinterland, referring to the *Groene Woud* as a nature *and landscape* park. The vision incorporates ecology, cultural history, sustainable water management, recreation and tourism, urban planning and agriculture, all from a sustainable perspective. Moreover, GS has given the *Groene Woud* the status of *Regionale Natuur- en Landschaps Eenheid* (Regional Nature and Landscape Unit: RNLE), reflecting a new provincial status for rural areas with specific nature and landscape qualities (Bureau Omega and Grontmij, 2001).

Meanwhile, the new integral character of the *Groene Woud* policy is not only elaborated on paper; a group of agrarians also begins to get involved in the *Groene Woud*, primarily due to the exploits of one farmer who feels that Midden-Brabant agrarians should focus on new ways of doing business. He claims that *"after the problems of the early 1990s and the horrors of the veterinary crisis, some of us felt that it was time to take a different course. We felt that we should take our direct surroundings as the basis for our enterprises, not the world market"*.

As a first step, the farmer, also a high-ranking ZLTO official, initiates a study to create an integral Midden-Brabant agrarian vision. In this study, published in 2000, it is claimed that there is no longer room for extensive agricultural modernization in Midden-Brabant. This does not mean that agrarians cannot make a living, but it does imply that they will have to change their ways. Possible scenarios are broadened agriculture, for example through recreational activities or nature management, and quality production, for example through producing eco-products (Bethe et al, 2000).

As a consequence, several Midden-Brabant agrarians begin to initiate *Groene Woud* projects of their own, in practice elaborating the second layer. In addition, some agrarians engage in nature management activities. In this case also, these actors are free to decide how they want to organize their projects. To guide these activities, the *Agrarische Natuurvereniging het Groene Woud* (Agrarian Nature Association *Groene Woud*: ANGW) is founded, chaired by the proactive farmer. However, at the same time, the engagement of the agricultural sector has to be nuanced. There are still many agrarians who reject the *Groene Woud* developments. One respondent states that *"many farmers do not believe in the Groene Woud. They just want to continue doing business as they have always done"*.

In addition, the IDM members, previously mainly active in the nature core, start to get involved in more integral projects as well. Moreover, agrarians also join the platform. For example, the proactive farmer becomes a director of the IDM, alongside the Boxtel alderman. According to these two persons, this symbolizes the new integral character of the IDM. Moreover, the platform is increasingly able to sustain itself. When the WCL, NUBL and PIG budgets are exhausted, it applies for EU subsidies, by initiating an

Interreg project, together with the Belgian *Groene Hageland* region, and by opting for European LEADER + funding (IDM, 2001).

5.4.2 The late 1990s: the arrangement broadens and transforms

The third period witnesses the transformation of the 'EHS arrangement' because of the rise and broadening of the *Groene Woud* policy. The unstable 'WCL arrangement' is subsumed into this transformed arrangement. Meanwhile, a second integral policy (the *Reconstructie*) is prepared. In Midden-Brabant, however, this does not yet result in the emergence of an additional arrangement.

The late 1990s and early 2000s: the '*Groene Woud* arrangement'

Quite soon after the severe changes of the early 1990s, Midden-Brabant nature policy is subjected to yet another significant alteration, i.e. the transformation of the 'EHS arrangement' into the '*Groene Woud* arrangement' (see Table 5.7), which takes place in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In terms of the discourse dimension of the PAA, the transformation occurs in a stepwise fashion. First, the more general ecological networks concept is replaced by the more radical *Groene Woud* concept. This latter concept was already conceived in the previous period (see section 5.3.1) and comprehends the creation of a nature park in Midden-Brabant. Second, a few years later the *Groene Woud* concept is broadened, influenced by the continuing presence of the socio-political trend of regionalization and by the experiments with GGB visible in the 'WCL arrangement'. As a consequence, the *Groene Woud* concept assumes a more comprehensive and integral character, now including the creation of a Midden-Brabant nature *and landscape* park. The renewed concept embodies two comparable strategies, i.e. the initiation of nature core *Groene Woud* projects and the initiation of second layer *Groene Woud* projects.

This stepwise transformation is accompanied by a gradual increase in actors involved. Initially, only a few actors are visibly engaged in the EHS realization. Gradually, however, the EHS coalition is complemented by more and more new actors that all jump on the *Groene Woud* bandwagon (see Table 5.7). The *Groene Woud* platform

is established, an informal coalition that discusses the further elaboration of the policy. Quite soon, the involved actors are encouraged to partake in *Groene Woud* projects. This is mainly orchestrated by several key individuals who operate as policy entrepreneurs, i.e. the HBL director, the Boxtel alderman, a GS member and – later on – a proactive farmer. Two new coalitions, the IDM and ANGW, are created, and local NCOs and agrarians are drawn into the arrangement, taking part in project-related coalitions. It is striking to see that agrarians also enter the arrangement as a consequence of the broadening of the *Groene Woud* discourse, but also because of the continuing decline of the adjacent agricultural arrangement, which in turn is grounded in the bad agro-economic situation and in a major shock event (the outbreak of swine fever).

Because of the emphasis on *Groene Woud* implementation, power is in fact dispersed over the actors that are mobilizing their expertise, capacity and budgets to initiate the *Groene Woud* projects. This emphasis is at least partially related to the general desire to keep ahead of the *Reconstructie* policy, a pending but delayed GGB policy initiative that is sparked by a shock event (see below). The resources mobilized in the *Groene Woud* projects are often derived from the aforementioned socio-political trend of regionalization (as is for example the case with the LEADER + subsidies). At the same time, it is clear that the abovementioned policy entrepreneurs are more influential than the other actors. Their influence is based on their charisma, which enables them to engage many new actors and resources in the realization of the *Groene Woud* policy. The regional enthusiasm that they generate this way in turn functions as a resource in its own right.

The rules that over time appear have a very informal character. Although there are two vision documents (one for the nature core, one for the second layer), a covenant and a quite general headline plan, the stabilization of the *Groene Woud* policy is not accompanied by the elaboration of all kinds of formal agreements. Instead, there is an atmosphere of loosely working together in an informal setting. The idea is that responsibility for the realization of the *Groene Woud* nature and landscape park should be borne by as many regionally oriented actors as possible. This also means that, in principle, each actor interested in initiating a *Groene Woud* project is able to gain access to the arrangement. At the same time, this results in an interaction process that is quite loosely

bound; the involved project initiators are free to start their own projects, as long as these contribute to the integral *Groene Woud* discourse.

Early 2000s	***Groene Woud* arrangement**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	*Groene Woud* - *Groene Woud* nature and landscape park - realize nature core *Groene Woud* projects; realize second layer *Groene Woud* projects
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	PND, GS, municipalities, SBB, water board, LNV Zuid, DLG (gov); HBL, NM, BMF, ZLTO, RECRON, local agrarians, local NCOs (non-gov) - EHS, *Groene Woud* platform, IDM, ANGW, project coalitions - HBL director, Boxtel alderman, GS member, proactive farmer
Power **- resources** **- influence**	The capacity to realize the *Groene Woud* is spread over the various project initiators - capacity, expertise, budget (project initiators); charisma, regional enthusiasm (policy entrepreneurs) - actors initiate their own *Groene Woud* projects stimulated by the policy entrepreneurs
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Working together in a loosely bound and informal setting - open to anyone who wants to realize a *Groene Woud* project - informally taken by the four policy entrepreneurs and the other project initiators

Table 5.7: Stable *Groene Woud* arrangement in the early 2000s

‘WCL arrangement’ merged with ‘*Groene Woud* arrangement’, *Reconstructie* policy prepared but not yet issued

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the ‘*Groene Woud* arrangement’ is the only arrangement to appear in Midden-Brabant nature policy. It can be argued that the ‘WCL arrangement’, which existed in addition to the ‘EHS arrangement’ in the mid 1990s, is in fact merged with the ‘*Groene Woud* arrangement’. After all, the malfunctioning WCL project group is transformed into the IDM coalition, and this coalition assumes an important role in the ‘*Groene Woud* arrangement’. The Boxtel alderman is responsible for this merger, also in this respect acting as a policy entrepreneur.

Furthermore, throughout the entire period, the launch of the *Reconstructie* is at hand, an integral and comprehensive policy that will also affect Midden-Brabant. However, this GGB policy initiative, grounded in a shock event (the 1997 outbreak of swine fever), is delayed time and again. Consequently, the policy has not yet begun in Midden-Brabant. It is clear, however, that it nevertheless has already had a more indirect impact on Midden-Brabant nature policy; it has provided an important incentive to make haste with the implementation of the *Groene Woud* policy, stimulating the stabilization of the '*Groene Woud* arrangement'.

The change factors affecting the above developments are outlined in Table 5.8. The developments themselves are visualized in Figure 5.4. Here, it is also indicated that the 'WCL arrangement' dissolves in 1999. The dashed vertical arrow indicates the embedding of the 'WCL arrangement' in the '*Groene Woud* arrangement'.

Change factors	Manifestation	Effect
Policy entrepreneurs	- HBL director, Boxtel alderman, GS member, proactive farmer	- stimulate the rise of the *Groene Woud* arrangement by engaging new actors and resources
Policy innovations	- GGB (*Reconstructie*)	- functions as a stimulus for the stabilization of the *Groene Woud* arrangement
Adjacent arrangements	- declining adjacent agricultural arrangement	- draws several agrarians into the *Groene Woud* arrangement
Socio-political trends	- regionalization - agro-economic crisis	- stimulates the broadening of the *Groene Woud* discourse; provides additional resources - affects the decline of the adjacent agricultural arrangement
Shock events	- outbreak of swine fever	- affects the decline of the adjacent agricultural arrangement; causes the *Reconstructie* policy initiative

Table 5.8: Manifest explanatory factors for policy change in the late 1990s and early 2000s

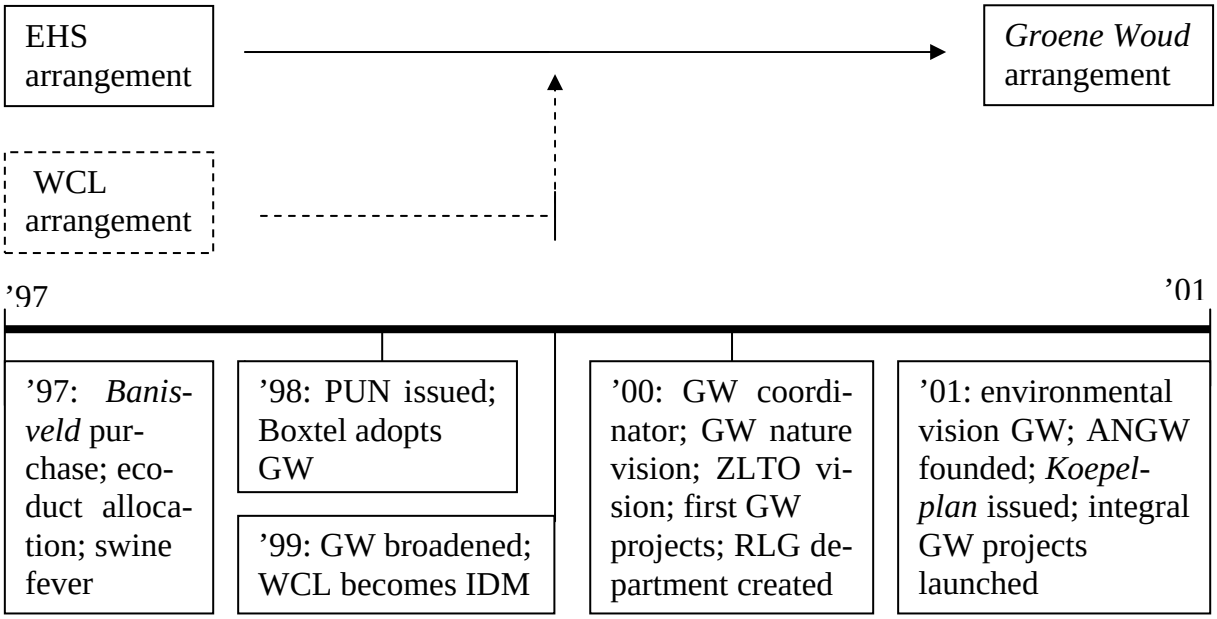

Figure 5.4: Timeline of the third period with changing arrangements and some important events

5.5 Period IV (2001-2008): towards one Midden-Brabant policy?

In the fourth period, Midden-Brabant nature policy is characterized by two comprehensive arrangements. On the one hand, there is the '*Groene Woud* arrangement', which stabilizes further. On the other hand, a new arrangement appears around the *Reconstructie* policy. At the end of the period, there are attempts to merge the two overlapping arrangements. The main developments are sketched in section 5.5.1, and an analysis in terms of the PAA is given in section 5.5.2.

5.5.1 From 2001 to 2008: *Reconstructie* and *Groene Woud*

From the early 2000s, the *Groene Woud* policy evolves quite rapidly. This culminates in the assignment of a National Landscape status, and more and more *Groene Woud* projects are launched. At the same time, the *Reconstructie* policy commences, when a specific committee starts with the creation and implementation of a *Reconstructie* plan. In the late 2000s, the province takes steps to integrate the two policies.

The *Reconstructie* commences: RC *de Meierij*

At the start of this period, the *Reconstructie* policy finally begins in Midden-Brabant. To make the policy more concrete, the provincial territory is divided into several *Reconstructie* areas. Furthermore, the province decides that, for each of the demarcated areas, a specific *Reconstructiecommissie* (Reconstruction Committee: RC) will have to be installed, constituting a comprehensive cross-section of the actors involved in each region. These RCs will have to create and eventually implement an area-specific *Reconstructie* plan, based on the provincial *Koepelplan* (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2001, see section 5.4.1).

According to an RLG civil servant, the demarcation of the *Reconstructie* areas is a very tough exercise, because the actors in the PCLG have differing perceptions about regional boundaries. As a consequence, Midden-Brabant is divided into three different areas, i.e. *de Meierij*, *Beerze Reusel* and *Maas en Meierij*. Several respondents indicate that they find it quite peculiar that in this demarcation process the borders of the *Groene Woud* layers are not followed. For some of them, this emphasizes the fact that the *Reconstructie* and *Groene Woud* policies are two separate entities. Because most of Midden-Brabant is situated in the *de Meierij Reconstructie* area and because the roles of the other RCs are less important for Midden-Brabant nature policy, from now on only the exploits of RC *de Meierij* are taken into account.

In 2001, RC *de Meierij* begins with the formulation of a *Reconstructie* plan. Its first goal is to investigate how the several functions that are visible in the Midden-Brabant rural area can best exist alongside and in interrelation with each other. The committee comprises the aldermen of eleven municipalities, water board de Dommel, ZLTO, BMF, RECRON, NM and KvK. HBL and SBB are not involved, they are represented by NM. Within the RLG department, a *de Meierij* coordinator is appointed, supported by several RLG civil servants. There are advisory functions for LNV, VROM, DLG, a GS member and the head of the PND. Also, seven local deliberation boards are installed, with local representatives of the actors participating in the RC. Moreover, a specific socio-economic platform is created, containing representatives of the municipalities, ZLTO, RECRON, KvK and some educational institutions, advised by provincial civil servants. Quite soon,

however, the IDM replaces this latter platform (SEP de Meierij, 2003; RC de Meierij, 2005).

The *Groene Woud* implementation is on its way

Meanwhile, the launching of *Groene Woud* projects continues. At the end of 2001, the PND presents a first *Groene Woud* implementation program, comprising an overview of the 43 projects that so far have been issued (Provincie Noord-Brabant and Grontmij, 2002). Several respondents point out that the four proactive individuals discerned in the previous period (i.e. the Boxtel alderman, the HBL director, the GS member and the proactive farmer) are the driving force behind many of these projects. Also, these actors start to informally discuss the course of the *Groene Woud* policy. As a consequence, as one respondent puts it, *"in the coulisses of all kinds of meetings, the Groene Woud policy was often debated"*.

As a next step, in 2002, a *Groene Woud* covenant is signed by the province, RC *de Meierij*, IDM, the municipalities of Best, Boxtel, Oisterwijk, Oirschot, Schijndel, Sint-Oedenrode and Son en Breugel, NM, SBB, HBL, the BMF, water board *De Dommel*, the ZLTO and *Groene Poort* (Green Gateway), a recreational interest organization that replaces RECRON. These actors want to show that they are committed to the *Groene Woud*, and agree to support each other and strive for a good mix between the several *Groene Woud* themes. The aforementioned implementation plan is updated and embedded in the covenant (RC de Meierij and Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2004). The cities of Eindhoven, Tilburg and 's-Hertogenbosch are asked to participate but are not interested. Consequently, the third Midden-Brabant layer remains unelaborated.

At this point, RC *de Meierij* formally starts to play a role in the *Groene Woud* policy. It signs the covenant, and moreover it is also formally charged with keeping the realization of the implementation program on course. The PND coordinator claims that the RC is involved for future reasons: *"GS had already decided that the RCs would eventually get an important role in the implementation of Midden-Brabant rural area policy. Therefore, it seemed like a good idea to connect them at an early stage to the Groene Woud"*.

However, several respondents point out that, in practice, the involvement of the RC in the *Groene Woud* policy remains very limited. First of all, the implementation of *Groene Woud* projects is going rather well. Furthermore, each project has its own leader. Also, when assistance is required, it is the PND coordinator that responds, not the RC.

Lobbying for a National Landscape status

Around the same time, i.e. early in 2002, the province updates the early 1990s policy plans that set out its first explicit engagement in nature policy (see section 5.3.1). The NNB is replaced by the *Natuur- en Landschapsoffensief Brabant* (Nature and Landscape Offensive Brabant: NLOB, Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2002a), inspired by the national *Natuur voor Mensen, Mensen voor Natuur* (Nature for People, People for Nature: NvM) plan (see section 1.1.2). The EHS is regarded as the most important success in ten years of provincial nature policy. The province expresses the ambition to speed up its realization. Furthermore, a new provincial spatial plan is presented (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2002b).

In these provincial plans, Midden-Brabant has an important position. The speeding up of the EHS implementation planned in the NLOB significantly benefits the realization of the *Groene Woud* nature core. Moreover, several additional ecological connection zones are designated in the region. In the new spatial plan, the *Groene Woud* is further confirmed as RNLE (see section 5.4.1). Formally, the new RNLE status is not that significant; it only provides the region with some additional protection through new planning measures. However, the responsible GS member, who has just started his third term, claims that he had an important strategic reason to elaborate the *Groene Woud* as RNLE: *"my ultimate goal was to get the Groene Woud designated as a National Landscape. I used the RNLE status to upgrade the Groene Woud, to try and make sure that LNV and VROM would notice it and select it"*.

The National Landscape selection procedure takes place around the same time, to be elaborated in the *Nota Ruimte* (Spatial Memorandum), the new national spatial plan that is being prepared. In the first version of this new plan, however, the Midden-Brabant region is not mentioned. For GS, Boxtel and HBL this is not acceptable, so these actors start a strong lobbying campaign. Eventually, in 2003, they are successful. One

respondent involved in the lobbying campaign points out that *"at one point, we were on an excursion somewhere, and the responsible VROM official was present as well, and during this tour, we were able to finally convince him that the Groene Woud deserved a National Landscape status"*. When the *Nota Ruimte* is issued a year later, the *Groene Woud* is indeed assigned National Landscape status (Ministeries van VROM et al, 2004), a feat that the responsible GS member calls *"the crown upon the years of hard work on Midden-Brabant nature policy"*.

Determining the *Reconstructie* plan: tough deliberations

Early in 2002, the mandate of the RC is further formalized when finally the promised law, the *Reconstructiewet* (Reconstruction Act: RW), is presented (Boonstra et al, 2007). The RC is still working on the elaboration of the *Reconstructie* plan. Much of its attention is focused on discussions about borders. First of all, in the 2002 provincial spatial plan, the province determines that the RC has to take care of the demarcation of the *Groene Woud* RNLE. This is a second official RC responsibility in *Groene Woud*-related matters, in addition to RC's formal responsibility to ensure the progress of the *Groene Woud* implementation process (see above).

This demarcation process proves to be very toilsome. One respondent, who has been involved for a long time in provincial rural area policy, compares it to the small-scale tug of war that characterized the WUR deliberations in the first period (see section 5.2.2). Agrarians, supported by the ZLTO, do not want to be located within the RNLE, whereas local NCOs and the BMF want to demarcate it as broadly as possible. The municipalities and water boards also take a stance in this discussion, alternately supporting the NCOs and BMF or the agrarians and ZLTO. The involved actors use their own expertise to try to convince the others, pointing to the detrimental effect that possible decisions will have on their activities. As a result, the demarcation process takes a long time; it is completed early in 2003.

Next, as prescribed by the RW, the so-called integral zoning map has to be elaborated. Midden-Brabant has to be divided into *Landbouwontwikkelingsgebieden* (Agricultural Development Areas: LOGs), *Extensiveringsgebieden* (Extensivation Areas: EGs) and *Verwevingsgebieden* (Integration Areas: VGs), where there is, respectively,

room for agriculture, room for nature and room for both (Bleumink, 2007). The RC initially cannot commence with this task because of a dispute about integral zoning between the BMF and the ZLTO in the PCLG. As a consequence, the ZLTO leaves the deliberation process. When during a fieldtrip to Cork, Republic of Ireland, the ZLTO is brought back to the table in June 2003 (Boonstra et al, 2007), the designation process finally starts. Several respondents claim that basically the same exercise evident during the RNLE demarcation starts all over again, although this time it takes place mainly in the local deliberation boards. Local agrarians and ZLTO branches try to have their areas designated as LOGs, but the BMF and local NCOs dispute this. Again, the municipalities and water boards variously support agrarian or nature interests.

Both these demarcation processes show that the debates in the RC mainly concern the future of the agricultural sector in Midden-Brabant, and the BMF and ZLTO generally dominate the discussions. This is also evident in the PCLG (Bleumink, 2007) and the other RCs (Groot and Kuindersma, 2007) and leads to very toilsome processes. In Midden-Brabant, the BMF and the local NCOs have a slight advantage because, here, the importance of nature and landscape is emphasized. Consequently, the room for LOGs is limited (RC de Meierij, 2005).

According to an RLG civil servant, RC *de Meierij* finishes its first version of the *Reconstructie* plan early in 2004. Several respondents point out that the RLG department has had to invest a lot of effort in getting the various RC members in line, mainly through the investment of a lot of time and capacity in an extensive lobbying campaign. The plan addresses a multitude of themes, amongst others environment, water, nature, landscape, agriculture, socio-economic aspects, livelihood, recreation, tourism and cultural history. These themes are captured in 21 goals, all focused on improving the quality of the rural area and on increasing the economic and social vitality of Midden-Brabant (RC de Meierij, 2005).

However, the finalization of the plan takes quite some time. In June 2004, the BMF leaves all RCs and the PCLG, arguing that the *Reconstructie* plans generally favour the agricultural sector too much. It takes half a year for the BMF to return. After that, it takes an additional six months to formally sanction the *Reconstructie* plans, because the RLG department has to compare them with provincial policies and relevant laws. In June 2005,

the *Reconstructie* plan is finally published (RC de Meierij, 2005). However, the BMF is still not satisfied and goes to court, disagreeing with many *Reconstructie* plans, a fact that is greatly resented by the other actors involved in the *Reconstructie* process (Groot and Kuindersma, 2007).

Eventually, early in 2006, the implementation of the Midden-Brabant *Reconstructie* plan commences. Several respondents indicate that the idea is that the members of the RC, including the province, will jointly initiate *Reconstructie*-related projects, making use of the capacity and the budget that the province and the Ministry of LNV have provided. However, this way of doing things is not yet formalized; it rather has an experimental character.

Groene Woud lacks guidance but keeps up its pace

The realization of the *Groene Woud* policy, meanwhile, proceeds rather well. After the *Groene Woud* is assigned National Landscape status, quite a number of new projects are launched. However, the actors that lobbied together for the National Landscape status (i.e. HBL, Boxtel, GS) start to play a less proactive role in determining the course of the *Groene Woud* policy, relinquishing their habit of regularly discussing it, although they remain involved as project initiators. This is mainly due to the fact that the GS member leaves office after twelve years in 2004. Also, it is felt that with the designation of the *Groene Woud* as a National Landscape, the Midden-Brabant region has been promoted sufficiently.

Around this time, some first signs of criticism of the *Groene Woud* appear. It turns out that no one is really guiding the stream of *Groene Woud* projects, and this leads to confusion about the goals of the *Groene Woud* policy among the actors involved in the various projects. This is acknowledged by a PND civil servant who argues that *"after the lobbying for the National Landscape, some sort of vacuum arose around the Groene Woud. No one really took the lead, and this led to a lot of confusion about what should happen. The province should have done this, but most of my colleagues were occupied with the start of the Reconstructie"*.

At this point, within the RLG department, voices are once more heard urging the merger of the *Groene Woud* policy with the extensive apparatus that is elaborating the

Reconstructie policy, and that the RC should take the lead in Midden-Brabant. However, HBL and Boxtel in particular reject this suggestion. They claim that the RC has neither the time nor the focus to guide the *Groene Woud*, and that it is not yet ready to coordinate implementation efforts because it is still involved in writing a *Reconstructie* plan.

Therefore, the province decides to establish the *Bestuurlijk Platform Nationaal Landschap Groene Woud* (Management Platform National Landscape *Groene Woud*: BPGW). The BPGW is given a strong advisory role vis-à-vis GS on matters that relate to the course that should be pursued in relation to the *Groene Woud* policy. Boxtel represents the Midden-Brabant municipalities, and an Eindhoven alderman is approached in order to create some commitment to the third layer. HBL represents NM and SBB, and the ZLTO and BMF also join. To increase the bond between *Reconstructie* and *Groene Woud*, a member of the RC becomes involved as well. The BPGW convenes for the first time in July 2004.

With the BPGW in place, the stream of *Groene Woud* projects is further increasing. At the end of 2004, a second implementation program is issued, now containing 104 projects instead of 43. Many new actors have jumped on the *Groene Woud* bandwagon, for example local NCOs, farmers, civilian groups, businesses, volunteers and real estate developers (RC de Meierij and Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2004). These actors continue to invest their expertise, capacity and budget in new projects, often facilitated by municipalities or by the province. The IDM has been able to secure new Interreg funds; this results in a large project to create a *Groene Woud* brand. Also, a study on the economic spin-off of the *Groene Woud* is conducted (Witteveen+Bos and Imagro BV, 2006). Moreover, an annual *Groene Woud* festival is organized. In 2007, a third implementation program is issued, with 237 projects (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2007).

The situation in 2008: towards one comprehensive policy for Midden-Brabant

In the late 2000s, the provincial *Groene Woud* and RC *de Meierij* coordinators begin to discuss the long since pending integration of the *Groene Woud* and *Reconstructie* policies into one integral and comprehensive rural area policy for Midden-Brabant. This would imply a merger between the BPGW, RC *de Meierij* and IDM (which until now has played an important role in both policies). The coordinators argue that, since the *Reconstructie*

policy has entered the implementation phase, it is no longer feasible to allow the *Groene Woud* to continue separately. After all, the *Reconstructie* and *Groene Woud* policies cover largely the same territory and have similar goals. The argument that was used before, i.e. that the *Groene Woud* should run ahead because the *Reconstructie* was lagging behind, is no longer valid.

Moreover, within the provincial organization it is felt that the *Reconstructie* and *Groene Woud* policies can strengthen each other. The *Groene Woud* policy, on the one hand, still lacks guidance. The BPGW has not been able to provide this. One respondent states that *"the BPGW is hanging above the Groene Woud, somewhere, but it is not connected to it and it is not clear what its responsibilities are. Consequently, it does not really have a function"*. It is argued that a merger with the *Reconstructie* would provide the *Groene Woud* with a well elaborated course. Also, the *Groene Woud* policy could profit from the extensive government budget and capacity pertaining to the *Reconstructie*. RC *de Meierij*, on the other hand, lacks experience with creating and implementing projects to realize its goals. Therefore, only a relatively limited number of projects have been launched so far. In this case, a merger with the *Groene Woud* policy, where many projects have long since been initiated, could give an important boost to the implementation of the *Reconstructie*.

However, the first attempts to bring a merger about are not successful. One respondent states that *"since a new structure would mean the introduction of new leaders, the high-ranking officials in the IDM, RC and BPGW were reluctant to accept such a structure, not wanting to lose their island of power"*. Moreover, there are quite a few actors, mostly active in *Groene Woud* projects, who are afraid that the *Groene Woud* may lose the regional enthusiasm that has been built up in a bottom-up fashion over the years. A PND civil servant claims that *"many consider it the strength of the Groene Woud that we, as the province, only play a facilitative role. As a result, people that engage in the Groene Woud feel free to act as they see fit. I fear that an integration with the Reconstructie might kill this regional spirit"*.

Despite these misgivings, at the end of this period, the province starts to carry out the merger between the *Groene Woud* and *Reconstructie* policies anyway. First of all, it brings all its civil servants working on Midden-Brabant together in a so-called *Streekhuis*

(Regional Office), to facilitate both *Groene Woud* and *Reconstructie* projects (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2007). In addition, a so-called agenda committee is created, in which members of the BPGW and RC *de Meierij* compare, adjust and align the agendas of both bodies.

Eventually, towards the end of 2007, the BPGW, IDM and RC *de Meierij* agree that a merger is the best option after all. A common vision is developed, integrating the *Reconstructie* plan with the provincial spatial plan and the *Groene Woud* nature, environmental vision and implementation program. In June 2008, a formal meeting is held in which the new vision is presented. The interests of the RC, BPGW and IDM are integrated, and proposals are made on how the to-be-established new organization should function. It is decided that the National Landscape status will become the main vehicle of the new policy, which will be known as *Groene Woud* (Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2008). At the time of writing, the establishment of the new organization is not yet concluded, but it seems just a matter of time before the merger of the *Reconstructie*, *Groene Woud* and IDM is a fact.

5.5.2 The late 2000s: two comprehensive integral arrangements

In the fourth period, Midden-Brabant nature policy is embedded in two integral policy arrangements, one focused on the *Groene Woud*, the other on the *Reconstructie*. Both largely cover the entire region. Even though these arrangements are two separate entities, their interrelation and overlap is quite significant. At the end of the period, therefore, an attempt is made to merge the two.

The '*Groene Woud* arrangement' stabilizes further

After the early 2000s, the '*Groene Woud* arrangement' that appeared in the late 1990s further stabilizes (see Table 5.9). This stabilization is mainly reflected in the assignment of National Landscape status – which in turn is the consequence of a similarly named and nationally orchestrated policy initiative that has a GGB character – and in the significant increase in *Groene Woud* projects over the course of the 2000s. Whereas in 2001 there are 43 projects, in 2007 there are 237.

In terms of the discourse dimension, not a lot is changing. The two interrelated strategies of realizing the *Groene Woud* nature and landscape park concept through the initiation of all kinds of nature core and second layer projects is further pursued, as mentioned resulting in a continual stream of *Groene Woud*-related projects (see section 5.4.2).

As in the previous period, the increase in the number of participating actors continues also. New actors include, for example, local NCOs, local agrarians, civilian groups, businesses, volunteers and real estate developers. These actors complement those that from the start were involved in *Groene Woud*-related activities. To guide the activities of the project-related sub-coalitions within which these actors are organized, a new coalition is created, the BPGW, which replaces the informal *Groene Woud* platform. RC *de Meierij* also plays a role in the arrangement, but in practice its involvement remains limited. Furthermore, the IDM, the ANGW and the EHS coalition are also still visible, and of the four individuals that operated as policy entrepreneurs in the late 1990s and early 2000s (see section 5.4.2), eventually three remain, i.e. the HBL director, the Boxtel alderman and the proactive farmer. The GS member leaves office.

Because the emphasis on the implementation of the *Groene Woud* through the initiation of projects remains the most important issue, power within the arrangement continues to be dispersed over the individual project initiators. These actors manage to mobilize a lot of funding, capacity and expertise to sustain *Groene Woud*-related activities. Regional enthusiasm continues to be an important resource as well. The remaining three policy entrepreneurs continue to be more influential than the other actors, because of their charisma, expertise and useful contacts. Furthermore, many of the resources that are mobilized continue to be derived from the continually visible regionalization trend. Also, the National Landscape policy initiative provides new budgets and a prestigious status. It is clear that this latter policy initiative has not been allocated to the region by coincidence; halfway throughout the period, the (then) four policy entrepreneurs manage to secure this policy initiative for Midden-Brabant through an extensive lobbying campaign.

Furthermore, the informal rules that already characterized the '*Groene Woud* arrangement' are still very much in vogue. The loosely binding character of the interactions becomes very much cherished throughout the entire period. Actors like the

fact that they are free to organize their projects as they see fit, and everyone who is interested in launching a *Groene Woud*-related initiative can still gain access to the arrangement. The facilitative role of the province in particular is very much appreciated.

However, from the mid 2000s, an important disadvantage connected to these interaction rules is visible. Due to their informal character, said rules fail to provide a lot of guidance to the *Groene Woud* policy. It is therefore not clear where the policy is headed, and this creates quite a lot of confusion among the various actors involved. Moreover, the many *Groene Woud* projects are not attuned to one another. The abovementioned BPGW coalition is installed to resolve this disadvantage, but the coalition does not function very well.

Late 2000s	***Groene Woud* arrangement**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	*Groene Woud* - *Groene Woud* nature and landscape park - nature core *Groene Woud* projects; second layer *Groene Woud* projects
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	PND, GS, municipalities, water boards, SBB, LNV Zuid, DLG (gov); HBL, IDM, ZLTO, BMF, ANGW, NM, *Groene Poort*, local NCOs, local agrarians, civilian groups, businesses, volunteers, real estate developers (non-gov) - EHS, BPGW, IDM, ANGW, RC *de Meierij*, project coalitions - HBL director, Boxtel alderman, proactive farmer
Power **- resources** **- influence**	The capacity to realize the *Groene Woud* is spread over the various project initiators - capacity, expertise, budget, regional enthusiasm (project initiators); charisma, expertise, contacts (policy entrepreneurs) - actors initiate own *Groene Woud* projects stimulated by the policy entrepreneurs
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Working together in a loosely bound, informal and unguided setting - open to anyone who wants to realize a *Groene Woud* project - informally taken by project initiators in an unguided fashion

Table 5.9: Stable *Groene Woud* arrangement in the late 2000s

The '*Reconstructie* arrangement' complements the '*Groene Woud* arrangement'

Besides comprehending the further stabilization of the '*Groene Woud* arrangement', the fourth period also sees the materialization of a second arrangement (see Table 5.10). In

terms of discourse, this new '*Reconstructie* arrangement' is even more comprehensive than the '*Groene Woud* arrangement'. Like in this latter arrangement, attention is paid to nature and sustainable agriculture, but several other themes are explicitly incorporated as well, such as socio-economic aspects and recreation. This means that the arrangement embodies a multi-functional rural area concept. This concept appears in Midden-Brabant because of a nationally and provincially orchestrated *Reconstructie* policy initiative that after several years of delay is introduced in the region. This initiative is in turn partially inspired by the still visible regionalization trend. To realize the concept, many *Reconstructie*-related projects are needed, based on a to-be-established *Reconstructie* plan.

The province organizes the realization of the *Reconstructie* policy. To achieve this, it establishes a broad coalition, RC *de Meierij*, which reflects a cross-section of all the relevant Midden-Brabant actors. These actors represent the various themes that the *Reconstructie* incorporates. In addition, the IDM takes part in the arrangement, eventually functioning as a socio-economic platform. In the interactions that over time occur, the nature and agriculture themes in particular are predominantly addressed. In fact, it can even be argued that, around these two themes, two informal sub-coalitions materialize. In the nature sub-coalition, the BMF is prominently involved, in the agriculture sub-coalition, the ZLTO is in charge. These two actors play an entrepreneurial role. Such a role is also visible for the RLG department (see below).

Initially, the stabilization of the arrangement evolves rather uneasily. The two policy entrepreneurs ZLTO and BMF and their two respective sub-coalitions try to influence the contents of the *Reconstructie* plan according to their own interests, invoking their own capacity and expertise and rallying the support of the other RC members, especially in relation to the boundaries that the RC has to demarcate. It turns out that the nature-related sub-coalition is slightly more influential because of the relatively green character of the Midden-Brabant region.

This struggle comes to an end when the *Reconstructie* plan is completed. The RLG department plays an important mediating role in this respect, investing a lot of its capacity in bringing the various coalition members together. After that, the involved actors are expected to join forces with the province and engage in *Reconstructie* projects. In this

matter, they can mobilize the extensive budget and capacity that the province and the ministry of LNV have allocated. In addition, they are expected to invest resources of their own, especially capacity and expertise. At the end of this period, the implementation of the *Reconstructie* plan is just underway, so there are not many projects up and running yet. The members of the RC have yet to show their ability in realizing this jointly established plan.

The interaction rules of the '*Reconstructie* arrangement' have always been very much formalized by the government. The RW for example arranges which actors the province should invite to the RC. Also, the participants that are approached have to pledge that they will take responsibility for bringing the *Reconstructie* policy further, partaking in regular RC meetings. The above-outlined struggle indicates that the RC members for a long time were taking responsibility only for their own respective interests. With the *Reconstructie* plan finished, they are asked to take part in the realization of the integral ambitions. However, although the formalized deliberations continue, the implementation process is not formally arranged yet; new responsibilities still have to be allocated.

Late 2000s	***Reconstructie* arrangement**
Discourse **- concept** **- strategy**	*Reconstructie* - multi-functional rural area - realize *Reconstructie* projects
Actors **- coalitions** **- entrepreneurs**	GS, RLG, PND, LNV Zuid, VROM, DLG, municipalities, water boards (gov); NM, RECRON, ZLTO, BMF, KvK (non-gov) - RC *de Meierij*, IDM, sub-coalitions on nature and agriculture - RLG, ZLTO, BMF
Power **- resources** **- influence**	RC *de Meierij* has the capacity together with the province to realize the *Reconstructie* - budget, capacity (province, LNV); capacity, expertise (RC members) - after establishing a *Reconsturctieplan*, RC *de Meierij* members have yet to engage in new *Reconstructie* projects
Rules **- access** **- responsibility**	Restricted and formalized cooperative process - determined by the province, restricted to RC *de Meierij* members - divided over RC *de Meierij* members and the province; to be newly allocated in the implementation phase

Table 5.10: Stable *Reconstructie* arrangement in the late 2000s

The late 2000s: a *Groene Woud–Reconstructie* merger attempt

When the fourth period comes to an end, there are two parallel comprehensive and integral policy arrangements in Midden-Brabant. The first one, the '*Groene Woud* arrangement', has materialized from the more sectoral 'EHS arrangement' in the late 1990s. It can be argued that the second one, the '*Reconstructie* arrangement', is grounded in a desire on the part of the provincial government to restructure the adjacent agricultural arrangement. Moreover, each of these two arrangements has its own specific qualities. However, they also show a considerable amount of overlap.

Therefore, in the late 2000s, the provincial government considers merging the two policies. It argues that the two can reinforce each other. The '*Groene Woud* arrangement' can profit from the formal rules and resources embedded in the '*Reconstructie* arrangement'. The latter arrangement in turn can incorporate the project initiation strategy that has been honed in the '*Groene Woud* arrangement' for quite some time already. Adversaries of the merger, however, argue that the regional enthusiasm that is a pivotal resource for the '*Groene Woud* arrangement' will disappear once the rules of said arrangement are adapted to the formal character of the '*Reconstructie* arrangement'. Moreover, in both arrangements, there are actors that do not want to give up their power position.

At the time of writing, the merger between the two arrangements is nevertheless being orchestrated. The IDM coalition is also incorporated in this process, which is led by the province. For example, a common venue has been established to accommodate the various projects initiators, the so-called *Streekhuis*. Also, at a large meeting, a new structure for the merged policies has been outlined. It remains to be seen, however, whether this suggested structure will stabilize into one comprehensive Midden-Brabant policy arrangement.

The change factors that have affected these developments are presented in Table 5.11. The developments themselves, as well as several of the main events, are visualized in Figure 5.5. Note that the '*Reconstructie* arrangement' in the beginning has a relatively unstable character, due to the competitive process that initially ensues. The vertical dashed two-headed arrow on the right indicates the merger attempt undertaken by the province at the end of the fourth period.

Change factors	Manifestation	Effect
Policy entrepreneurs	- HBL director, pro-active farmer, Boxtel alderman - ZLTO, BMF, RLG	- stimulate the further stabilization of the *Groene Woud* arrangement by engaging new actors and resources - stimulate the slowly evolving stabilization of the *Reconstructie* arrangement
Policy innovations	- GGB (National Land-scapes) - GGB (*Reconstructie*)	- stimulates the stabilization of the integral *Groene Woud* arrangement - causes the rise of the integral *Reconstructie* arrangement
Adjacent arrangements	Not visible	Not visible
Socio-political trends	Regionalization	- stimulates the stabilization of the *Groene Woud* and *Reconstructie* arrangements
Shock events	Not visible	Not visible

Table 5.11: Manifest explanatory factors for policy change from the early 2000s

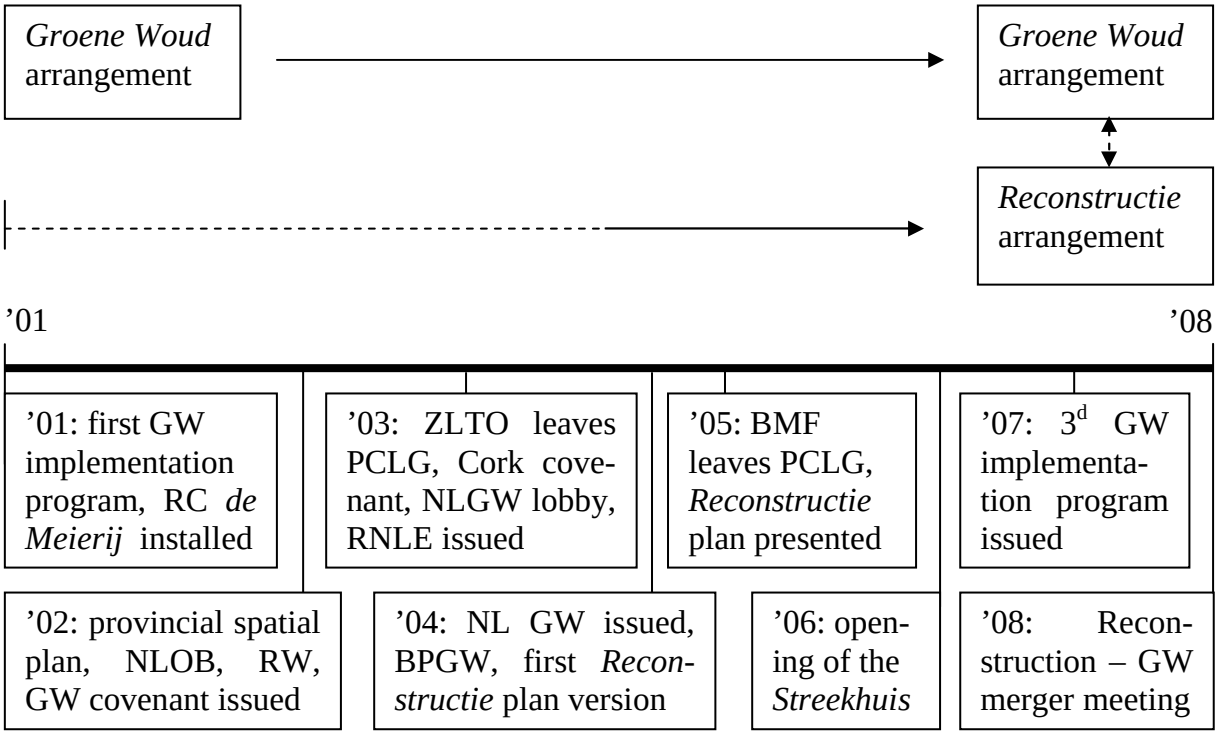

Figure 5.5: Timeline of the fourth period with changing arrangements and some important events

Chapter 6 Governance

In this chapter, the modes of, and shifts in, governance that have appeared over time in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant are presented (respectively in sections 6.1 and 6.2) and compared (in section 6.3). Consequently, research questions two, three (in the former two sections) and four (in the third section) are addressed:

2. Which modes of governance appear over time in these nature policy arrangements?

3. Which change factors are responsible for the shifts that appear over time in these modes of governance?

4. Which differences and similarities are visible between the governance modes and shifts that have appeared in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant, and why have these occurred?

Section 6.4 discusses what this means for the general appearance of governance in Dutch nature policy. Consequently, research question five is also dealt with:

5. What does the occurrence of these differences and similarities mean for the general manifestation of governance modes and shifts in Dutch nature policy?

6.1 Governance shifts in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug

This section highlights the governance modes and shifts that over time appear in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case, based on the evolving policy arrangements sketched in Chapter 4. Regarding governance modes, it is outlined which of the four varieties (i.e. hierarchical, closed co-, open co- and self governance) is predominantly visible at a particular point in time. The three organizational dimensions of the policy arrangement approach (PAA) guide in determining this (see section 2.2.4). The relative strength of the apparent modes (i.e. weak or strong) is also indicated.

Regarding governance shifts, this means that several aspects are emphasized. On the one hand, attention is paid to shifts between the various modes (for example from closed co-governance to open co-governance). On the other hand, attention is paid to shifts within one governance mode (for example from weak self governance to strong self governance). Finally, it is also possible that both shift types appear (for example from weak closed co-governance to strong closed co-governance).

6.1.1 The early 1970s: weak and unintentional self governance

In the early 1970s, in the 'purchase arrangement', only one actor, the non-governmental nature conservation organization (NCO) *Het Utrechts Landschap* (The Utrecht Landscape: HUL), is proactively involved in the governance of Heuvelrug nature. By opting to buy natural areas, it tries to play an entrepreneurial role. Another NCO, *Natuurmonumenten* (Nature Monuments: NM), is active in other regions, and the role of the two involved governmental actors (the province and the *Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk* [Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work: CRM]) is limited. In addition, interaction between the four actors is minimal; there is no explicit coalition. Other actors active in the region are not primarily concerned with nature; they are involved in an adjacent arrangement focused on forestry.

The interaction rules embody the forerunning role of HUL, which materializes into two agreements made between the actors involved. The first one, the spheres of influence map, shows that the NCO is entitled to buy Heuvelrug lands. The second one, the reimbursement agreement, determines that the government reactively facilitates the non-governmental initiatives; it afterwards reimburses the purchase costs.

Although this implies that the government does take some responsibility for governing nature, its involvement remains limited, mainly because it prioritizes the adjacent forestry arrangement. Attempts to engage governmental actors more prominently are to no avail. This gives HUL's forerunning role an unintentional connotation; the NCO does not so much *take* the initiative, it is rather *left* with it.

Moreover, although the non-governmental NCO HUL is the only policy entrepreneur, it does not have the power to determine governing. Its purchase capacity is

constrained by the fact that it depends on resources that are controlled by others, i.e. on the lands of a group of non-governmental actors (the private estate owners) and on government budgets. Because most private owners – who partially gain their livelihoods from the adjacent forestry arrangement – are not inclined to sell their properties, land is only occasionally available. As a consequence, it is also only occasionally possible to mobilize government budgets to acquire such lands.

Consequently, in the early 1970s, it is a non-governmental NCO that is governing nature, occupying a forerunning role. From this, the conclusion can be drawn that *self governance* is the predominant mode. However, at the same time, signs of closed co-governance are also visible. For instance, government actors are also involved, although their engagement is rather marginal. Moreover, in its activities, the non-governmental policy entrepreneur partially depends on government resources, and this gives the governance of nature a weak character. This governance situation derives mainly from the presence of an adjacent forestry arrangement that overshadows the governance of nature. Because of their activities in this arrangement, neither the Heuvelrug private owners nor the government are inclined to engage more proactively in governing nature.

6.1.2 From the mid 1970s: reversed shift to strong closed co-governance

From the mid 1970s, governmental actors become much more explicitly involved in the 'purchase arrangement'. The most important one is the new *Provinciale Natuurdienst* (Provincial Nature Department: PND), which joins forces with the already proactive NCO HUL. Both actors become policy entrepreneurs, leading a coalition in which several other actors participate, amongst others *Staatsbosbeheer* (State Forest Service: SBB), the *Ministerie van Landbouw en Visserij* (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: L&V) and *Gedeputeerde Staten* (Provincial Executive: GS). The engagement of these latter actors is closely linked to their withdrawal from, and the decline of, the adjacent forestry arrangement (see section 4.2.3).

Within the new coalition, the interaction rules change. The non-governmental NCO HUL is no longer solely responsible for governing nature. Instead, an atmosphere

of cooperation emerges. The exploits of the two policy entrepreneurs in particular stand out; they are the driving force behind the activities undertaken. Informally, it also becomes the rule that governance has a restrictive character; access is confined to the coalition members only. For example, the private owners and several governmental actors that try to downgrade the purchase ambitions are sidestepped.

By pooling their resources, over the years the coalition members are able to consolidate an influential role. In their purchase activities they depend on the lands controlled by the private owners, but, over time, these resources are much more extensively available. This is due to the decline of the adjacent forestry arrangement, which leads to many private estate owners having to sell their properties. HUL and the PND exercise their entrepreneurial role through the mobilization of the budgets needed to acquire the available lands. This is made easier by the fact that government is much more explicitly engaged.

Consequently, Heuvelrug nature is governed by a select few governmental and non-governmental actors who pool their resources and cooperate in a restrictive fashion. This means that it is characterized by a mode of *closed co-governance* that importantly strengthens from the mid 1970s, replacing the weak mode of self governance of the early 1970s. This *reversed shift* is first of all enabled by the decline of the adjacent forestry arrangement because this decline frees up a large amount of the pivotal resource (i.e. land) and at the same time draws the government into the governance of nature. Of equal importance are the exploits of two policy entrepreneurs (HUL and PND) that are responsible for seizing the opportunities that are offered by the decline of the adjacent forestry arrangement.

This development is visualized in Figure 6.1. The dashed nature of the left textbox and the subsequent first half of the arrow reflect the initial weak character of governing. The relevant external factor is positioned above the horizontal arrow, whereas the internal one is situated below (this will remain the case throughout the remainder of this chapter).

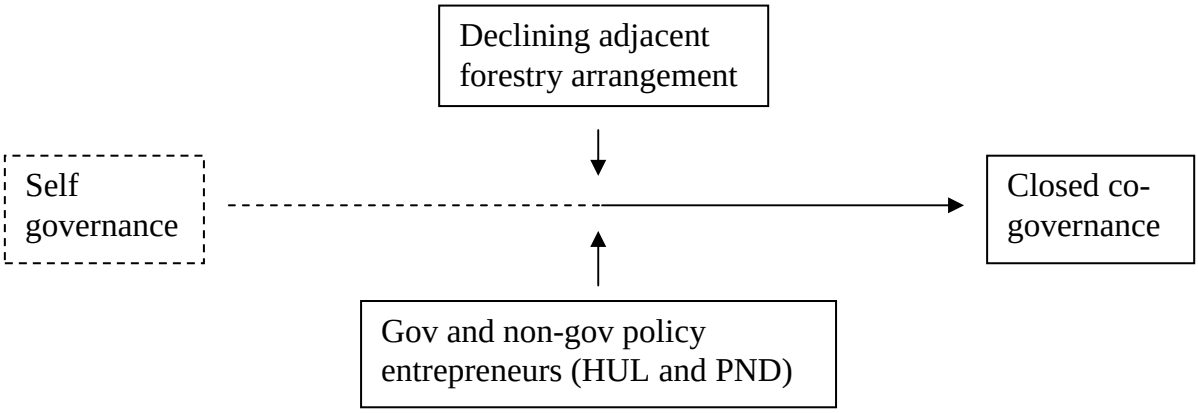

Figure 6.1: Reversed shift from weak self governance to strong closed co-governance in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug from the mid 1970s

6.1.3 Towards the mid 1990s: closed co-governance weakens

In the mid 1990s, almost two decades after its emergence, this strong mode of closed co-governance weakens significantly, and the 'purchase arrangement' transforms into the 'safeguarding arrangement'. As a result of two socio-political trends (decentralization and regionalization), the provincial government, empowered to play a more prominent role, starts to focus its nature-related governance efforts on a select few regions. Because Heuvelrug nature is not very interesting from the point of view of a recently introduced national policy initiative (ecological networks), the new *Ecologische Hoofdstructuur* (Ecological Main Structure: EHS) policy is introduced without much ado. From that moment onwards, the Heuvelrug is no longer among the regions that the government prioritizes. As a consequence, government resources are withdrawn. On top of that, land availability drops significantly, mainly because the "low hanging fruit" (the land of the weakest private owners) has already been bought. This twofold resource deficiency diminishes the influence of the existing coalition and its two policy entrepreneurs and hampers the pooling of their resources.

Because of the shifting government priorities, the rule that the governmental and non-governmental coalition members cooperate to jointly govern Heuvelrug nature falls somewhat into abeyance. Moreover, the restrictive character of governing also is broken, given the entrance of a new actor (see below). It is eventually even the case that

responsibility for Heuvelrug nature policy is generally neglected, as a consequence of the abovementioned policy initiative and socio-political trends that deflect government attention away from the Heuvelrug. This means that a situation arises in which *no one* is actively taking responsibility.

The coalition that appeared in the mid 1970s therefore continues to exist, but its composition changes. Moreover, its activities, and the interactions within it, are decimated. The two policy entrepreneurs of old, HUL and the PND, are no longer able to maintain their proactive role because of the new course that is being pursued by the provincial government and because of the low level of land availability. A new governmental actor, *Dienst Landelijk Gebied* (Government Service for Land and Water Management: DLG), is introduced into the coalition to supervise the adapted and downgraded governing activities, but this actor does not take over the proactive role that the PND and HUL used to play. This means that, in the end, no policy entrepreneurs remain.

These developments reflect a *weakening of closed co-governance*. Largely the same actors are engaged in governing nature, complemented with one new governmental actor. However, the mode of closed co-governance assumes a weak character; since only few resources are available, the capacity of the coalition to realize its ambitions has diminished severely, and the rule of tightly knit and restricted cooperation is considerably less evident. This is consequent to three interrelated external change factors, i.e. two socio-political trends (decentralization and regionalization) and a nationally orchestrated policy initiative (ecological networks). Figure 6.2 visualizes said developments. Note that the dashed arrow and textbox reflect the weak closed co-governance character that appears in the mid 1990s.

At this point, two comments seem in order. First of all, the decline of closed co-governance is closely related to a decrease in land availability; the opportunities that arose in the mid 1970s, grounded in the decline of the adjacent forestry arrangement, have all been utilized. Secondly, it could be argued that it is the government, responding to the abovementioned trends and initiative, that brings about the decline of closed co-governance. This could be seen as reflecting signs of hierarchical governance, but the new government engagement does not endure. For example, no governmental policy

entrepreneurs replace HUL and the PND. Consequently, hierarchical governance eventually does not materialize.

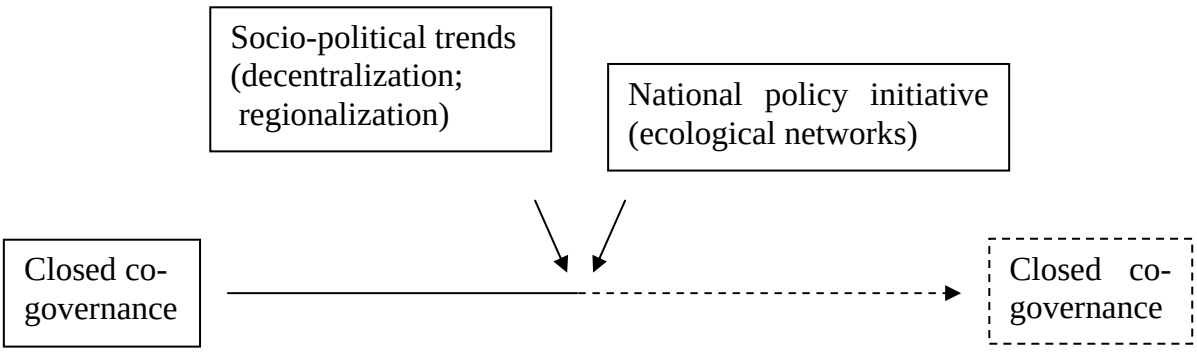

Figure 6.2: Weakening of closed co-governance in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug in the first half of the 1990s

6.1.4 From the mid 1990s: shift to self governance in two fashions

After the decline of closed co-governance, two entirely new modes appear, one in the south of the Heuvelrug, the other covering the entire region. These two modes, both characterized by self governance, overshadow the weakened mode of closed co-governance. The former one attracts most attention (see below).

Governing nature in the south: strong self governance

From the mid 1990s, a new mode of governance appears in the south of the Heuvelrug, with the rise of the 'southern National Park arrangement'. At the basis of its appearance are the private estate owners, a group of non-governmental actors that until now has only marginally been involved in governing nature. The engagement of these actors is sparked by a national policy initiative that occurred in the early 1990s (i.e. the creation of Dutch National Parks). Disliking both the National Park concept itself and the way in which the government tries to introduce it, the private owners initially block the initiative (see section 4.3.2). After that, however, they begin to realize that they do want to participate in a National Park, but on their own terms. Therefore, the private owners

adopt an entrepreneurial role. Eventually, they manage to persuade the other governmental and non-governmental actors with a stake in the south of the Heuvelrug to form a sub-regional coalition (the *Overlegorgaan Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug* [Deliberation Board National Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug: ONPUH]).

The interaction rules that appear in the new mode of governance determine that the governmental and non-governmental actors involved in the ONPUH should cooperate to realize the National Park. However, at the same time, these actors cannot be obliged to get involved; access is voluntary. Furthermore, the actors that eventually join the National Park coalition agree to jointly take responsibility in their part of the region. They together determine that all future decisions on the course of the National Park will have to be based on consensus.

Despite this focus on cooperation between all relevant actors on the southern Heuvelrug, however, it is the private owners that over time remain the most influential actors. They are continually able to have a say in many decisions by referring to the fact that without their properties a National Park is not possible. Thus utilizing their landownership as a main resource, they for example introduce a concept that is much less ecologically inspired than is usual in a Dutch National Park, even defending this on the national level. Also, the voluntary access rule and the consensus-based responsibility rule have been installed by the private owners. The other involved actors have no choice but to play along, since the alternative is accepting that there will be no National Park.

This means that, even though the mode of governance that appears in the south of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug has some characteristics of closed co-governance (a more or less equal amount of governmental and non-governmental actors, rules that indicate cooperation between these actors), *self governance* is the best way to characterize it. This conclusion is based mainly on the very influential role of the private estate owners, who keep on acting as important policy entrepreneurs, causing the gradual strengthening of governance, i.e. from a rather weak to a quite strong mode. Self governance seems to appear through an act of resistance against government; it is a rejected national policy initiative, the creation of National Parks, originating from the previous period, that draws the private owners into the governance of Heuvelrug nature.

These developments are visualized in Figure 6.3. The fact that self governance arises as an entirely new mode of governance, i.e. not as the transformation of an existing mode, is indicated by the vertical line from which the horizontal arrow emanates. That the policy initiative that is partially responsible for this rise originates from the previous period is indicated by the indirect dashed arrow that emanates from the top left textbox. The initially weak character of self governance is represented by the dashed nature of the left part of the horizontal arrow. That the private estate owners as policy entrepreneurs are responsible for both the rise of self governance and its further strengthening is indicated by the two arrows coming from the corresponding textbox.

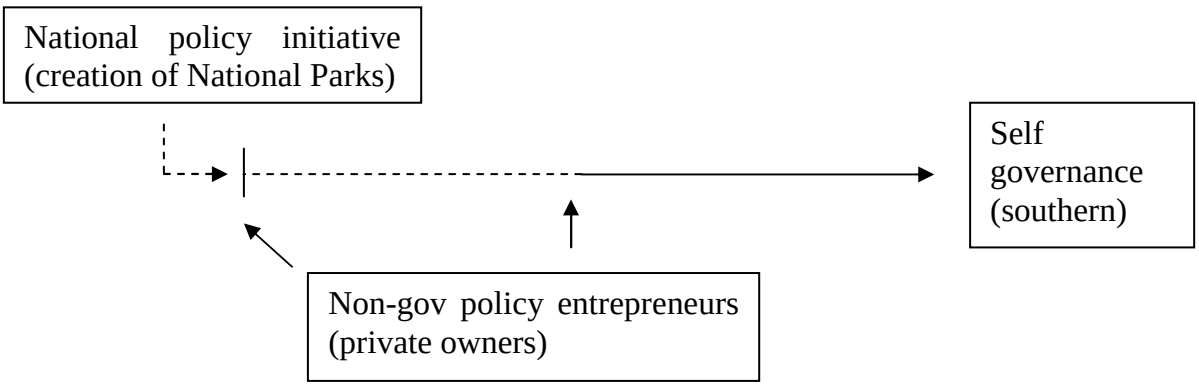

Figure 6.3: Rise of strong self governance in the south of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug after the mid 1990s

Governing nature coherently and regionally: weak self governance

Around the time that the National Park takes shape in the south, a new governance mode with a more regional and comprehensive character arises in the newly appearing 'cohesion arrangement', as a result of the exploits of one of the policy entrepreneurs from before the mid 1990s, i.e. the non-governmental NCO HUL. This actor tries to put ecological networks, a policy initiative of the early 1990s, on the agenda; it argues that this initiative does apply to the Heuvelrug and that the corresponding EHS policy does need further elaboration, disagreeing with the government on this matter. The NCO manages to gather a large coalition to elaborate this alternative interpretation and

promote the further cohesion of the Heuvelrug region, involving both governmental and non-governmental actors, including all Heuvelrug landowners and LNV and the PND. By doing so, it tries to regain its role as a policy entrepreneur.

However, despite the proclaimed commitment of the coalition members, the involved governmental and non-governmental actors never truly start working together. The governmental participants, in particular, do not take responsibility for the comprehensive regional approach, despite earlier promises and explicit calls on the part of HUL to become more proactively engaged. The government reluctance to take part is based on the same reasons that caused the decline of closed co-governance in the mid 1990s (see section 6.1.3). Because of the continuing socio-political trend towards regionalization, the government continues to prioritize other regions. Moreover, it still maintains that ecological networks are not an issue on the Heuvelrug, not accepting HUL's alternative interpretation. Consequently, the informal interaction rule remains that HUL is the only forerunner, left to take the lead on its own.

It eventually turns out that HUL does not have the power to bring its new comprehensive and regional approach further on its own. Although it has managed to focus the spotlight on its new approach, for example at a *Week van het Landschap* (Week of the Landscape: WvhL) event, it is not able to generate the necessary (government) support for its ambitions; this is due to the aforementioned socio-political trend and the different interpretation of the ecological networks policy initiative. All in all, only a few resources are invested in the realization of the new approach, and HUL's entrepreneurial role remains limited. After a promising start, therefore, the comprehensive governance mode fails to strengthen further.

This means that, although several governmental and non-governmental actors are involved and to a certain extent work together, only HUL is truly engaged in trying to govern nature from a regional perspective. Hence, *self governance* is the predominant mode. At the same time, this mode remains rather weak, mainly because government commitment and resources are lacking. Moreover, as in the early 1970s, it acquires a rather unintentional connotation. The government reluctance to get engaged is grounded in the continuing socio-political trend towards regionalization and in the ecological

networks policy initiative of the early 1990s. Note that the same initiative, interpreted differently, explains the entrepreneurial role of HUL.

Figure 6.4 visualizes these developments. Again, the vertical line from which the horizontal arrow emanates indicates the rise of a newly appearing governance mode. Above and below this vertical line, the change factors that are responsible for this rise are given. The dashed nature of the horizontal arrow indicates the weak character of self governance. The double role of ecological networks (i.e. as incentive for HUL's entrepreneurship and as constraint for further strengthening [in combination with a socio-political trend]) is visualized by the two arrows emanating from the corresponding textbox. Note that both the initiative and the trend in this latter case are not causing change. Instead, they *hamper* change by constraining the further strengthening of self governance.

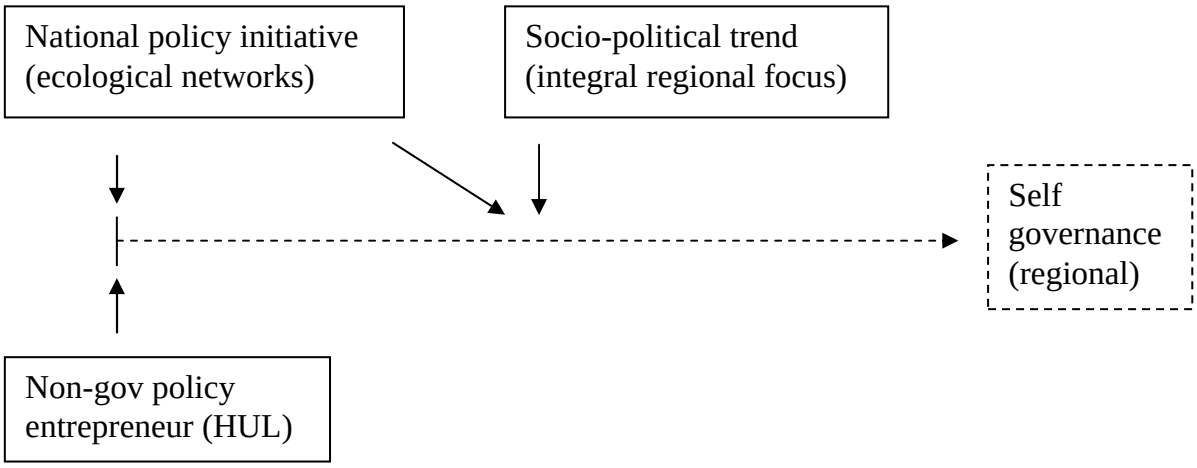

Figure 6.4: Rise of weak self governance in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug after the mid 1990s

On the basis of the appearance of both new governance modes it can be argued that from the mid 1990s a *shift in governance* takes place; self governance replaces closed co-governance. There are two modes as a consequence of separate efforts of non-governmental policy entrepreneurs who are reacting to two policy initiatives of the early 1990s. Overall, governance in the south of the region overshadows the comprehensive regional mode. The southern mode is much stronger, reflecting the influential role of the

private owners, as well as the explicit support of the other actors engaged in this part of the region. The comprehensive mode remains rather weak because it is only carried by one NCO.

6.1.5 After the early 2000s: self and closed co-governance coexist

In the early 2000s, a second sub-regional governance mode appears, focused on the centre of the region and characterized by closed co-governance. This provides evidence for the appearance of a non-shift in governance. At the same time, self governance in the south continues to be visible. Meanwhile, the regional governance mode, already rather weak, gradually disappears.

Governing nature in the centre: strong closed co-governance

In the early 2000s, the province forms a coalition in which governmental and non-governmental actors from the centre of the Heuvelrug take part; this leads to the rise of the 'central corridors arrangement'. This is a reaction to a new, more integral land exchange strategy developed by the NCO HUL, which gives its entrepreneurial role a new direction. A large amount of land is available to accommodate the exchange as a result of a socio-political trend (a military reorganization, see section 4.5.2). The established coalition comprises actors with both a green (nature) and a red (urban expansion) interest. Informally, however, two sub-coalitions appear, reflecting this green-red distinction. The former comprises HUL and the PND, the latter, actors such as the *Kamer van Koophandel* (Chamber of Commerce: KvK) and several municipalities and provincial departments. The PND and the KvK complement the NCO HUL as policy entrepreneurs (see below).

The official interaction rule is that the members of the new coalition have to cooperate in a restrictive fashion to jointly realize the de-fragmentation of the centre of the Heuvelrug. However, behind the scenes, for a long time such cooperation only hesitantly materializes, because actors from the two sub-coalitions heavily compete with one another, trying to rhyme the de-fragmentation process as much as possible with their own respective red and green interests. The three policy entrepreneurs (PND, HUL and

KvK) in particular are engaged in this. HUL and the PND have to work very hard to eventually persuade the members of the red sub-coalition to adhere to the official rule. Only after several years, in the mid 2000s, is a constructive form of cooperation brought about.

This means that governing is characterized by a competitive process between actors with a green and a red interest that use their resources to try and dispute each others' capacity to determine how the new strategy should be applied. Eventually, under the influence of HUL and the PND, the sub-coalitions are able to work out a compromise. Together the coalition members start pooling their resources to implement this agreement. The two entrepreneurs, HUL and PND, are sustained by a provincial policy initiative, i.e. a "no, unless" principle that stipulates that expansions into nature areas in principle are disallowed.

From this, the conclusion can be drawn that *closed co-governance* is predominant. After an absence of several years, in the early 2000s the government becomes explicitly involved in the governance of Heuvelrug nature once more. A socio-political trend, a military reorganization and the efforts of the non-governmental policy entrepreneur HUL, are at the basis of this renewed government involvement. In a newly created coalition, governmental and non-governmental actors cooperate in a restricted way, brought together by the province, elaborating a new land exchange strategy. The efforts of three policy entrepreneurs (HUL, the PND and KvK) and a provincial policy initiative (the "no, unless" principle) are important for the eventual strengthening of the new mode.

These developments are visualized in Figure 6.5. The dashed nature of the left part of the horizontal arrow refers to the initial lack of strengthening of the closed co-governance mode, which is due to a long dispute between the two sub-coalitions. When the three policy entrepreneurs reach a compromise, interrelated with the introduction of a new provincial policy initiative, closed co-governance strengthens further. As an additional comment, it is striking to see that the picture of governmental–non-governmental cooperation as a reaction to increasing land availability resembles the mid 1970s rise of closed co-governance. Moreover, it involves the same policy entrepreneurs.

However, as a main comment, it has to be pointed out that signs of open co-governance are also visible. Because the new governance mode incorporates actors with a different background, a competitive interaction process ensues, in which the involved actors try to maximize their own interests. Although these actors eventually pool their resources, power is relatively more diffused, as was for example the case in the mode of closed co-governance that appeared from the mid 1970s (see section 6.1.2). Moreover, the interaction rules enable the competitive process, embodying relatively more flexibility.

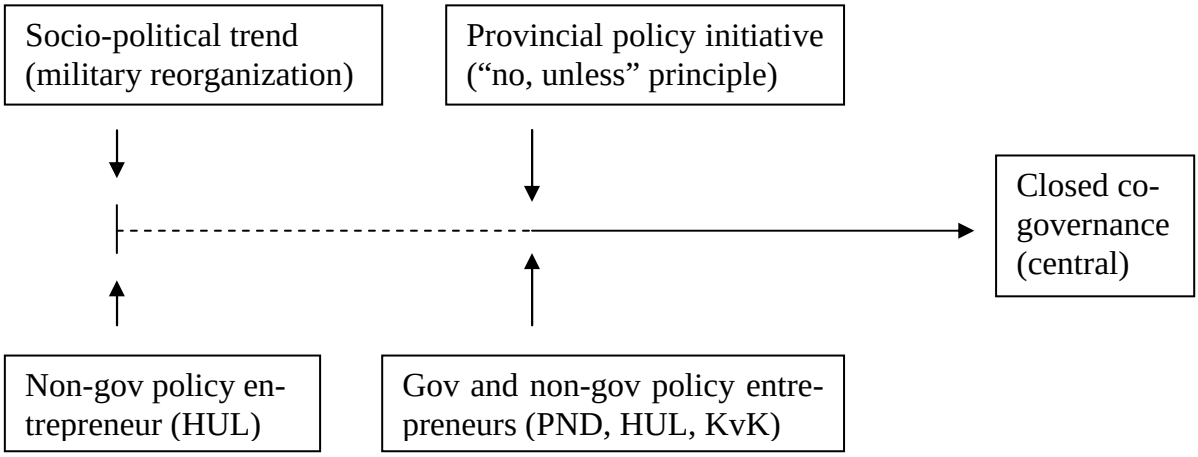

Figure 6.5: Rise of strong closed co-governance in the centre of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug from the early 2000s

Strong self governance remains visible in the south

Meanwhile, after the early 2000s, in the south of the Heuvelrug the governance of nature continues to strengthen in the 'southern National Park arrangement', for example through the formalization of the National Park status. The character of governing does not fundamentally change. The private estate owners are still the main entrepreneurs, capitalizing on their landownership. In addition, they also use the rules that they have set as resources, to have a significant say in what happens. This means that a shift in governance is not visible; *self governance* remains predominant, strengthening over time. This is visualized in Figure 6.6. Note that the entrepreneurial role of the private owners does not function as a factor that causes a shift in governance in this matter;

rather, it stimulates the further strengthening of self governance. This strengthening process is indicated by the bolder nature of the rightmost part of the horizontal arrow.

However, the entrepreneurial role of the private owners causes some uneasiness as well. This involves the allegedly defensive attitude of these actors, as opposed to the supposedly more dynamic stance of other coalition members. It is often claimed that the private owners focus too much on maintaining the status quo since they rarely sanction important changes. This would give the entrepreneurial role of the private owners a rather paradoxical defensive connotation. The private owners in turn maintain that they have every right to oppose those changes that they do not like, since their own property is very often at stake. As a consequence, governing tends to become long drawn out. Also, involved actors are hesitant to invest their resources in the National Park any longer.

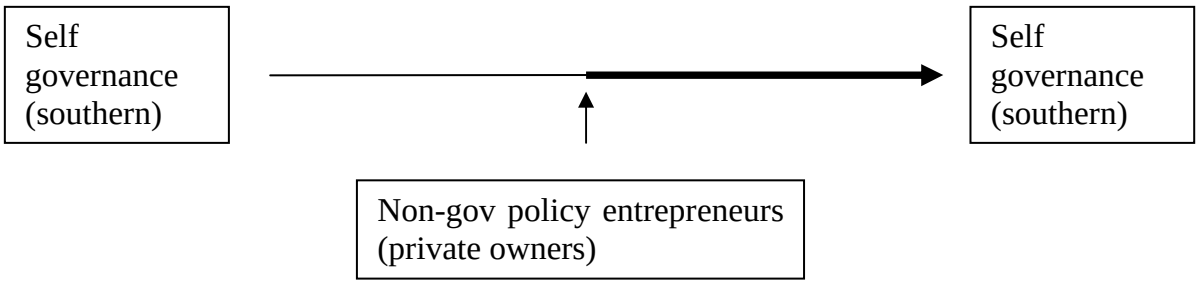

Figure 6.6: Self governance strengthening in the south of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug towards the late 2000s

Evidence of a non-shift, new impulse for regional governance?

Consequently, from the early 2000s, closed co-governance in the centre of the Heuvelrug complements self governance in the south. This means that a juxtaposition of two modes of governance appears. After appearing in the sectoral governance of nature that was predominant before the mid 1990s, closed co-governance also eventually surfaces in a more integral approach to governing nature. This recurrent appearance provides evidence of the presence of a *non-shift in governance*.

It is clear that these two modes have very little to do with each other. They are geographically separated, and only a few actors involved in the one are also engaged in the other. Because of this lack of interrelation, it is difficult to determine which of the two modes is more important. Overall, however, governing in the southern part of the region is more stable, despite the problems that have appeared in the National Park over time. It has been evolving gradually, over a relatively long time span. The mode of closed co-governance that has appeared in the centre has only quite recently stabilized. Moreover, in this case governing has a temporary character; it will most likely disappear when the de-fragmentation goals are achieved.

Since the governance of Heuvelrug nature after the early 2000s mainly concentrates on two sub-regions, the comprehensive self governance mode that appeared after the mid 1990s, already quite weak, gradually disappears. Involved actors largely focus on the governing activities in the south and centre of the Heuvelrug. Moreover, other regions are still prioritized, due to the continuing presence of the socio-political trend towards regionalization. As a consequence, from the mid 2000s, the comprehensive coalition more or less silently dissolves.

In the late 2000s, there are signs that the government is starting to advocate a comprehensive approach to governing Heuvelrug nature. This is quite surprising because the government has until now refrained from becoming involved in such a venture. In any case, it is doubtful whether a comprehensive approach will eventually appear. Sub-regional differences may be too significant for that. Moreover, the government has yet to show that it is really committed to the comprehensive governance of Heuvelrug nature.

6.2 Governance shifts in Midden-Brabant

In this section, the governance modes and shifts that have appeared in the Midden-Brabant case are elaborated on the basis of the evolving policy arrangements described in Chapter 5. Like in section 6.1, the predominance of one of the four governance modes (hierarchical, closed co-, open co- and self governance) is indicated in five successive sections, as well as the relative strength of these modes. The organizational PAA

dimensions provide the signposts. Attention is also paid to shifts between the various modes, within one governance mode, or both (see section 6.1).

6.2.1 The early 1970s: weak and unintentional self governance

The governance of Midden-Brabant nature in the early 1970s very much resembles the situation in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. In the 'purchase arrangement', two actors to some extent play an entrepreneurial role in the governance of Midden-Brabant nature, i.e. the non-governmental NCOs *Het Brabants Landschap* (The Brabant Landscape: HBL) and NM. The government, represented by the province and CRM, is only obliquely engaged. Interactions between these four actors are few; an explicit coalition does not appear. Almost all the attention in the region is focused on the agricultural sector. This means that most of the actors active in Midden-Brabant (municipalities, L&V, agrarian interest organizations) are engaged in an adjacent agricultural arrangement.

Mainly because of the very strong position of this adjacent arrangement, the non-governmental NCOs are not able to extensively apply their purchase activities. For this, these actors are too dependent on resources that are controlled by others; lands with high natural qualities are owned by agrarians, and the budget required to buy these lands is provided by the government. Because Midden-Brabant agrarians, backed up by the strong adjacent arrangement, are generally not inclined to sell their lands, the government budget cannot be mobilized either. Consequently, the NCOs are generally only able to carry out their activities on an ad hoc basis.

The rules embody the forerunning but limited role of the NCOs. This is captured in agreements that are also visible in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug (see section 6.1.1). A spheres of influence map determines that both actors are entitled to buy natural areas in Midden-Brabant. A reimbursement agreement determines that the government in a reactive fashion will fund these purchases. Although this does imply that the government is to some extent responsible for governing Midden-Brabant nature, in practice, it largely leaves this responsibility to the NCOs. Attempts to get the government more explicitly engaged are to no avail, mainly because most governmental actors prioritize the adjacent

agricultural arrangement. Consequently, the initiating role of HBL and NM has a rather unintentional character.

This means that in the early 1970s nature is primarily governed by non-governmental NCOs, so therefore, *self governance* is predominant. However, this mode of governance has a weak character; the power of the two policy entrepreneurs is limited and their forerunning role has an unintentional connotation. This is mainly due to the overshadowing effect of a very stable adjacent arrangement focused on agriculture. Moreover, signs of closed co-governance are also in evidence; governmental actors do get involved, albeit rather marginally, and the non-governmental NCOs depend on the availability of government resources, i.e. the budgets that are provided to reimburse the NCO purchase activities.

6.2.2 From the mid 1970s: weak self governance remains

From the mid 1970s, the governance of Midden-Brabant nature that takes place within the 'purchase arrangement' does strengthen somewhat, mainly regarding the actors that are involved. Because of a nationally orchestrated policy initiative (the *Relatienota*), several actors, both governmental and non-governmental, involve themselves more explicitly, to discuss the purchase of agricultural land for nature protection purposes. The province establishes a coalition, the *Werkgroep Uitwerking Relatienota* (Working Group on the Implementation of the *Relatienota*: WUR) in which it cooperates with the two NCOs and the Ministry of L&V (which replaces CRM). Moreover, an agricultural interest organization, the *Noord-Brabantse Christelijke Boerenbond* (Northern Brabant Christian Agricultural Association: NCB), joins in, representing the agrarians. The members of the coalition start to meet on a regular basis. Also, occasionally individual agrarians whose lands are at stake take part. The NCOs and the NCB act as policy entrepreneurs.

Nevertheless, governance remains quite weak, mainly because the interactions in the new coalition result in major struggles between the policy entrepreneurs that are generally decided in favour of the NCB and the Midden-Brabant agrarians. After all, the NCOs continue to depend on resources, i.e. lands, that are controlled by agrarians, and

these latter actors are still not inclined and cannot be forced to relinquish this control, mainly because the adjacent agricultural arrangement continues to provide them with significant bargaining strength. Even though the government has provided additional financial resources through the *Relatienota*, the NCOs are not able to mobilize these as long as the agrarians do not cooperate. Consequently, only few natural areas are protected.

This means that in the late 1970s and 1980s the interaction rules are quite ambivalent. Officially, the NCOs and the NCB discuss the preservation of Midden-Brabant nature in cooperation with the government. In practice, however, as an informal rule, an ongoing non-governmental bargaining process appears; the NCOs time and again try to initiate new purchases, acting as forerunners, but this is very often thwarted by the NCB. The government chooses not to become involved in these disputes. The government and agrarian attitudes derive from these parties' support for the adjacent agricultural arrangement.

On the basis of these developments, it can be concluded that, despite the more explicit government involvement that results from the *Relatienota* policy initiative, *weak self governance* remains visible; non-governmental actors govern nature, or more precisely, the governance of nature is disputed between them. This picture is mainly framed by the remaining presence of the adjacent agricultural arrangement and the entrepreneurial role of the NCB. It seems that the NCB has not become engaged to act as a forerunner in the governance of nature, but rather to *constrain* it, operating in a defensive fashion. Likewise, the adjacent arrangement does not bring about change, it *hampers* it. These factors respectively overshadow the respective national policy initiative (the introduction of the *Relatienota*) and the entrepreneurial role of the NCOs NM and HBL. Consequently, overall, self governance, now harbouring a rather defensive connotation, fails to strengthen significantly. These developments are visualized in Figure 6.7. The limited impact of the policy initiative and of HBL and NM's entrepreneurial role is indicated by the respective dashed nature of the corresponding textboxes and arrows.

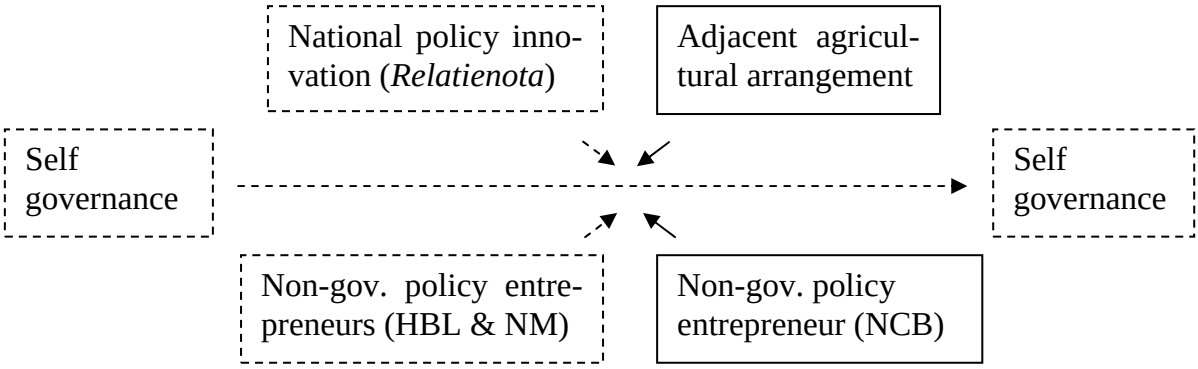

Figure 6.7: Weak self governance failing to strengthen significantly in Midden-Brabant from the mid 1970s

6.2.3 The first half of the 1990s: reversed shift to closed co-governance

In the early 1990s, several governmental actors, especially GS and the PND, intervene in the governance of Midden-Brabant nature. Their entrepreneurial role is grounded in two intertwined socio-political trends (decentralization and regionalization) and a national policy initiative (ecological networks). Government is committed to form a new coalition of a select few governmental and non-governmental actors (PND, DLG, SBB and the NCOs) that has to pool its resources to implement the new EHS policy derived from the ecological networks initiative, working together in a restricted fashion. This eventually leads to the transformation of the 'purchase arrangement' into the 'EHS arrangement'.

However, before this happens, the government has to end the persistent struggles between NCOs and agrarians. To achieve this, it has to pacify the Midden-Brabant agrarians. It therefore establishes two temporary coalitions. One of them, the *Werkgroep Ecologische Hoofdstructuur Begrenzing* (Working Group Ecological Main Structure Demarcation: WEB), comprises only governmental actors, the other is a deliberation board with local non-governmental actors, i.e. NCOs and agrarians.

Under the influence of the newly empowered governmental policy entrepreneurs, the members of these temporary coalitions start to discuss the consequences of the new concept. As in the 1970s and 1980s, these deliberations constitute a struggle between non-governmental NCOs and agrarians. This time, however, the struggle has a different character. For one thing, the government more explicitly sides with the NCOs, since both

advocate the new concept implied by the national policy initiative on ecological networks. Furthermore, the resistance of Midden-Brabant agrarians is less significant, on the one hand because of the efforts of the governmental policy entrepreneurs, and on the other because of the decline of the adjacent arrangement, as a consequence of which the Midden-Brabant agrarians are no longer influential enough to try and hamper the governance of nature very significantly.

Consequently, eventually interaction rules appear that determine the realization of the new proactive approach in a restrictive cooperative effort by a select few governmental and non-governmental actors. The compromises made between the local and governmental coalitions are formalized into demarcation proposals that have to be put into practice by the new EHS coalition, which from that moment on takes over the responsibility for governing Midden-Brabant nature. These actors pool their expertise and capacity with the provided government budgets to acquire new lands, sometimes developing them into nature.

In the above developments, governance is subjected to significant changes. In the end, however, it is a strong mode of *closed co-governance* that replaces weak self governance, because nature is eventually governed in a restrictive fashion by a select coalition of governmental and non-governmental actors that pool their resources. This *reversed shift in governance* is the result of the mixture of external and internal change factors. On the one hand, two socio-political trends (regionalization and decentralization), a national policy initiative (ecological networks) and the decline of the adjacent agricultural arrangement play a role, and on the other hand, the exploits of governmental policy entrepreneurs are important. Figure 6.8 visualizes these developments.

As an additional comment, it is noticeable that these developments embody characteristics of both hierarchical and open co-governance. Signs of the former mode are found in the significant entrepreneurial role of governmental actors. The latter mode is visible in the fact that a large group of local actors is temporarily involved in the demarcation of the EHS. However, even though these signs of hierarchical governance and open co-governance are important for the eventual strengthening of governance, in the end, none of these modes endures; closed co-governance eventually predominates.

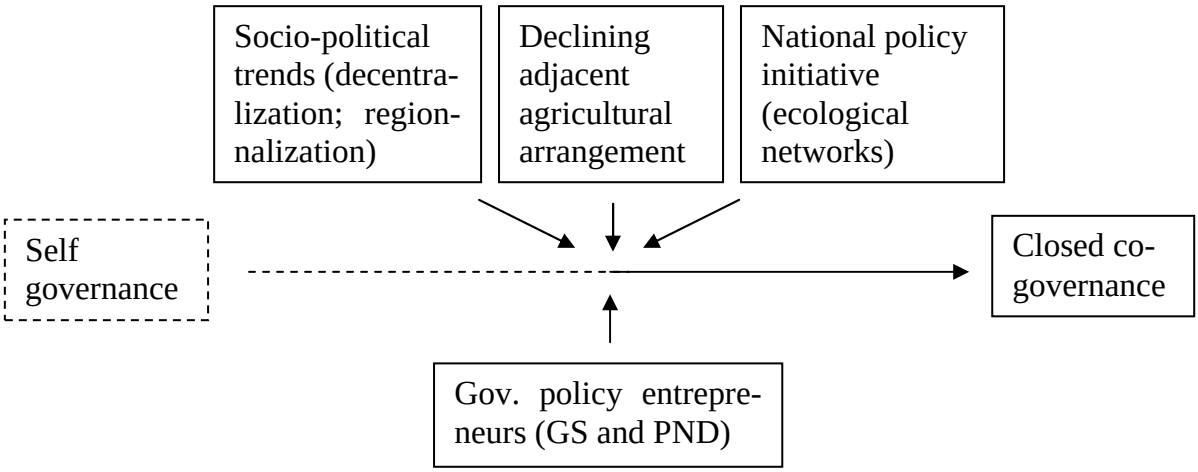

Figure 6.8: Reversed shift from weak self governance to strong closed co-governance in Midden-Brabant towards the mid 1990s

6.2.4 From the mid 1990s: shift to open co-governance in two steps

From the mid 1990s, a new and more integral approach to governing nature appears. This approach is characterized by open co-governance, which at first remains quite weak, but afterwards becomes rather strong.

Governing nature in an integral regional way: weak open co-governance appears

In the mid 1990s, parallel to the just stabilized more sectoral mode of closed co-governance (see previous section), the governance of Midden-Brabant nature is approached from a more regional and integral perspective, a development that tallies with the rise of *Geïntegreerd Gebiedsgericht Beleid* (Integrated Area Specific Policies: GGB) policy initiatives and the socio-political trend towards regionalization (see section 1.1.2). This is initiated by the province, whose responds to one such initiative (*Waardevol Cultuurlandschap* [Valuable Man-made Landscape: WCL]) leads to the rise of the 'WCL arrangement'. A coalition is established in which several municipalities and non-governmental actors from various sectors participate. The province intends the coalition to involve a large group of local actors, to engage together in WCL projects.

However, in practice, this provincial ambition does not become reality. The resources provided by the government are only meant as a stimulus; the coalition

members and the to-be-involved local actors should complement them with resources of their own, and this should result in a diffused resource mobilization process. However, the involved actors argue that the government resources available to support the new governing activities are by no means sufficient. As a consequence, only relatively few resources are mobilized and invested in WCL projects.

Consequently, the flexible collaboration process that the government strives for and that is referred to in the official WCL vision document only materializes to a limited extent, mainly because the intended increased involvement of local non-governmental actors does not really happen. Instead, a rather half-hearted collaborative process takes place, involving some of the coalition members. Overall, no one really takes responsibility for governing Midden-Brabant nature in an integral fashion. The new approach therefore does not really find fertile ground.

From these developments, it can be deduced that the government tries to orchestrate a strong open co-governance process as a response to a national policy initiative (the GGB-related WCL policy) and a socio-political trend (regionalization). However, the desired governing activities only to some extent materialize. Therefore, *weak open co-governance* appears. These developments are visualized in Figure 6.9. The vertical line on the left from which the horizontal arrow emanates indicates that the mode of governance in question appears for the first time. The dashed nature of the horizontal arrow and the textbox on the right indicate the weak character of closed co-governance.

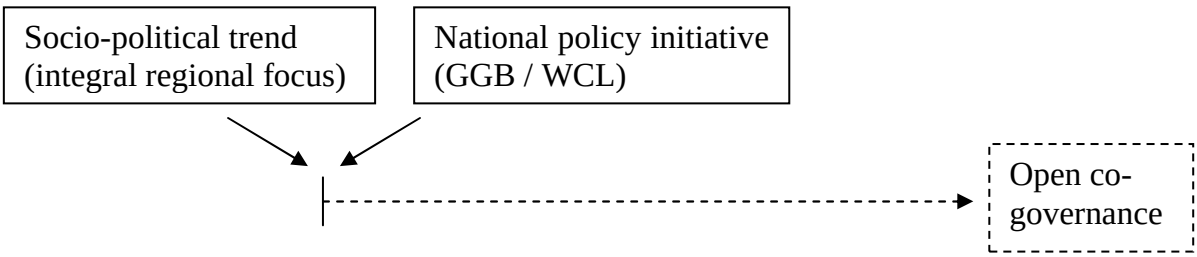

Figure 6.9: Rise of weak open co-governance in Midden-Brabant from the mid 1990s

The integral and regional governance of nature finds fertile ground: shift to strong open co-governance appears

The abovementioned rise of weak open co-governance in the 'WCL arrangement' turns out to be only the first hesitant step towards a more significant shift in governance that arises from within the 'EHS arrangement'. Eventually, this results from the merger of the 'EHS arrangement' and the 'WCL arrangement' into the '*Groene Woud* arrangement'. From around 1997, a stepwise increase is apparent in the number of actors involved in the governance of Midden-Brabant nature. This begins with the exploits of a few actors who elaborate the *Groene Woud* ideas (focused on the nature core of Midden-Brabant), operating from within the recently formed EHS coalition.

Under the influence of the socio-political trend towards regionalization and the GGB-related experiments in the 'WCL arrangement', these actors broaden the *Groene Woud* concept. One by one, other actors, both governmental and non-governmental, become engaged, for example local agrarians and municipalities. Moreover, the WCL coalition, transformed into the *Innovatieplatform Duurzame Meierij* (Initiative Platform Sustainable Meierij: IDM), joins as well. In the early 2000s, a large, diverse and loosely bound coalition of actors has become involved, carrying out *Groene Woud* projects. Among these actors, four key individuals stand out, acting as important policy entrepreneurs, i.e. the Boxtel alderman, a GS member, the HBL director and a proactive farmer.

The interaction rules change along with the gradual increase in actors. Initially, the select few actors that are involved cooperate in a restrictive fashion, among themselves elaborating the *Groene Woud*. Gradually, however, access to governing is opened up, eventually including many actors that want to participate in a *Groene Woud* project. As a consequence, responsibility for the governance of Midden-Brabant nature is shouldered by an increasing number of actors. On the one hand, this development is caused by the efforts of the four policy entrepreneurs; on the other hand, it is stimulated by a pending policy initiative (the *Reconstructie*). The rules are rather informal in character as well; formal governmental policy plans are not visible. This is meant to accommodate the flexible collaboration process that starts to blossom among the newly involved and expanding group of actors.

As a result, power is effectively diffused over the many actors that alone or in small coalitions mobilize their capacity, budget and expertise to realize a *Groene Woud* project. In addition, resources are often derived from government initiatives that in turn are grounded in the socio-political trend towards regionalization (such as Leader + subsidies). At the same time, the abovementioned key individuals are somewhat more influential than the other actors. They not only invest their own resources in *Groene Woud* projects, but also attract more and more new actors, and the resources of these actors, into the governance of Midden-Brabant nature. In this way, a large spin-off effect is created.

From an examination of these developments it can be concluded that in the early 2000s strong *open co-governance* appears, replacing the existing strong mode of closed co-governance and weak mode of open co-governance. This *shift in governance* is mainly spurred by the exploits of several governmental and non-governmental policy entrepreneurs, i.e. the abovementioned key individuals. In addition, the regionalization trend and the pending *Reconstructie* policy play a supportive role. Said developments are reflected in Figure 6.10.

As an additional comment, it is clear that signs of closed co-governance continue to be visible. For one thing, the implementation of the EHS continues to be carried out in a closed co-governance fashion. Moreover, the very influential role of the four key individuals bears signs of closed co-governance. However, the flexible collaboration process and the diffusion of power that are related to the rise of many *Groene Woud* projects are the predominant characteristics of governance. This is exemplified by the fact that the EHS implementation is subsumed under *Groene Woud* projects. Consequently, open co-governance is prevalent.

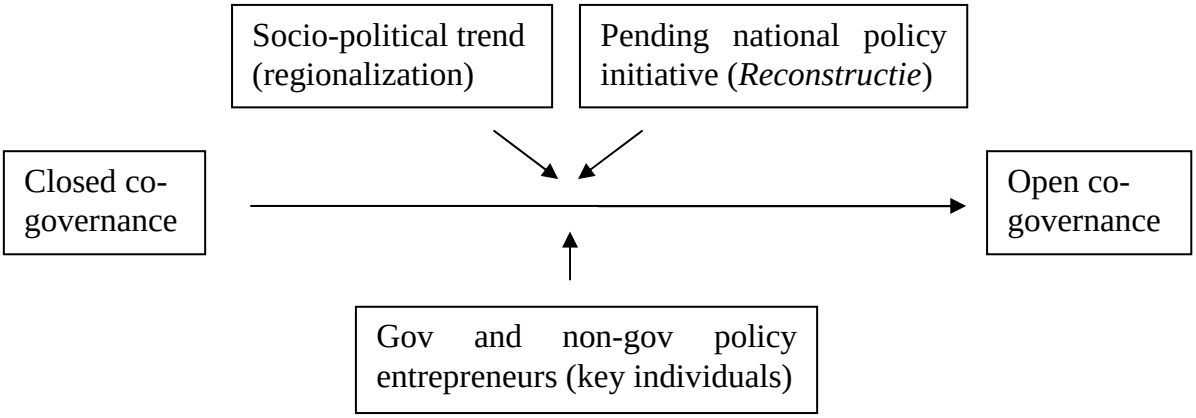

Figure 6.10: Shift from strong closed co governance to strong open co-governance in Midden-Brabant in the late 1990s/early 2000s

6.2.5 From the early 2000s: open and closed co-governance coexist

From the early 2000s, the open co-governance mode connected to the *Groene Woud* continues to strengthen. In addition, the governance of Midden-Brabant nature is taken up in a second comprehensive and integral fashion, due to the start of the *Reconstructie* policy, which is characterized by closed co-governance. The two modes of governance remain separate entities until the late 2000s, when a merger between them is considered.

***Reconstructie*-related governance: closed co-governance re-appears**

In the early 2000s, the '*Reconstructie* arrangement' appears, due to the start of the *Reconstructie* policy, grounded in a similarly named GGB-related policy initiative, which is in turn a government reaction to a major shock event that took place in 1997 (an outbreak of swine fever). The decision to give the *Reconstructie* a regional scope is grounded in the ongoing socio-political trend towards regionalization.

The provincial government establishes the *Reconstructiecommissie de Meierij*, a comprehensive coalition that comprises a cross-section of governmental and non-governmental actors with an interest in Midden-Brabant. In practice, however, two sub-coalitions appear, respectively focused on nature and agriculture, each containing both governmental and non-governmental actors. The *Brabantse Milieufederatie* (Brabant Environmental Federation: BMF) is the main policy entrepreneur in the former sub-

coalition, the *Zuidelijke Land- en Tuinbouw Organisatie* (Southern Organization for Agriculture and Horticulture: ZLTO) is the main entrepreneur in the latter one. The provincial RLG department also has an entrepreneurial role, mainly in aligning the two sub-coalitions (see below).

The interaction rules are set by the province and determine that the members of the comprehensive coalition cooperate to share the responsibility for the major reorganizations envisioned by the government. The participants have to subscribe to this rule when they join the coalition. In practice, however, for a long time, the two sub-coalitions engage in a bargaining process to try to maximize their own interests. This means that the interactions in the coalition become long drawn out. Eventually, however, the bargaining is concluded and formalized in the new *Reconstructieplan*. The mediating and facilitative exploits of the RLG department are important in this respect. Subsequently, this new policy plan has to be implemented. Although the coalition members are expected to cooperate to help bring this about, their precise role in the matter is not yet determined.

Consequently, for a long time governance is characterized by competition between the coalition members who challenge each others' capacity to influence the contents of the *Reconstructieplan*; through this competitive process, it is determined what resources will be invested in the governance of nature, as opposed to how much will be invested, for example, in agriculture. Along the way, the coalition members, especially the two entrepreneurs ZLTO and BMF, find a way to resolve their differences, realizing that they need to pool their resources if they are to eventually make use of the extensive government resources reserved for the implementation of the *Reconstructieplan*. This implementation commences in 2007. However, at the time of writing, only a few projects have been initiated.

Overall, *Reconstructie*-related governance can best be characterized as *closed co-governance*, given the restrictive cooperation between the government and several non-governmental actors that is orchestrated by the province and the eventual pooling of resources that is brought about. This mode of governance arises due to the national GGB-related *Reconstructie* policy initiative. At the same time, a shock event that took place in 1997 (an outbreak of swine fever) is the catalyst of this initiative. Its regional

character derives from the regionalization trend. That the governance process evolves uneasily is due to competition between two sub-coalitions, one emphasizing nature, the other agriculture. Only when the three policy entrepreneurs ZLTO, BMF and the RLG department reach a compromise does closed co-governance strengthen further. These developments are visualized in Figure 6.11. The fact that a shock event that occurred in the past is at the basis of the new governing activities is captured by the leftmost textbox and the corresponding dashed arrow.

However, as a main comment, it can be claimed that some characteristics of open co-governance are visible. Since the *Reconstructie*-related governance mode includes a relatively large group of actors that moreover stem from different sectors, an interaction process with a competitive character ensues. In this process, the involved actors, largely organized in two sub-coalitions, try to maximize their own interests. Eventually, a pooling of resources is orchestrated, but nevertheless, power is relatively more diffused when for example compared with the mode of closed co-governance that appeared in the first half of the 1990s (see section 6.2.3). Moreover, the competition is enabled by the interaction rules; this points at the relatively more flexible character of this mode.

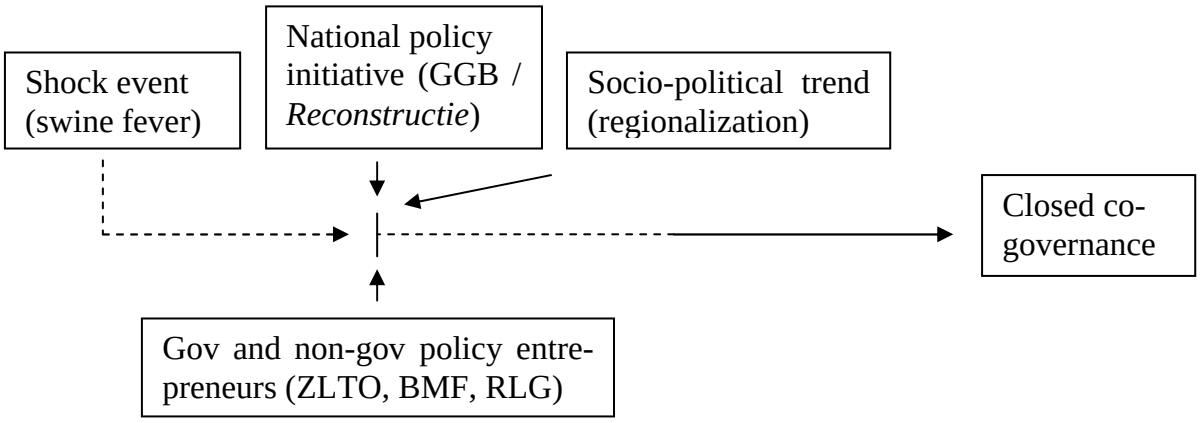

Figure 6.11: Rise of strong closed co-governance in Midden-Brabant from the early 2000s

***Groene Woud*-related open co-governance strengthens further**

At the same time, the *Groene Woud*-related mode of open co-governance strengthens further. New governmental and non-governmental actors keep joining the already quite large but rather loosely bound coalition, engaging in new projects, jumping on the *Groene Woud* bandwagon. The four key individuals remain committed policy entrepreneurs (although one of them eventually leaves office). To somewhat guide the activities of all these actors, a new coalition is created (the *Bestuurlijk Platform Nationaal Landschap Groene Woud* [Management Platform National Landscape *Groene Woud* : BPGW]), comprising the most important governmental and non-governmental actors.

In the late 2000s, power is still diffused over the many actors involved. These actors are able to mobilize significant resources for *Groene Woud*-related purposes. This is exemplified by the continually increasing number of projects initiated. A lot of resources are derived from the still present socio-political trend towards regionalization. In addition, new resources are available consequent to the assignment of the National Landscape status, a result of a national policy initiative with a GGB character. That this designation is also the result of a lobbying campaign by the several policy entrepreneurs re-emphasizes the influence of these latter actors. Regional enthusiasm continues to be an important resource as well.

The informal rule that a very large group of governmental and non-governmental actors collaborates in a flexible fashion continues to predominate governing. This rule has become an important strength of the *Groene Woud* and is very much cherished. However, over time, a disadvantage begins to show as well. Due to the informal character of governance, the governing activities begin to lack guidance; there is, for example, no formal overarching course that gives direction to the many projects. This creates confusion about where the *Groene Woud* process is headed. The recently formed BPGW coalition, established to solve this problem, has not been able to eliminate this confusion.

Nevertheless, *open co-governance* continues to be the predominant mode, further strengthening over time. Governance is still the result of the combined efforts of the many project initiators, due in large part to the continuing entrepreneurial role of the key

individuals. In addition, the socio-political trend towards regionalization and the national policy initiative of the creation of National Landscapes are of influence. The strengthening process is visualized in Figure 6.12.

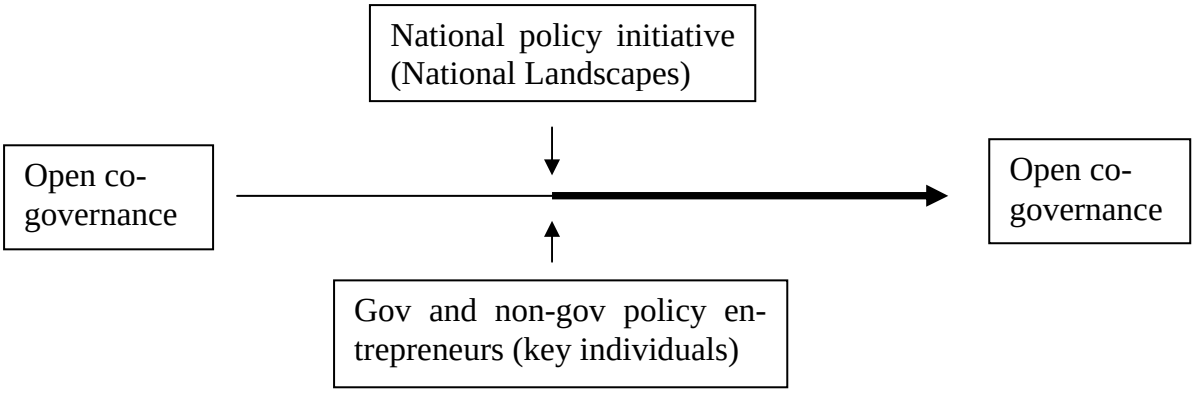

Figure 6.12: Open co-governance strengthening in Midden-Brabant from the early 2000s

***Reconstructie* and *Groene Woud*: a merger attempt**

All in all, in the late 2000s there are two strong modes of nature-related governance in Midden-Brabant, respectively connected to the *Groene Woud* and the *Reconstructie* policies. The former is characterized by open co-governance, whereas the latter reflects closed co-governance. Although they cover more or less the same territory and reflect similar integral and comprehensive ambitions, they evolve separately, at a different pace.

On the one hand, this means that a juxtaposition of two modes of governance appears, one with a "new" character, the other with an "old" connotation. Furthermore, the return of closed co-governance, after an absence of several years, can be regarded as evidence of a *non-shift in governance*. After all, this mode of governance surfaces both in the sectoral governance of nature that is predominant before the mid 1990s, and in the more integral approach to governing nature that becomes apparent after the mid 1990s.

At a certain point in time, the province starts to work on a merger between the two governance modes, since there is considerable overlap between them. This is met with mixed reactions. Advocates of a merger argue that the extensive resources and the

well elaborated policy plan of *Reconstructie*-related governance can be combined with the flexible collaboration visible in *Groene Woud*-related governance. This would solve the lack of guidance evident in the latter activities and would provide the former with the necessary implementation boost. Adversaries are afraid that a merger will lead to the disappearance of regional enthusiasm, an important resource that has been a driving force behind open co-governance in the *Groene Woud* process. This enthusiasm will go at the expense of the stream of projects that over time has appeared.

At the time of writing, the merger has commenced but is not yet completed. The main challenge seems to lie in combining the strengths of the two modes, in order to resolve the weaknesses of the past. The question remains as to whether the Midden-Brabant actors will be able to pull this off.

6.3 A comparative perspective

In this section, the governance shifts in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant are compared with each other, focusing on four main issues that reflect the most profound differences and similarities. In the first section (6.3.1), these issues are presented. In the four sections after that, each of them is elaborated.

6.3.1. Some main issues

Examination of the differences in the governance shifts in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant cases reveals four main issues that stand out. First of all, after the very similar starting point in the early 1970s, i.e. weak and unintentional self governance, in the second half of the 1970s and in the 1980s a very different development is visible in the two cases. Governing nature strengthens profoundly in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, reflected in the appearance of a reversed shift to strong closed co-governance. In Midden-Brabant, on the other hand, such a reversed shift is not yet visible; here, self governance remains, still rather weak although it does strengthen somewhat.

Secondly, in the first half of the 1990s, a turning trajectory appears that, from a comparative perspective, shows a very intriguing “mirror effect”. In both cases, largely

the same socio-political trends and policy initiatives affect the governance of nature, but the consequences are completely different for the two regions. On the Heuvelrug, governance diminishes as a result of it; the existing mode of closed co-governance weakens profoundly. In Midden-Brabant, however, governance is boosted; strong closed co-governance replaces weak self governance. This means that Midden-Brabant nature policy experiences a reversed shift as well, two decades after this happened on the Heuvelrug.

Thirdly, after the mid 1990s, as a main similarity, each case shows a shift in governance. However, the new modes that overshadow the existing modes of closed co-governance are different, i.e. self governance on the Heuvelrug and open co-governance in Midden-Brabant. Moreover, when compared to Midden-Brabant, the governance of Heuvelrug nature has a relatively limited scope.

Finally, in the early 2000s, in both cases the recently stabilized new modes of governance are complemented with closed co-governance, which therefore makes a comeback, although it appears in a different fashion. This means that eventually in both regions a juxtaposition of governance is visible. This juxtaposition continues to reflect the difference in scope that first appeared in the mid 1990s; on the Heuvelrug, two sub-regional modes materialize, whereas in Midden-Brabant two comprehensive modes co-exist. This difference is reflected in the late 2000s' merger attempts that appear in both regions.

These developments are visualized in Figure 6.13. The modes in the upper part of the figure relate to the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case, the modes in the lower part are connected to the Midden-Brabant case. The four main issues are covered by the larger dashed rectangles. The horizontal arrows indicate the points in time at which the shifts in governance that are apparent start to materialize.

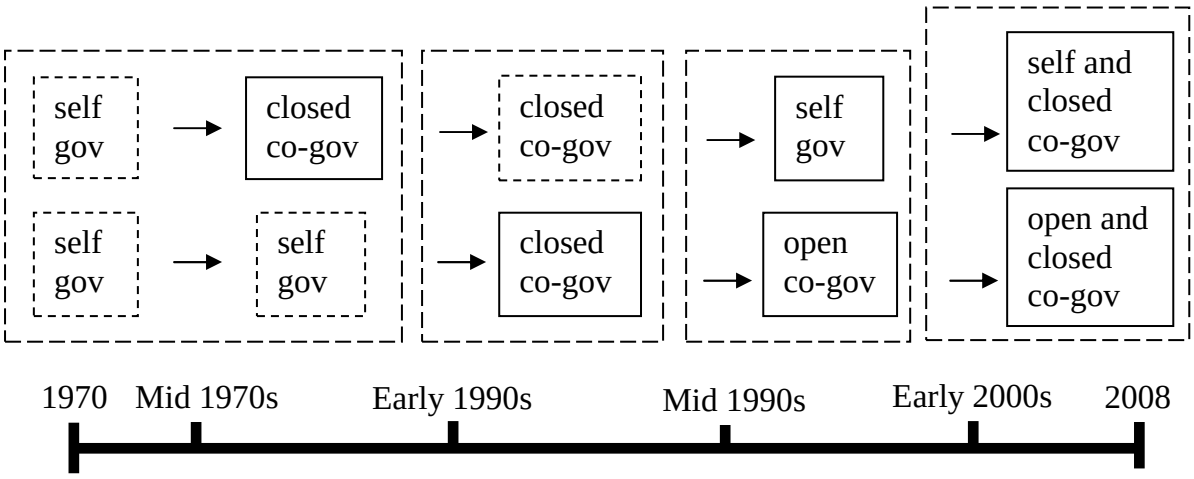

Figure 6.13: Comparison of Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant governance shifts: four issues

6.3.2 The 1970s and 1980s: different modes, different progress

In the early 1970s, nature is governed in a sectoral fashion. Weak self governance is visible, because the main governors – non-governmental NCOs – encounter severe resistance from governmental and non-governmental actors that prioritize adjacent arrangements. On the Heuvelrug, however, the adjacent arrangement deteriorates. In Midden-Brabant, on the contrary, it remains strong. This difference is responsible for the different development in terms of governance that eventually appears.

The same starting point: weak and unintentional self governance

In the early 1970s, on the Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant the governance of nature is very similar. Nature is protected through the purchase of areas with high natural qualities. This is mainly a non-governmental affair, carried out by NCOs. However, due to their dependency on resources (i.e. lands) controlled by others, and government unwillingness to take a more proactive role, these non-governmental actors are only occasionally able to buy land. This means that, in both cases, governing nature is characterized by weak self governance that moreover has an unintentional character; the non-governmental actors that are the main governors depend on the resources (i.e. budgets) provided by the government.

This similar governance characterization relates mainly to the competition that nature protection encounters from other sectors, manifested in the overshadowing presence of stable adjacent arrangements. Although these are respectively related to forestry (on the Heuvelrug) and agriculture (in Midden-Brabant), their constraining effects are similar. First of all, non-governmental actors who are active in these arrangements (private estate owners on the Heuvelrug, agrarians in Midden-Brabant) control the lands that are targeted by the NCOs. Because these actors generally are not inclined to sell their properties, the scope of the NCO purchases is limited. Secondly, the government generally prioritizes the adjacent arrangements as well; this means that its involvement in the governing nature remains limited.

Reversed shift versus no shift: the importance of adjacent arrangements

From the mid 1970s, the importance of the constraining effect that adjacent arrangements can have on the governance of nature is further emphasized when, on the Heuvelrug, the adjacent arrangement deteriorates. In Midden-Brabant, on the other hand, it remains very stable. This difference has important consequences for the respective development of the nature-related governance processes that emerge.

These consequences manifest themselves in four ways. First of all, a significant difference in land availability develops. On the Heuvelrug, it is relatively easy to obtain land. In Midden-Brabant, however, this pivotal resource continues to be scarce. Secondly, and related, the non-governmental actors that own the lands required for nature-related governing activities find themselves in a very different position. Heuvelrug private owners are effectively sidestepped, whereas Midden-Brabant agrarians are able to actively constrain the governance of nature. Thirdly, there is a profound difference in government involvement. On the Heuvelrug, governmental actors engage in governing nature, exemplified by the entrepreneurial role adopted by the PND. In Midden-Brabant, this is not the case. Government actors remain marginally involved, and a PND is not even established yet. Finally, the influence of the respective NCOs is very different. On the Heuvelrug, the predominant NCO is able to adopt an entrepreneurial role. Its Midden-Brabant counterparts are not able to do so.

As a consequence, on the Heuvelrug, the governance of nature strengthens significantly, and a reversed shift takes place; a strong mode of closed co-governance is able to arise, and governing nature is no longer severely hampered by the adjacent forestry arrangement. As a consequence, a lot of land is bought. In Midden-Brabant, in contrast, such a change does not occur; self governance persists, with a continually weak character, because governing nature is still subservient to agriculture. Here, the amount of land bought is limited.

From this, it can be concluded that the governance of nature, at least when it embodies a sectoral discourse, very much depends on the prominence of adjacent sectors that also have a claim on the lands that are needed for nature-related governance. When such sectors are strong, governing nature is likely to be overshadowed. When such sectors lose at least some of their prominence, the governance of nature seems to have a chance to gain ground.

6.3.3 The first half of the 1990s: mirrored turning trajectories

In the first half of the 1990s, from a comparative point of view an interesting mirrored development appears. On the Heuvelrug, the governance of nature diminishes; the existing strong mode of closed co-governance weakens. In Midden-Brabant, on the other hand, governing nature receives a boost; here, the existing weak mode of self governance transforms into strong closed co-governance. Curiously, this different development is grounded in the same policy initiatives and socio-political trends.

Moving in or out of the government spotlight

In the first half of the 1990s, there are several general changes in the governance of Dutch nature. There is a nationally orchestrated policy initiative that introduces the new, more proactive, ecological networks concept, embodied in the EHS policy. Moreover, because of a socio-political trend towards regionalization, the government starts to prioritize some regions over others. Finally, a second socio-political trend (decentralization) empowers the Dutch provinces to incorporate and elaborate these changes, implementing the EHS policy.

Both the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant regions are affected by these developments. There is an important difference between them, however: their perceived "compatibility" with the various change factors. According to the Utrecht provincial government, the Heuvelrug does not align with the ecological networks concept, because the region already appears as a coherent ecological entity. Consequently, without much ado, the region is demarcated as EHS nature core. The Noord-Brabant province, on the other hand, argues that the Midden-Brabant region perfectly tallies with the ecological networks concept. Here, nature is perceived as rather fragmented and infringed upon by the agricultural sector.

Consequently, the trends and initiative of the first half of the mid 1990s draw the government spotlight to Midden-Brabant, whereas they remove it from the Utrechtse Heuvelrug; the provincial government of Noord-Brabant selects Midden-Brabant as one of its prime regions, whereas the Utrecht provincial government chooses to no longer prioritize the Heuvelrug. This leads to the decline of closed co-governance in the former case and its rise in the latter. This divergence is exemplified by comparing the involvement of governmental policy entrepreneurs in both cases; whereas such entrepreneurs disappear from nature-related governance processes on the Heuvelrug, they for the first time start to play an essential role in the governance of Midden-Brabant nature.

The continuing importance of adjacent arrangements

In addition, this mirrored turning trajectory is closely related to what happens in terms of adjacent arrangements. In Midden-Brabant, the rise of closed co-governance is not only caused by a policy initiative, governmental policy entrepreneurs and socio-political trends; it is also importantly enabled by the decline of the adjacent agricultural arrangement. At the same time, on the Heuvelrug, the weakening of closed co-governance is not only caused by the withdrawal of the government spotlight that in turn is grounded in the same policy initiative and two socio-political trends; it is also importantly related to the disappearance of the opportunities that resulted from the destabilization of the adjacent forestry arrangement in the mid 1970s.

In this train of thought, it can be claimed that, from a governance point of view, the two cases show an interesting similarity; they both experience a reversed shift, which in both cases is at least partially related to the parallel decline of adjacent arrangements. This reaffirms the statement that, when nature is governed in a sectoral fashion, the strength of such governance importantly corresponds with the prominence of adjacent sectors.

At the same time, however, the two cases are not entirely comparable in this respect. The most obvious difference is the time span of two decades that separates both reversed shifts – a difference related to the relatively early (i.e. mid 1970s) decline of the Heuvelrug forestry sector versus the continuing potency of the Midden-Brabant agricultural sector. In addition, in Midden-Brabant, the decline of the adjacent arrangement is not as severe as on the Heuvelrug, as exemplified by the relatively influential role of Midden-Brabant agrarians in the mid 1990s (who are involved in a local deliberation board) vis-à-vis the marginal position of the Heuvelrug private owners in the late 1970s and 1980s (who are generally sidestepped).

6.3.4 Towards the late 1990s: new modes with a different scope

From the mid 1990s, a shift in governance begins to appear. In both cases, new modes of governance materialize to overshadow the existing modes of closed co-governance. At the same time, there are profound differences: the new modes that appear have a different character and a different scope. The appearance of this shift and these differences relate closely to a discursive change that also takes place.

Shifts in governance with a different character

The mid 1990s are an important turning point, both in terms of organization (i.e. governance) and substance (i.e. discourse). In both regions, before this point in time modes of closed co-governance materialize, connected to nature policies that have a sectoral character. After the mid 1990s, new modes of governance appear (i.e. open co- and self governance) that are grounded in a new, more regional and integral approach to governing nature. As a main nuance, however, it should be pointed out that the existing modes of closed co-governance, relating to the sectoral approach to governing nature, do

not altogether disappear. Rather, they are overshadowed by the new modes of governance.

The shift in governance that appears is mainly caused by the exploits of various policy entrepreneurs who advocate the new integral regional approach. In Midden-Brabant, there are four key individuals that together trigger the rise of the *Groene Woud* policy, bringing about the shift to open co-governance. The mode of open co-governance that precedes this development, visible in the 'WCL arrangement', is not as important; it remains rather weak. In the Utrechts Heuvelrug, self governance appears as a result of the efforts of a group of private estate owners (in the south of the region) and, less significantly, an NCO (in a mode that covers the entire region).

At the same time, this similarity also contains a main difference. In Midden-Brabant, governmental actors remain very proactively involved. For example, two of the policy entrepreneurs have government status. On the Heuvelrug, the government is not very proactively involved; there are only non-governmental policy entrepreneurs, either because the government chooses to leave the initiative to a non-governmental actor (in the regional mode of governance) or because non-governmental policy entrepreneurs rebuff too explicit governmental engagement and choose to take the lead themselves (in the mode of governance that appears in the south of the region).

A difference in scope

As a second main divergence, it is apparent that the two shifts in governance reflect a difference in the scope of nature governance. On the Heuvelrug, the regional governance mode remains rather weak. Consequently, the governance of nature focuses mainly on a small part of the region, i.e. the south. In Midden-Brabant, on the other hand, the governance of nature is extremely comprehensive in character; here, the entire region is included.

This discrepancy relates partially to the abovementioned difference in entrepreneurship. In Midden-Brabant, the scope of nature governance increases because both the governmental and the non-governmental policy entrepreneurs have the capacity and the ambition to mobilize a lot of resources, engage new actors and take part in comprehensive governing activities. On the Heuvelrug, this is not so much the case.

Here, the scope remains limited because there is only one non-governmental policy entrepreneur, HUL, that advocates a comprehensive approach to governing nature; moreover, this actor is not powerful enough to bring this approach further.

Secondly, the difference in scope is related to the ongoing socio-political trend towards regionalization in combination with the different susceptibility of both regions to GGB-related policy initiatives and to the ecological networks policy initiative. Because of the former, governmental actors still are prioritizing some regions over others. Because of the latter, regions that allow for the integration of different functions, especially nature and agriculture, and regions that enable the development of new nature are often prioritized. As a consequence, in Midden-Brabant, the implementation of the EHS and the continual encroachment of nature and agriculture continue to receive attention, attracting quite a lot of additional resources to the region. The governance of Heuvelrug nature, on the other hand, is not as susceptible to GGB-related policies, and the government does not share the alternative interpretation of the ecological networks concept that is introduced by the NCO HUL. As a consequence, resources meant to sustain GGB policies and to support the realization of the ecological networks concept do not find their way to the Heuvelrug; the government continues to prioritize other regions.

This development gives cause for an alternative claim when it comes to the influence of adjacent sectors. Above, it has been argued that the overshadowing presence of such a sector can constrain the governance of nature. However, this seems only to be the case when nature is governed in a *sectoral* fashion. It turns out that when nature is governed from a more *integral* perspective, the presence of a strong adjacent sector seems to be an *advantage*. After all, regions in which there is strong competition between sectors (such as Midden-Brabant) are interesting from an integral point of view, whereas regions that do not have such competition (such as the Heuvelrug) are much less appealing. Consequently, governmental actors and resources are drawn *to* Midden-Brabant but *away* from the Heuvelrug; this in turn has important consequences for the scope and strength of governance.

6.3.5 From the early 2000s: juxtaposition

After the early 2000s, the abovementioned new modes of governance continue to be visible. As a striking similarity, in both cases these modes are complemented with parallel governance modes that are characterized by closed co-governance. This means that in both regions a juxtaposition of governance appears that provides evidence of a non-shift in governance. However, the difference in scope, already manifest after the mid 1990s, continues to be visible.

The juxtaposition: closed co-governance re-appears in a new fashion

In both cases, after the early 2000s modes of closed co-governance appear. In the centre of the Heuvelrug, a socio-political trend (a military reorganization) leads to an increase in land availability, which in turn enables the eventual rise of closed co-governance orchestrated by two non-governmental and one governmental policy entrepreneur (respectively HUL and KvK and the PND). In a way, this resembles the situation in the mid 1970s. In Midden-Brabant, the rise of closed co-governance can be traced back to a shock event (the outbreak of swine fever) that leads to the introduction of a large-scale nationally and provincially orchestrated GGB-related policy initiative (the *Reconstructie*) that in turn eventually leads to the re-appearance of closed co-governance in the region.

The recurrent appearance of closed co-governance, after several years of absence, can to some extent be regarded as evidence of a non-shift in governance. After all, this mode of governance appears in relation to both the sectoral approach to governing nature and the integral and regional approach. It has to be pointed out, however, that both newly appearing modes of closed co-governance are in a similar way different from the modes that appeared before or in the mid 1990s. Both reflect a (sub)regional and integral discourse, instead of a sectoral one. As a consequence, closed co-governance in the early 2000s comprises a lot more participants, who moreover stem from various sectors and – to a lesser extent – levels and bring different interests into the governance of nature. This means that closed co-governance does not reflect the same homogeneity as before; conflict, competition and bargaining appear. As such, in both cases, closed co-

governance strengthens rather uneasily, and in both cases, the modes in a similar way also show signs of open co governance.

Different scopes, different merger attempts

These quite similar juxtapositions, however, continue to reflect the difference in scope that characterizes the two cases after the mid 1990s. In Midden-Brabant, closed co-governance materializes as a second integral and regional governance mode, significantly overlapping with the open co-governance mode that is already visible. On the Heuvelrug, closed co-governance focuses only on the centre of the region; this means that a second sub-regional governance mode appears, besides the mode of self governance that is already visible in the south. At the same time, and partially because of this, the already weak regional governance mode vanishes.

This difference is due mainly to the abovementioned continual varying susceptibility of both regions to policies with an integral character. It is evident that the mode of governance that appears in the centre of the Heuvelrug does have such a character. This partially explains why the government suddenly is interested in this part of the region. Nevertheless, it is a non-governmental policy entrepreneur, and not a governmental policy initiative, that causes the rise of said mode. However, the situation on the Heuvelrug is still rather bleak when compared to Midden-Brabant. This latter region remains much more interesting from an integral perspective, and this draws several policy initiatives (*Reconstructie*, National Landscape) to the region. This importantly sustains the two integral and regional modes of governance visible in Midden-Brabant.

The merger attempts that in the late 2000s appear in both cases reflect the main difference in scope. In Midden-Brabant, the merger constitutes the integration of the two comprehensive modes; it is meant to remove extensive overlap, supposedly solving a "governance overload". On the Heuvelrug, the two modes that are visible only cover some of the region. In this case, the merger is intended to solve a "governance deficiency", rekindling a regional approach to governing Heuvelrug nature and introducing the governance of nature in sub-regions that until now have been neglected.

6.4 Some generalizations

In this final section, the above comparison is discussed in terms of the general manifestation of governance in Dutch nature policy. Attention is paid to different governance modes (in section 6.4.1) and to governance shifts (in section 6.4.2). In this latter section, the three claims of the governance puzzle are addressed. In the final section (6.4.3) a new classification of the governance of Dutch nature is outlined, based on the findings presented in this chapter.

6.4.1 Governance modes

This section provides a discussion about how the four different modes of governance at the core of this thesis have materialized in the two cases. Also, the extent to which this may be representative of Dutch nature policy in general is outlined. The modes are dealt with in the order of frequency (over the whole period in both cases) of their appearance, i.e. closed co-governance, self governance, open co-governance and hierarchical governance.

Closed co-governance: a classic and a contemporary variety

Closed co-governance is the mode that most often appears in the two cases. In the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, it is prominently visible from the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s and from the early 2000s onwards. In Midden-Brabant, it appears in the mid 1990s and after the early 2000s. This frequent appearance of this mode seems to be related to the fact that closed co-governance resembles neo-corporatism, which is the domestic institutional tradition of the Netherlands, also referred to as the so-called *poldermodel*.

It is striking to see that, in both regions, closed co-governance has manifested itself in two fashions. The first fashion very much resembles the ideal typical closed co-governance mode sketched in section 2.2.3. A small coalition of a select few governmental and non-governmental actors pools its resources in a restrictive cooperation process. The Dutch NCOs and governmental actors from the provincial policy tier in particular play a prominent role. It is evident that this more *classic* form of closed co-governance is linked in both cases to nature policies with a more sectoral

discourse. It surfaces in the mid 1970s on the Heuvelrug and in the first half of the 1990s in Midden-Brabant. The time difference in the appearance of the modes is related to the corresponding strength of adjacent sectors.

In the mid 1990s, this mode has become the predominant way of governing nature in both regions (even though it has already weakened in the former case). Given this similarity, it seems plausible that, at this point in time, classic closed co-governance will also be visible in other regions. This is likely to be further influenced by the fact that, from the early 1990s, the Dutch government is much more deeply engaged in the more sectoral governance of nature, given the recent introduction of the EHS policy. It therefore proactively complements the conventional activities of the NCOs.

After the mid 1990s, the classic fashion of closed co-governance, and the interrelated sectoral approach to governing nature, continue to be visible; nowadays, both still exist, even though they are no longer the most prominent modes in the governance of Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant nature.

In the early 2000s, closed co-governance reappears in the two cases. This time, however, the mode seems to reflect a more *contemporary* character. It does not so strongly resemble the ideal typical mode of closed co-governance but encapsulates some characteristics of open co-governance. This seems to be related to the more integral discourse that from the mid 1990s has become more common in the governance of Dutch nature.

For example, the number of actors involved in contemporary closed co-governance is much larger, stemming from different policy tiers. Moreover, due to the more integral discourse, these actors, and the policy entrepreneurs that are among them, have different backgrounds and interests and are organized not only in one more comprehensive coalition, but also in several sub-coalitions. As a consequence, compared with classic closed co-governance, it is more difficult for contemporary closed co-governance to strengthen. The interaction rules still enable a restricted form of cooperation, but at the same time they allow the competitive process, showing relatively more flexibility. Also, resources eventually are pooled, but because of the competitive interaction process, power is relatively more diffused.

The two faces of self governance: unintentional and defensive

Over time, self governance has appeared quite a lot as well. It can be argued that, like closed co-governance, this mode of governance generally has two faces. However, as an important difference, these two faces do not seem to be related to a certain timeframe, nor to an integral or sectoral discourse. Moreover, both reflect a somewhat subdued governance character.

The first face that appears is *unintentional* self governance, which is visible in both cases in the early 1970s. In addition, it also materializes in the Heuvelrug case after the mid 1990s. In such a mode, non-governmental policy entrepreneurs play a forerunning role, not because they insist on doing things alone, but because governmental actors do not seem to be interested in becoming engaged more explicitly, despite non-governmental requests to do so. This government reluctance relates for example to a focus on other sectors (in the early 1970s) or on other regions (on the Heuvelrug after the mid 1990s). Without government support, the non-governmental actors in question are not powerful enough to realize their objectives. As a consequence, unintentional self governance generally has a weak character.

The second face that appears can be referred to as *defensive* self governance. This face relates to the presence of non-governmental actors that do not become engaged to bring about a lot of change, but rather to align the governance of nature with their own interests, generally keeping things as they are, resisting the introduction of policies that they do not approve of. This gives the entrepreneurial role that these actors occupy a rather paradoxical connotation. The actions of the Midden-Brabant agrarians in the late 1970s and 1980s can be qualified as such. They engage in governing nature to minimize the consequences of the introduction of a national policy initiative (the *Relatienota*), not to develop it further. Because they are powerful enough to pull this off, the governance of nature has a weak character. The agrarians derive their power from their extensive landownership.

In a way, the actions of the private estate owners in the south of the Heuvelrug are comparable. The private owners dislike the introduction of a national policy initiative (the governmentally orchestrated introduction of National Parks) and mobilize their landownership to hamper its elaboration. However, the activities of the Heuvelrug

private owners are not as intensely defensive as are the exploits of the Midden-Brabant agrarians; despite the hesitancy shown by private owners to accommodate change, their commitment to governing nature is evident, given their efforts to establish a National Park after all (albeit on their own terms). Moreover, despite an uneasy connotation, the governance of nature in the south of the Heuvelrug eventually is not weak in character.

It can be argued that both faces of self governance are closely interrelated with government involvement. However, the character of this interrelation is different. Unintentional self governance reflects a non-governmental dependency on government resources. This creates a picture of self governance that, to continue its existence, *depends* on the government. Defensive self governance shows a non-governmental intent to circumvent or reject government involvement. This mode of self governance seems to *resist* the government.

It seems quite likely that the form of weak and unintentional self governance that appears in the early 1970s at that specific point in time is representative of Dutch nature policy in general, since it materializes in the two cases in an identical fashion. In that timeframe, the governance of nature seems to be still overshadowed by other sectors such as forestry and agriculture. Apart from that, unintentional self governance may appear in situations where non-governmental actors have their own policy but fail to enlist the support of the government and consequently are not, or only to some extent, able to realize their ambitions.

It can furthermore be assumed that defensive self governance may also appear in other regions where non-governmental actors actively resist changes that are implied by government nature policy initiatives. Defensive self governance seems to have a stronger character when the non-governmental actors that are involved in it are able to mobilize landownership to back their resistance.

Open co-governance: not easily orchestrated

Open co-governance only appears predominantly in the Midden-Brabant case, arising from the mid 1990s, first (but rather weakly) in relation to the WCL policy, later on (and much more intensely) in the *Groene Woud* policy. From this, it can be concluded that the appearance of this mode is probably not representative of Dutch nature policy in general.

This claim is even more justified given the fashion in which the mode appears and strengthens. It seems to be difficult to consciously orchestrate an open co-governance process, as the example of the WCL-related governing activities has shown.

When it does arise and strengthen, open co-governance is the result of a quite informal bottom-up development rather than a consequence of a much more formally organized and restrictive form of governmental–non-governmental cooperation, which is the way in which for example closed co-governance often manifests itself. An essential prerequisite seems to be the input of a group of so-called problem owners, proactive individuals that represent important governmental and non-governmental actors. It seems furthermore to be evident that one of the key individuals represents a local government; in the context of the developments in both regions, this is the only example of significant government involvement at the local level. This may be one of the reasons why open co-governance has institutionalized in Midden-Brabant (see section 7.2.3).

Hierarchical governance: not predominantly visible

The fourth mode, i.e. hierarchical governance, does not predominantly surface for any length of time in almost four decades of governing Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant nature. This seems to justify the conclusion that governmental actors have not shaped Dutch nature policy on their own. It also implies that, in the entire time span studied, non-governmental actors, especially NCOs but also other landowners, have played an essential role, either working together with the government (in an open or a closed fashion), or acting on their own (as outlined in the preceding part of this section).

However, despite the absence of hierarchical governance in its “pure” form, governmental actors have played essential roles. The most prominent example occurs in the first half of the 1990s, when hierarchical governance characteristics briefly materialize. In this time span, the Dutch government gives the governance of nature an important boost, exemplified by newly empowered governmental actors at the provincial level that introduce the EHS policy, derived from relevant socio-political trends and policy initiatives that materialize at that time.

Given the parallel occurrence of this phenomenon, it seems likely that in other Dutch regions a (temporary) increase in government involvement will also have

appeared in the first half of the 1990s. It is furthermore evident that the impact of this temporary increase in government involvement can be quite severe, and, moreover, very dissimilar in different areas. In Midden-Brabant, it contributes to the rise of closed co-governance, whereas on the Heuvelrug, it weakens closed co-governance.

Furthermore, government has played important mediating roles, for example in the strengthening of the two contemporary modes of closed co-governance that appear in both cases in the early 2000s. In addition, government can also play an essential role by keeping its distance. This is evident in rise in the late 1990s of open co-governance in the Midden-Brabant case, where governmental actors are important policy entrepreneurs but at the same time mainly operate in a facilitative fashion. They for example refrain from introducing formal interaction rules or determining the contents of governance. They see it as their main task to create the room that non-governmental actors (and local governments) require to act as they see fit, sustaining this when necessary with government resources.

On the basis of these observations, the conclusion can be drawn that, even though the government has not shaped (and probably cannot shape) Dutch nature policy on its own, it *does* have the power to make or break such policies, mainly because it controls resources that are often required by non-governmental actors engaged in governing nature or that can be used to stimulate non-governmental actors to play a more proactive or constructive role.

6.4.2 Governance shifts

In this section, the governance shifts that have been discerned and compared above are confronted with the three claims that constitute the governance puzzle (see sections 1.2.2 and 2.3.2). Overall, and to a varying extent, there is some truth in all these three claims, reflected in the presence of a shift, a reversed shift, and a non-shift (i.e. the appearance of the classic and contemporary versions of closed co-governance).

From new to old: a pre-mid-1990s reversed shift with a sectoral character

It can first of all be claimed that, in a way, Dutch nature policy is characterized by a *reversed shift* in governance. Both in Midden-Brabant and in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, the governance of nature in the early 1970s is characterized by a "new" mode, i.e. self governance. In the mid 1990s, the governance of nature in both cases reflects an "old" mode, i.e. closed co-governance, appearing in a more classic connotation. Consequently, in between, a reversed shift has taken place, as a consequence of the much more explicit involvement of government actors, which materializes both in Midden-Brabant and in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. The best example of such involvement is the establishment of provincial nature departments (PNDs).

Because the reversed shift materializes in both regions, and has a similar form, it is likely to be representative of Dutch nature policy in general. It is moreover clear that it relates to a more sectoral fashion of governing nature. The "timing" of the manifestation of the reversed shift is therefore at least partially related to the strength of adjacent sectors. In regions like the Heuvelrug, where the forestry sector already begins to decline in the mid 1970s, the reversed shift also begins to materialize from the mid 1970s. In regions such as Midden-Brabant, where the agricultural sector remains strong for longer, the reversed shift is likely to appear two decades later, i.e. in the mid 1990s, when the agricultural sector comes under strain.

As a main nuance, it has to be emphasized that the mode of self governance that is visible in the early 1970s only to some extent resembles self governance as elaborated in section 2.2.3 (and in the policy science literature). It is true that in the early 1970s non-governmental actors are in charge, but at the same governmental actors are also involved. Furthermore, self governance only appears because governing nature seems to be some sort of niche that is neglected by the government. Therefore, it is left to a few non-governmental NCOs, with government adopting a reactive attitude. Moreover, self governance seems to need the government to survive, given its dependence on government resources. These characteristics give self governance a weak and unintentional connotation that does not tally with the picture of self governance in which non-governmental actors consciously take matters into their own hands.

From old to new in two fashions: a post-mid-1990s shift with an integral and regional character

At the same time, it can be argued that after the pre-mid-1990s' reversed shift has materialized, in the two cases studied, a *shift* in governance appears. In both cases, the more classic modes of closed co-governance, connected to a sectoral approach to governing nature, disappear into the background, while new modes of governance relating to a more integral and regional discourse appear. At the basis of the shift in governance are on the one hand several of the policy entrepreneurs that before the mid 1990s also played an important role, especially the provincial nature departments and the landowning NCOs. In addition, however, several new entrepreneurs come to the fore, such as private estate owners, agrarians and local governments.

However, the question is whether the appearance of this shift in governance is representative of Dutch nature policy in general. First of all, in the two cases studied, it manifests itself quite differently, given the different "new" modes that appear. In Midden-Brabant, governmental actors continue to be engaged; here, open co-governance appears. On the Heuvelrug, government engagement is limited; in this case, two modes of self governance appear. This is realized by non-governmental policy entrepreneurs. Moreover, in comparison to Midden-Brabant, the scope of Heuvelrug self governance is somewhat more limited.

Secondly, the institutionalization processes of the new modes of governance all have a rather unique character. In particular, the rise of the *Groene Woud* policy in Midden-Brabant and the appearance of the National Park in the south of the Heuvelrug are quite exceptional, the former because of the flexible collaboration process that emerges, the latter because of the very influential role of the private estate owners. It is also evident that both governance modes appear in a bottom-up fashion.

Finally, in the two cases studied, the new modes that appear in relation to the new integral and regional approach to governing nature do not entirely replace the existing classic and sectoral modes of closed co-governance; they rather *overshadow* them. After all, on the Heuvelrug, weak classic closed co-governance remains visible in the 'safeguarding arrangement', whereas in Midden-Brabant, the EHS continues to be implemented in a closed co-governance fashion. It may therefore very well be that in

regions where the integral and regional discourse is not as apparent or where the sectoral governance of nature is very much emphasized, a shift in governance will not materialize.

The non-shift: recurrent appearance of closed co-governance

Finally, the appearance of closed co-governance before the mid 1990s and its re-appearance in the early 2000s seems to justify the third claim manifest in the governance puzzle, i.e. that there is a *non-shift* in governance. In a Dutch context, tightly knit and restricted cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors is not connected to a particular point in time. As suggested in section 1.2.2, and repeated in section 6.4.1, the extensive presence of closed co-governance in the two cases, at different points in time, can probably be explained by the Dutch institutional tradition. Closed co-governance seems to appear when governmental and non-governmental actors are seeking cooperation with each other (provided that they both see the need to do so).

In addition, the re-appearance of closed co-governance after the early 2000s can also be regarded as a main nuance to the shift in governance claim, since in both cases it results in a juxtaposition between old and new modes. Considering that it has just been argued that both new modes of governance are *not* representative of Dutch nature policy and that the more classic modes of closed co-governance do not altogether disappear, it could even be claimed that closed co-governance is the mode that most likely characterizes Dutch nature policy, in relation to not only sectoral nature policies, but also more integral and regional ones.

However, the claim that closed co-governance is a timeless phenomenon should be nuanced as well. First of all, as elaborated in the previous section, closed co-governance itself is also susceptible to change, since it has assumed a different character over time. Its more classic variant relates to a sectoral approach to governing nature. This variant is predominant before the mid 1990s and closely resembles the ideal typical closed co-governance mode. The more contemporary variety of closed co-governance relates to a more integral and regional approach to governing nature. This variety appears after the mid 1990s and embodies some characteristics of open co-governance.

Consequently, there seems to be some kind of shift in governance "within" closed co-governance.

Secondly, it is not as if closed co-governance has been always visible in both cases. For example, it was absent from the Midden-Brabant case for a relatively long time, i.e. from the mid 1970s to the early 1990s. Moreover, it is not predominantly visible in either case in the early 1970s and between the mid 1990s and early 2000s.

6.4.3 The governance of Dutch nature: two currents

In this final section, based on the above analysis, a model is outlined that explains the governance of Dutch nature. This model comprises two discursive currents that each have a specific governance signature. Policy entrepreneurs play an essential role in these currents, making use of the opportunities offered by policy initiatives, socio-political trends, changing adjacent arrangements and shock events, sometimes competing with other policy entrepreneurs. Their exploits, and the extent to which they are successful, determine the mode of governance that eventually appears, and the relative strength of this mode.

The sectoral current: reversed shift towards closed co-governance

The first current that is visible in the governance of Dutch nature has a sectoral character. It reflects the protection of individual natural areas, initially only by buying them, but later on (i.e. from the early 1990s) also by interconnecting and developing them, exemplified by the ecological networks policy initiative and the subsequent EHS policy. This current commenced about a century ago and is nowadays still visible. The traditional landowning Dutch NCOs are importantly involved in it, as are the provincial governments, SBB and the ministries that over time have been responsible for nature policy (CRM, L&V, LNV).

The involvement of the non-governmental NCOs is most prominent, already visible for a very long time. The engagement of the governmental actors in question has been increasing over the years, especially that of the provincial nature departments that are gradually set up. As a consequence, there is a specific governance signature that is

connected to the sectoral current, i.e. a reversed shift, from weak and unintentional self governance to strong closed co-governance.

Initially, the sectoral current is characterized by the former mode. The role of government is limited, the NCOs are the main forerunners. However, in their activities, the NCOs largely depend on government resources. Moreover, the NCOs try to more explicitly engage governmental actors, but without success, generally because government prioritizes other sectors. As a consequence, closed co-governance, reflecting the Dutch neo-corporatist tradition, does not yet appear in the sectoral governance of nature, although signs of closed co-governance are already visible. Even though this has not been explicitly studied in this thesis, in the sectors adjacent to nature, closed co-governance does seem to be predominant, especially in agriculture (Frouws, 1993) but also – albeit less significantly – in the forestry sector (Veenman et al, 2009).

Over time, however, classic closed co-governance does materialize in the sectoral current. This means that the governance of Dutch nature converges with the domestic institutional tradition, and that nature as a policy field is no longer a niche. It seems that several policy entrepreneurs, i.e. the Dutch NCOs, the provincial nature departments or both, are required to bring this transformation around, working together with actors like SBB, DLG or LNV, sometimes confronted with actors that try to prevent this. Moreover, these entrepreneurs depend on opportunities offered by external factors, especially the decline of adjacent arrangements, but also policy initiatives or socio-political trends that reflect increasing political and societal attention being paid to nature-related governance.

What the reversed shift precisely looks like and when it precisely occurs depends on region-specific characteristics. It seems likely, however, that it will have materialized in most Dutch regions after the mid 1990s, given the government emphasis on the sectoral current that appears in the first half of the 1990s.

In this respect, the two case studies offer their own stories. In the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, the two policy entrepreneurs, HUL and PND, make use of the decline of the adjacent forestry arrangement that commences in the mid 1970s, bringing about a reversed shift to closed co-governance in a relatively early stage. In Midden-Brabant, at that time the NCOs are not able to realize such a transformation, due to the defensive exploits of the agrarians and due to the government support of the adjacent agricultural

arrangement. Only in the first half of the 1990s, when government generally starts to emphasize nature policy (exemplified by the ecological networks policy initiative and the decentralization and regionalization trends), when the PND and GS as a consequence appear as main policy entrepreneurs and when the adjacent agricultural arrangement declines, does closed co-governance appear.

The integral regional current: governance pluralism

The second current that appears in the governance of Dutch nature has a regional and sometimes integral character, complementing the sectoral current from the mid 1990s. It envisages the protection of nature in a region-specific way. Moreover, in some cases, nature has to be governed in interrelation with other sectors, predominantly agriculture. The appearance of this current is related to a socio-political trend, i.e. regionalization, and to policy initiatives that have a GGB character, several of which have appeared over time (for example WCL, National Landscapes, *Reconstructie*).

The governance of nature in the integral regional current does not reflect a governance signature as clear as in the sectoral current. Instead, both “old” and “new” modes of governance manifest themselves in a pluralist fashion. Which mode precisely appears at which time again depends on regional circumstances, related to the exploits of the policy entrepreneurs that are visible and on the opportunities that these entrepreneurs see and try – with varying success – to make use of. It is obvious that hierarchical and classic co-governance have not materialized. Rather, self governance, open co-governance and contemporary closed co-governance have appeared. This seems to be due to the broader character of this current, which implies a larger variety of entrepreneurs (and actors, resources and interaction rules).

For example, two modes of self governance have been found, both materializing in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case. One of them has a regional character, but not so much an integral one. This is one of the reasons why it retains an unintentional and weak character. The policy entrepreneur in question, the NCO HUL, is not able to muster enough government support to realize its comprehensive Heuvelrug ambitions, since the government prioritizes other regions. The other self governance mode, materializing in the south of the region, appears due to the exploits of a new group of non-governmental

policy entrepreneurs, the private owners. These actors reject a policy initiative but are able to gather support for their own governing activities. Although the interaction rules officially enable cooperation among the involved governmental and non-governmental actors, self governance predominates because the private owners are the most influential actors.

Open co-governance also appears in relation to the second integral regional current, i.e. in the Midden-Brabant case, materializing from the mid 1990s, most especially in relation to the *Groene Woud* policy. This is mainly due to the exploits of four key individuals, policy entrepreneurs that in an indirect and informal way stimulate the flexible collaboration of a large group of actors that come from different backgrounds. These entrepreneurs mobilize resources that are made available by the regionalization trend, for example European subsidies. Furthermore, they manage to link a national GGB-related policy initiative (the introduction of National Landscapes) to the Midden-Brabant region.

Finally, there are also two example of contemporary closed co-governance that appear in relation to the integral regional current, both appearing in the early 2000s. One focuses on a land exchange process in the centre of the Heuvelrug. This mode appears and eventually strengthens due to the sometimes competitive efforts of several policy entrepreneurs (HUL, PND, KvK), enabled by a socio-political trend (a military reorganization) and a provincial policy initiative (a “no, unless” principle). The other mode appears in Midden-Brabant, in relation to the GGB-related *Reconstructie* policy initiative. Its strengthening is orchestrated in a competitive fashion by governmental and non-governmental policy entrepreneurs (RLG, BMF, ZLTO).

At this point, it is interesting to see that contemporary closed co-governance seems to appear as a reaction to unsuccessful attempts to introduce classic closed co-governance. This latter mode no longer seems to tally with the governance of Dutch nature, probably because of the broader character of the integral regional current that, because of the various interests that are at stake, does not allow for restrictive cooperation and a quickly agreed upon pooling of power. This is exemplified by the fact that in both abovementioned examples a lengthy dispute occurs between various policy

entrepreneurs that represent the several interests. In both cases, therefore, it takes quite a while for the predominant governance mode to strengthen.

The interrelation between the currents

Above, it has been outlined that the sectoral current has already been in existence for more than a century, over time adopting classic closed co-governance characteristics. From the mid 1990s, it is complemented with a new current that embodies a more regional and integral discourse, reflecting self governance, open co-governance and contemporary closed co-governance. From that moment on, both currents are visible in the governance of Dutch nature.

Concerning the interrelation between the two currents, three possibilities seem possible, which all have different consequences for the governance modes that appear from the mid 1990s. First of all, the integral and regional current may overshadow the sectoral current, as has for example happened in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant regions. However, above it has been argued that this does not have to be representative of Dutch nature policy in general. When this happens, a pluralist governance picture is likely to appear, but with contemporary rather than classic closed co-governance. The overshadowing effect can either be caused by the relative strength of the integral and regional current (which happens in Midden-Brabant) or by the relative weakness of the sectoral current (as is the case in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug).

Secondly, it is also conceivable (although this is not the situation in the two cases studied in this thesis) that the sectoral current will remain predominant, thus overshadowing the regional and integral current, or even that the integral and regional current will not materialize. If this is the case, classic closed co-governance will probably continue to be predominant. In such a case, after the reversed shift from weak and unintentional self governance to classic closed co-governance, a non-shift is likely to be visible.

Thirdly, it may be the case that the sectoral current and the regional current are equally important. This would mean that, in this case also, a pluralist governance picture would materialize, with the “new” modes and contemporary closed co-governance in the

integral current and classic closed co-governance in the sectoral current. Closed co-governance would therefore appear in both varieties.

Finally, given the fact that hierarchical governance is absent from the two cases studied, this mode of governance is not likely to appear in the governance of nature, either in the sectoral current or in the integral and regional current.

Chapter 7 Conclusion and reflection

In this concluding chapter, the research is wrapped up. Section 7.1 summarizes the results of this thesis by addressing the main research questions. Subsequently, section 7.2 finalizes this study with a theoretical, methodological and empirical reflection.

7.1 Addressing the research questions

In this section, the research questions are answered. Section 7.1.1 constitutes a brief introduction in which these questions, the goal of this thesis and the main concepts are outlined. Section 7.1.2 deals with the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case, and section 7.1.3 addresses the Midden-Brabant case. Section 7.1.4 compares the two cases, and section 7.1.5 outlines the implications of this study for Dutch nature policy in general.

7.1.1 Introduction

As argued in the introductory chapter, the goal of this thesis is to explain how governmental and non-governmental actors have shaped Dutch nature policy over time. The main reason for formulating this goal has been the puzzlement that appears when the general development of this policy field is compared with policy science claims about governance. At least three different claims (a shift in governance, a reversed shift in governance and a non-shift in governance) seem to be applicable.

In the theoretical framework, it was outlined how Dutch nature policy would be studied by combining the policy arrangement approach or PAA (Van Tatenhove et al, 2000a; Arts and Leroy, 2006a) with the governance modes discerned by Kooiman (2003). In the methodological account, it was argued that two cases would be studied, the Dutch regions Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant. Also, the five research questions posed to address the research goal have been rephrased as follows:

1. Which nature policy arrangements institutionalize in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant from the early 1970s until the late 2000s?

2. Which modes of governance appear over time in these nature policy arrangements?

3. Which change factors are responsible for the shifts that appear over time in these modes of governance?

4. Which differences and similarities are visible between the governance modes and shifts that have appeared in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant, and why have these occurred?

5. What does the occurrence of these differences and similarities mean for the general manifestation of governance modes and shifts in Dutch nature policy?

The first three questions focus on the individual cases. Consequently, these are answered separately for the Utrechtse Heuvelrug (in section 7.1.2) and Midden-Brabant (section 7.1.3). In each of these sections, the arrangements that appear are outlined, labelled according to the predominant discourse (i.e. concept or strategy, see section 2.2.1). They are subsequently characterized in terms of hierarchical, closed-co, open-co and self governance, depending on the manifest actors, power and interaction rules (see sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3).

Attention is also paid to the shifts that appear between these governance modes. Hierarchical and closed co-governance are considered as “old” modes; open co-governance and self governance are regarded as “new” modes. When a new mode succeeds an old mode, a “normal” shift in governance is visible. When an old mode follows upon a new mode, a “reversed” shift appears. When the “old” mode closed co governance is continually visible, a “non-shift” appears (see section 2.3.2).

The relative strength of a certain governance mode (weak or strong) is also referred to. This strength corresponds with the stability (respectively unstable or stable) of the arrangement within which a mode appears. Finally, the change factors that bring about alterations in governance are outlined. In this thesis, five such factors have been identified, i.e. policy entrepreneurs, adjacent arrangements, socio-political trends, shock events and policy initiatives (see sections 2.2.4 and 2.3.1).

7.1.2 Arrangements, modes and shifts in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug

The first three questions focus on the nature policy arrangements and the governance modes and shifts that appear in the two cases studied. In this section, the development of these arrangements, modes and shifts is sketched for the Utrechtse Heuvelrug region.

The 1970s and 1980s: a stabilizing purchase policy

In the early 1970s, there is already a nature policy arrangement in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. Of the four actors involved in it, only one plays a prominent role, i.e. the non-governmental nature conservation organization (NCO) *Het Utrechts Landschap* (The Utrecht Landscape: HUL). Since this actor tries to protect Heuvelrug nature through the purchase of forested areas, the arrangement has been labelled as the 'purchase arrangement'.

However, the 'purchase arrangement' is rather unstable. To carry out its activities, the NCO HUL needs the government's financial support. The government, however, is reluctant to become explicitly involved. It only agrees to fund HUL's activities in a reactive fashion, when land is explicitly offered for sale. Since the private estate owners who own most of the Heuvelrug area are not inclined to sell their property, this rarely happens. Therefore, only very little land is purchased.

This means that in the early 1970s Heuvelrug nature policy is mainly characterized by self governance, even though signs of closed co-governance are visible. Self governance predominates because in the interaction rules the responsibility for the governance of nature is left to a non-governmental NCO. Government actors are present, but they keep a certain distance, even though the non-governmental NCO would like more explicit government involvement. This implies that self governance has an unintentional connotation. The NCO does not so much take a forerunning role; rather, it is left with it. Moreover, government funding is essential for the non-governmental purchase activities, but these resources are only scarcely available. As a consequence, governance remains quite weak.

From the mid 1970s, this situation changes, when the 'purchase arrangement' starts to stabilize considerably. An important catalyst is the decline of the forestry sector, which

loses its economic viability. This first of all leads to a financial predicament for the private estate owners, many of whom are forced to sell their estates. It also causes government to stop prioritizing forestry, while government attention to nature policy increases. This latter trend is also related to a general increase in societal attention to nature and the environment. Consequently, the new *Provinciale Natuurdienst* (Provincial Nature Department: PND) and the already proactive NCO HUL establish a coalition that starts to acquire the estates that are offered for sale, mobilizing an extensive amount of government funding to achieve this.

This development reflects the appearance of a strong mode of closed co-governance. The coalition constitutes a select few governmental and non-governmental actors that pool their resources to purchase a large amount of Heuvelrug nature. The interaction rules enable a restricted cooperation process; critique from within the provincial organization and from the private estate owners is generally sidestepped. The entrepreneurial exploits of the NCO HUL and the PND are especially important. However, it is the decline of the forestry sector that enables these exploits.

Towards the mid 1990s: the purchase policy diminishes

For about two decades, Heuvelrug nature policy is characterized in this way. In the mid 1990s, however, the policy falls into abeyance. The provincial government decides to focus on other regions, no longer allocating its purchase budgets to the Heuvelrug. It argues that the region can also be protected through planning measures and through subsidizing the management efforts of the private estate owners. These new and cheaper measures are referred to as the safeguarding strategy. Hence, the ‘purchase arrangement’ transforms into the ‘safeguarding arrangement’.

After this transformation, however, the arrangement loses a lot of its prominence. The coalition involved in the purchase activities continues to exist, but it only occasionally gets together. Moreover, the NCO HUL and the PND are no longer able to purchase many Heuvelrug forests. Instead, the coalition has to work with the new safeguarding strategy, but the provincial government does not elaborate the consequences of this new approach. In the end, nobody really takes responsibility for Heuvelrug nature policy any longer.

Consequently, the strong mode of closed co-governance that for a long time has been visible weakens considerably. As mentioned, the already visible coalition continues to exist, but the rules that long since enabled a restricted form of cooperation fall into abeyance. Moreover, mainly because of the withdrawal of essential government resources, the cooperation process diminishes considerably.

The weakening of closed co-governance has two causes. On the one hand, it is due to the nationally orchestrated introduction of the ecological networks concept and the subsequent *Ecologische Hoofdstructuur* (Ecological Main Structure: EHS), which becomes the new standard for Dutch nature policy. As a consequence of this introduction, the province, empowered to implement the new policy by a large decentralization operation, decides to prioritize regions where the new concept can be used to solve a deadlock between nature and agriculture. This means that, without much ado, the Heuvelrug, where such a deadlock does not exist, is designated as an EHS nature core area, to be protected through the abovementioned new but unelaborated safeguarding strategy. On the other hand, the weakening of closed co-governance is caused by a decrease in land availability. Because the "weakest" private owners have all sold their lands by now, the opportunities deriving from the decline of the forestry sector have mainly been utilized.

After the mid 1990s: southern and comprehensive focus

After the mid 1990s, a new phase of Heuvelrug nature policy commences. The 'safeguarding arrangement' and the corresponding weak mode of closed co-governance continue to exist, but at the same time, two new arrangements appear that embody a more (sub)regional and integral approach to governing nature. One arrangement focuses on the south of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, the other takes into account the region as a whole.

In the south of the Heuvelrug, after the mid 1990s a National Park is installed, leading to the rise of the 'southern National Park arrangement'. At its basis is a specific government committee that throughout the entire country is studying the possibilities of installing National Parks. In the early 1990s, this committee begins to focus on the south of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. However, the private estate owners that own a large part of

the studied area reject the committee's proposal, disagreeing with the proposed terms that in their eyes emphasize nature too much and have too profound a government signature.

After this rejection of the government attempt to install a National Park, the private estate owners issue their own proposal, which allows them to continue activities such as hunting and lets them manage their forests in line with their own preferences. This proposal is accepted by the other actors that are active in this part of the Heuvelrug and is eventually sanctioned by the government. A specific coalition is installed to guide the new policy, constituting the main landowners, the province and the involved municipalities. Over time, however, the private estate owners continue to play a pivotal role, keeping a close eye on what is happening in the National Park.

Therefore, self governance is the predominant mode that appears in the 'southern National Park arrangement', despite signs of closed co-governance. The private estate owners are the most influential actors, even though the coalition constitutes both non-governmental and governmental actors and the interaction rules enable a restricted cooperation process. The private owners base their influence on the fact that, without their lands, a National Park is not possible; this gives them a strong bargaining position. Self governance eventually has a rather defensive connotation, because the private estate owners generally resist changes proposed by other actors, preferring to keep things as they are.

It is therefore the entrepreneurial role of the private estate owners that causes the rise of self governance, and this role continues to be apparent over time. In addition, the government attempt to install a National Park has sparked the engagement of the private estate owners. It is interesting to note that the private owners perceive this attempt as rather hierarchical, which is one of the reasons why they reject it.

In addition, in the mid 1990s, the NCO HUL starts to argue that, even though the entire Heuvelrug is designated as an EHS nature core area, the region is not yet functioning as a coherent ecological entity. It comes with a new comprehensive approach to Heuvelrug nature policy, calling for de-fragmentation measures and more political attention. The NCO gathers a large coalition that includes all Heuvelrug landowners and several government actors. This leads to the rise of the 'cohesion arrangement'. However, this arrangement remains rather unstable. The NCO HUL does not manage to gather

enough support to transform its initiative into a broadly supported policy, mainly because the government continues to prioritize other regions, not sanctioning the pledge to provide extra resources.

The arrangement is therefore characterized by a weak and unintentional mode of self governance. Although government actors do participate, the interaction rules leave the NCO HUL in a forerunning role, even though this latter actor calls for more explicit government engagement. Moreover, the government refuses to supply the resources required to elaborate the new policy. This means that the entrepreneurial role of HUL is not strong enough to put the ecological networks concept on the agenda in the Heuvelrug. In the mid 2000s, the 'cohesion arrangement' and the corresponding weak mode of self governance disappear once again, when the large coalition more or less silently dissolves.

From the early 2000s: focus on the south and centre

Instead, in the early 2000s a new arrangement stabilizes in the centre of the region, appearing beside the 'southern National Park arrangement'. Once again, the NCO HUL is the main initiator, narrowing down its comprehensive ambitions by opting for the creation of two green corridors in the centre of the Heuvelrug. These corridors are to be realized by relocating so-called "red" (urbanized) and "green" (natural) patches of land. This new strategy is made possible by the fact that several military terrains will be abandoned. The lands that as a consequence fall free can be used to realize the two corridors. The provincial government adopts the new strategy and establishes a new coalition to put it into practice. This results in the appearance of the 'central corridors arrangement'.

Initially, a green and a red sub-coalition, the former led by the NCO HUL and the PND, the latter by the *Kamer van Koophandel* (Chamber of Commerce: KvK), dispute the outcome of the land exchange process, especially debating the redevelopment of the to-be-abandoned military airport, Soesterberg. Eventually, however, an agreement is reached in which the NCO HUL and the PND manage to maintain a largely green outcome. They are able to do so because they can make use of the "no, unless" principle, a newly introduced provincial planning measure, which disallows all red expansion activities in natural areas that have an EHS status, unless it is entirely certain that such activities are harmless or can be compensated for.

The ‘central corridors arrangement’ is characterized by closed co-governance. In the new coalition that is established, a group of governmental and non-governmental actors jointly elaborate the new land exchange strategy. The interaction rules enable a restricted form of cooperation: access to the arrangement is determined by the province. At the same time, though, there are also some signs of open co-governance, given the long drawn out dispute between the coalition members, especially between the three abovementioned actors (HUL, PND and KvK). These actors each try to play an entrepreneurial role, maximizing their own (green or red) interests. Consequently, in comparison to the ideal typical closed co-governance mode constructed in section 2.2.3, the interaction rules enable a relatively more flexible governance process, and power is relatively more diffused.

This means that, in the late 2000s, there are two sub-regional policy arrangements, the ‘southern National Park arrangement’ and the ‘central corridors arrangement’, the former characterized by self governance, the latter by closed co-governance. At the time of writing, there are signs that a comprehensive approach to the governance of Heuvelrug nature may re-appear. The province has started to study the possibility of expanding the National Park northwards, considering a merger of the two arrangements. However, such a merger has not yet left the planning stage. A chronological overview of the policy arrangements, governance modes and shifts, and relevant change factors that are visible is presented in Table 7.1.

Point in time	Arrangement	Governance mode / shift	Change factors
Early 1970s	Purchase (unstable)	Weak self governance	None (starting point)
Mid 1970s	Purchase (stabilizing)	Reversed shift to strong closed co-governance	Adjacent arrangements - decline of the forestry sector Policy entrepreneurs - HUL and PND Socio-political trend - increased attention to nature and environment

Point in time	Arrangement	Governance mode / shift	Change factors
Mid 1990s	Safeguarding (destabilizing)	From strong closed co-governance to weak closed co-governance	Socio-political trends - decentralization - regionalization Policy initiative - ecological networks
Mid 1990s	Southern National Park (stabilizing)	Shift to strong self governance (in the south of the region)	Policy entrepreneurs - private estate owners Policy initiative - National Parks
	Cohesion (unstable)	Shift to weak self governance (in the entire region)	Policy entrepreneurs - HUL Policy initiative - ecological networks
Early 2000s	Central corridors (stabilizing)	Strong closed co-governance (in the centre of the region) juxtaposes self governance	Policy entrepreneurs - HUL, PND, KvK Socio-political trend - military reorganization Policy initiative - "no, unless" principle
Mid 2000s	Cohesion (dissolving)	Weak self governance (in the entire region) disap-pears	Socio-political trend - regionalization (ongoing)
Late 2000s	Southern National Park (stable) Central corridors (stable)	Strong self governance and strong closed co-governance coexist	None (finishing point)

Table 7.1: Chronological overview of the arrangements, governance modes and shifts, and corresponding change factors in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case

Conclusion: a reversed shift preceding a shift and a juxtaposition

Analysis of these developments suggests that, on the Heuvelrug, first a *reversed shift in governance* appears, beginning in the mid 1970s, from the "new" mode of self governance to the "old" mode of closed co-governance (see section 2.3.2). This shift takes place within the 'purchase arrangement' that is already visible in the early 1970s. Essential for the appearance of this reversed shift is the more explicit attention paid to nature policy by the province of Utrecht, resulting in the creation of the PND. Furthermore, the exploits of

the non-governmental NCO HUL are of great importance. Together, the PND and HUL operate as main policy entrepreneurs, orchestrating the large-scale purchase of Heuvelrug forests. In addition, it is the decline of the Heuvelrug forestry sector that enables the activities of these two policy entrepreneurs, by providing the required leverage in terms of land availability.

After the mid 1990s, however, a mirrored development is visible: a *shift in governance* takes place, when the weakened mode of closed co-governance is overshadowed by two self governance modes. The strongest of these latter modes appears in the south of the Heuvelrug region, where a National Park is established. In this respect, several private estate owners play an essential role. These actors first reject a governmental attempt to install a National Park, to subsequently initiate the installation of such a park on their own terms. The second mode of self governance that appears is rather weak. It appears when the NCO HUL tries to initiate a comprehensive new nature policy for the entire region, inspired by the EHS. However, this NCO does not manage to gain enough support for its comprehensive ambitions, mainly because the provincial government chooses to prioritize other regions.

Finally, in the early 2000s, closed co-governance appears in the centre of the Heuvelrug, to juxtapose self governance. At the basis of the re-appearance of this “old” mode of governance is a new strategy, developed by the NCO HUL, which comprehends the exchange of “red” and “green” patches of land. After the province has adopted this new strategy, a policy process ensues to create two green corridors in the centre of the region, involving several policy entrepreneurs (the PND, the NCO HUL and KvK). This means that, after several years’ absence, closed co-governance eventually re-appears, this time relating to a more sub-regional and integral approach to governing nature. This recurrent appearance reflects some signs of path dependency, therefore providing evidence for a *non-shift in governance*. The pattern of governance shifts is visualized in Figure 7.1.

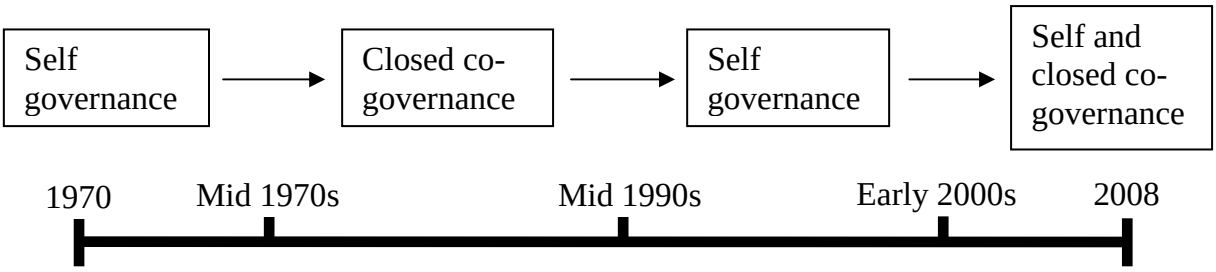

Figure 7.1: Governance shifts in Utrechtse Heuvelrug nature policy from 1970 to 2008

As a first nuance to the above-outlined claims, it should be emphasized that the closed co-governance mode that surfaces in the centre of the Heuvelrug in the early 2000s has a more contemporary connotation than the more classic and sectoral mode that appeared before the mid 1990s; in fact, it harbours some signs of open co-governance. For example, it involves a larger number of actors that stem from different backgrounds and therefore have different interests. As a consequence, power is relatively more diffused. Also, the interaction rules enable a cooperation process that is relatively more flexible but also relatively more competitive. However, because the cooperation process still has a restrictive character and remains characterized by a pooling of resources, closed co-governance (and not open co-governance) is predominant.

Secondly, the mode of self governance that after the mid 1990s appears in the 'southern National Park arrangement' differs from the modes of self governance that are visible in, respectively, the early 1970s 'purchase arrangement' and the 'cohesion arrangement' that exists between the mid 1990s and mid 2000s. In the latter case, self governance has an unintentional character, mainly because the governance of nature is a niche that is neglected by the government. As a consequence, non-governmental actors are left in a forerunning role. Their calls for more government support are not heeded. In the former case, self governance has a defensive connotation, because the powerful group of private estate owners that takes matters into its own hands decisively influences what happens, preventing too much change.

7.1.3 Arrangements, modes and shifts in Midden-Brabant

As mentioned above, the first three research questions deal with the arrangements, governance modes and shifts, and consequent change factors appearing in the studied cases. In this section, these questions are addressed for the Midden-Brabant case.

The 1970s and 1980s: a slightly stabilizing purchase policy

In the early 1970s, Midden-Brabant nature policy resembles the situation in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. In this case also, a more sectoral 'purchase arrangement' is visible and rather unstable. Nature policy is carried out by two NCOs, *Het Brabants Landschap* (The Brabant Landscape: HBL, a sister organization of HUL) and *Natuurmonumenten* (Nature Monuments: NM), actors that try to buy patches of nature, applying for government subsidies. However, these are only available when land is explicitly offered for sale. Since most of the land in Midden-Brabant is owned by agrarians, the NCOs depend on the willingness of these latter actors to sell their properties. The Midden-Brabant agrarians, though, generally are not inclined to do so; they prefer to continue and expand their agricultural activities.

Consequently, like on the Heuvelrug, early 1970s' Midden-Brabant nature policy is characterized by a mode of self governance that has a weak and unintentional connotation. The interaction rules give non-governmental NCOs a forerunning role, but these actors call for more explicit government support. Governmental actors, in turn, are involved, but only marginally; they leave the responsibility for governing nature to the NCOs. Moreover, the NCOs are constrained by their dependence on government resources, which are only to a limited extent available.

After the mid 1970s, the provincial government and the agrarian interest organization *Noord-Brabantse Christelijke Boerenbond* (Northern Brabant Christian Agricultural Association: NCB) become more explicitly involved in the 'purchase arrangement'. This is mostly due to a new nationally orchestrated subsidy scheme, the so-called *Relatienota*, designed to encourage agrarians to either sell or protect patches of land with high natural values. A new coalition, the *Werkgroep Uitwerking Relatienota*

(Working Group on the Implementation of the *Relatienota*: WUR), is established to elaborate the new policy.

However, in practice, this does not lead to the firm stabilization of the 'purchase arrangement'. The Midden-Brabant agrarians still are not very much inclined to participate in nature policy. This leads to a struggle between the NCB on the one hand and the two NCOs on the other. Because the *Relatienota* does not offer means to enforce the cooperation of the agrarians, the NCB generally is able to determine the outcome of the WUR coalition deliberations, constraining the purchase ambitions of the NCOs. Therefore, throughout the rest of the 1970s and the 1980s, the amount of nature purchased continues to be low.

This means that, from the mid 1970s, weak self governance remains visible. The governance of Midden-Brabant nature continues to be a matter of non-governmental actors, and the amount of land that is purchased continues to be limited. However, the self governance mode does change somewhat. It is not the activities of non-governmental NCOs but rather the interactions between the NCOs and the non-governmental NCB that dominate Midden-Brabant nature policy. Of these actors, the NCB is the most influential. However, this actor does not play a forerunning role, but rather a defensive one, which is enabled by the interaction rules. Moreover, the provincial government is somewhat more explicitly involved, but it does not interfere in the abovementioned struggle between the NCOs and NCB.

The involved non-governmental actors all try to act as policy entrepreneurs: the NCB by diminishing the impact of the *Relatienota* policy, the NCOs by maximizing it. The NCB eventually is largely able to determine what happens. This is mainly due to the continuing strength of the Midden-Brabant agricultural sector, which not only explains the strong bargaining position of the agrarians but also the government's reluctance to side with the NCOs: government very much values the importance of agriculture for the regional economy.

The first half of the 1990s: a boost for nature policy

In the early 1990s, this situation starts to change. The province adopts a prominent role in Midden-Brabant nature policy, emphasizing the need to realize the newly introduced EHS

policy (see section 7.1.2). The NCOs involved in the 'purchase arrangement' welcome the provincial change of heart that enables them not only to acquire existing natural areas, but also to buy agricultural land and develop it into nature. The Midden-Brabant agrarians, however, vehemently resist it. As a consequence, the struggle within the still existing WUR coalition initially intensifies.

Tired of this struggle, *Gedeputeerde Staten* (the Provincial Executive: GS) and the newly created *Provinciale Natuurdienst* (Provincial Nature Department: PND) decide to sidestep the WUR coalition. They install several temporary coalitions that constitute individual agrarians and local NCOs, promising these actors a say in the elaboration of the ecological networks concept. In a toilsome deliberation process, the temporary coalitions demarcate the EHS, guided by the government. Confronted with the efforts of their local counterparts, the NCOs and the NCB have no choice but to accept the demarcation proposals.

When the EHS demarcation is finished, the local coalitions and the WUR are dissolved. Instead, a small new coalition is established, charged with the realization of the EHS. This coalition constitutes, amongst others, the NCOs NM and HBL, the PND, *Staatsbosbeheer* (the State Forest Service: SBB) and the *Dienst Landelijk Gebied* (Government Service for Land and Water Management: DLG). Consequently, after a few toilsome years, the rather unstable 'purchase arrangement' of the 1970s and 1980s transforms into the stable 'EHS arrangement'.

This transformation process also reflects an important change in terms of governance; weak self governance is replaced by strong closed co-governance. This latter mode eventually appears in the mid 1990s, when a small coalition, constituting the non-governmental NCOs, SBB and several other governmental actors, starts to implement the EHS. The interaction rules enable a restricted form of cooperation between these actors, who pool their resources to acquire new lands, sometimes developing them into nature. However, the appearance of this mode is preceded by a toilsome process in which a lot of local non-governmental actors (both NCOs and agrarians) and the government play an essential role.

The appearance of strong closed co-governance has several interrelated causes. On the one hand, it is related to the much more explicit engagement of the provincial

government; in particular, the PND and GS adopt an entrepreneurial role. This new engagement is in turn grounded in the introduction of the ecological networks concept – very applicable to the Midden-Brabant region – and in the decentralization operation that empowers the Dutch provinces to realize said concept (see section 7.1.2). On the other hand, closed co-governance is able to arise because the resistance of the Midden-Brabant agrarians is not as formidable as it used to be. This is partially due to the provincial decision to elaborate the new policy on the local level. However, it is also importantly related to the fact that, in the first half of the 1990s, the Dutch agricultural sector loses some of its prominence, a consequence of an agro-economic crisis and a reorganization of the European agricultural subsidy schemes.

After the mid 1990s: nature policy with an integral and regional character

After the mid 1990s, the sectoral form of Midden-Brabant nature policy, visible in the 'EHS arrangement' continues to further stabilize. At the same time, however, it is complemented with a new more integral and regional approach to governing nature, referred to as *Geïntegreerd Gebiedsgericht Beleid* (Integrated Area Specific Policies: GGB). Initially, the manifestation of this approach is embodied in the rise of a new arrangement, which appears due to the designation of Midden-Brabant as a *Waardevol Cultuurlandschap* (Valuable Man-made Landscape: WCL).

However, this new 'WCL arrangement' remains rather unstable. The coalition that the province has established (constituting the NCOs, the NCB and several municipalities) engages only to some extent in integral projects that combine the different functions of the region (for example nature, agriculture, recreation and cultural history). Moreover, the coalition does not manage to involve local actors in the new policy, as initially intended.

With its elaboration of the WCL policy, the province tries to orchestrate an open co-governance process. Besides the several coalition members, it wants to involve many regional actors that will invest their own resources, trying to install interaction rules that enable flexible collaboration. However, such a process is only marginally brought about, mainly because the various coalition members do not proactively support the WCL policy and because too few facilitative government resources are available. This means that, in the end, a weak mode of open co-governance appears, to juxtapose the strong mode of

closed co-governance visible in the 'EHS arrangement'. The number of involved actors remains limited, the flexible collaboration process materializes only to some extent, and resources are only marginally invested.

After this hesitant start, a more integral and regional policy does appear, eventually overshadowing the sectoral EHS policy. This is the result of important changes in the 'EHS arrangement'. A few actors active in this arrangement (i.e. the PND and HBL) conceive the *Groene Woud* concept, envisaging the creation of a large nature and landscape park in Midden-Brabant. This concept not only includes the region's nature core but also incorporates the surrounding agricultural hinterland. Themes such as sustainable agriculture and nature-based recreation are also embedded.

From the late 1990s, the 'EHS arrangement' and the 'WCL arrangement' transform into the '*Groene Woud* arrangement'. The *Groene Woud* concept gains in popularity, and more and more actors engage in *Groene Woud* projects, for example local NCOs, local agrarians and municipalities. This creates a large knock-on effect through which a lot of money, (political) support and capacity is invested in the nature and landscape park. The EHS implementation is also subsumed under *Groene Woud* projects. Moreover, the WCL coalition is transformed into the *Innovatieplatform Duurzame Meierij* (Innovation Platform Sustainable Meierij: IDM). This actor becomes an important project engine, investing the remaining WCL budgets in the realization of the *Groene Woud* concept. In the mid 2000s, Midden-Brabant is designated as a National Landscape, under the heading *Groene Woud*.

While the two arrangements transform into the '*Groene Woud* arrangement', open co-governance is the mode that predominantly appears. The small coalition of governmental and non-governmental actors working on the implementation of the EHS continues its activities, but it is complemented by a lot of new actors that are drawn into the governance of Midden-Brabant nature. Among these actors is the former WCL coalition. The interaction rules enable a flexible collaboration process between the many actors, accompanied by an extensive mobilization of various resources, a diffusion of power and a rather unguided governance process.

The driving forces behind the rise of open co-governance are four policy entrepreneurs, key individuals who are responsible for engaging many of the new actors

and resources and for bringing about the flexible collaborative process. These four entrepreneurs are a GS member, the HBL director, a proactive farmer and an alderman from the municipality of Boxtel. They even manage to influence the allocation of National Landscape status to Midden-Brabant, through an extensive lobbying campaign. The Boxtel alderman also is responsible for the abovementioned transformation of the WCL coalition into the IDM.

The early 2000s: a parallel integral arrangement appears

In the early 2000s, a parallel integral and regional policy is introduced in Midden-Brabant, related to a nationally orchestrated reorganization of the Dutch rural area, under the heading *Reconstructie Landelijk Gebied* (Reconstruction of the Rural Area: RLG). This reorganization is a government response to the outbreak of swine fever in 1997. The province is charged with the elaboration of the new policy. It establishes a new RLG department and brings together a broad Midden-Brabant coalition, involving all municipalities and many actors that represent the different functions of the region.

Initially, the '*Reconstructie* arrangement' evolves uneasily. The new coalition has to establish a comprehensive policy plan, but this takes a very long time, because of a lengthy bargaining process between two sub-coalitions, one focused on nature, headed by the *Brabantse Milieufederatie* (Brabant Environmental Federation: BMF), the other on agriculture, led by the successor of the NCB, the *Zuidelijke Land- en Tuinbouw Organisatie* (Southern Organization for Agriculture and Horticulture: ZLTO). Eventually, after several years, the two sub-coalitions reach an agreement on the contents of the new plan and commence with the realization of the policy, through the initiation of *Reconstructie* projects.

The '*Reconstructie* arrangement' predominantly reflects closed co-governance. The installed coalition constitutes several governmental and non-governmental actors that in a cooperative fashion have to establish and eventually implement a new policy plan, pooling their various resources with the facilitative efforts of the RLG department. Access to this coalition is determined by the province. However, at the same time, signs of open co-governance are visible as well. For example, the cooperation process is characterized by lengthy negotiations between two sub-coalitions, with the ZLTO and BMF as

competing policy entrepreneurs. Therefore, in comparison to the ideal typical closed co-governance mode of section 2.2.3, power is relatively more diffused and the interaction rules enable a relatively more flexible governance process.

Consequently, in the late 2000s there are two policy arrangements with a largely similar integral and regional discourse. The '*Groene Woud* arrangement' has further stabilized over time, given the almost 300 projects that have been launched. It is characterized by open co-governance. The '*Reconstructie* arrangement' has stabilized more recently; the realization of the established policy plan is just underway. This arrangement reflects closed co-governance. Because the two arrangements show significant overlap, at the time of writing the province has initiated a merger between them. However, the consequences of this enterprise are not yet clear. A chronological overview of the policy arrangements, governance modes and shifts, and the relevant change factors that have been visible is presented in Table 7.2.

Point in time	Arrangement	Governance mode / shift	Change factors
Early 1970s	Purchase (unstable)	Weak self governance	None (starting point)
Mid 1970s	Purchase (unstable)	Weak self governance strengthens slightly	Policy entrepreneurs - HBL, NM, NCB Policy initiatives - *Relatienota* Adjacent arrangements - Agricultural sector remains stable
Early 1990s	EHS (stabilizing)	Reversed shift to strong closed co-governance	Socio-political trends - decentralization - regionalization Policy initiatives - ecological networks Policy entrepreneurs - GS and PND Adjacent arrangement - decline of the agricultural sector
Mid 1990s	WCL (unstable)	Weak open co-governance juxtaposes strong closed co-governance	Policy initiatives - GGB (WCL)

Point in time	Arrangement	Governance mode / shift	Change factors
Late 1990s	*Groene Woud* (stabilizing)	Shift to strong open co-governance	Policy entrepreneurs - Boxtel alderman, GS member, HBL director, proactive farmer Socio-political trends - regionalization (ongoing) Policy initiatives - GGB (National Landscape)
Early 2000s	*Reconstructie* (stabilizing)	Strong closed co-governance juxtaposes strong open co-governance	Shock events - outbreak of swine fever Policy initiatives - GGB (*Reconstructie*) Policy entrepreneurs - ZLTO, BMF, RLG Socio-political trends - regionalization (ongoing)
Late 2000s	*Groene Woud* (stable) *Reconstructie* (stable)	Strong closed co-governance and strong open co-governance coexist	None (finishing point)

Table 7.2: Chronological overview of the arrangements, governance modes and shifts, and corresponding change factors in the Midden-Brabant case

Conclusion: first a reversed shift, then a shift, then a juxtaposition

From these developments it can be deduced that, like on the Heuvelrug, in Midden-Brabant, first a *reversed shift in governance* appears. For about two decades, weak self governance is visible, only slightly strengthening over time. From the early 1990s, strong closed co-governance replaces self governance. This is due to a convergence of several change factors. First of all, Midden-Brabant nature policy receives a boost through the introduction of the ecological networks concept and the subsequent EHS policy. Also, empowered by a decentralization operation, the provincial government decides to prioritize Midden-Brabant nature policy, adopting an entrepreneurial role. Finally, the governance of nature is able to flourish because at the same time the very strong agricultural sector weakens somewhat.

After that, again like on the Heuvelrug, a *shift in governance* takes place, when from the mid 1990s closed co-governance is replaced by open co-governance. This is

mainly related to the rise of the *Groene Woud* idea, inspired by the ecological networks concept and by the new integral and regional approach to governing nature – the GGB. Most important for the shift in governance, though, are several key individuals, policy entrepreneurs that proactively promote the *Groene Woud*, engaging many new actors and resources and bringing about a flexible collaborative governing process.

Finally, in this case also, in the early 2000s, closed co-governance appears parallel to open co-governance; this causes juxtaposition between an "old" and a "new" governance mode. Its appearance is related to a large-scale reorganization of the Dutch rural area, under *Reconstructie.* This reorganization in turn is sparked by the outbreak of swine fever, occurring in the late 1990s. As a consequence, several policy entrepreneurs, brought together by the province, start to develop and implement a comprehensive policy plan for Midden-Brabant. Closed co-governance therefore eventually also manifests itself in the more integral and regional approach to governing nature. This recurrent appearance harbours signs of path dependency, and therefore provides some evidence for a *non-shift in governance*. The governance shifts pattern that has appeared in Midden-Brabant is visualized in Figure 7.2.

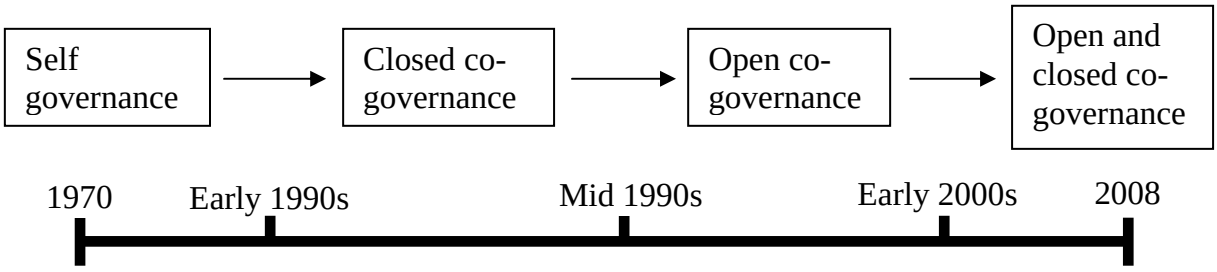

Figure 7.2: Governance shifts in Midden-Braban nature policy from 1970 to 2008

Several nuances are in order, though. First of all, the modes of closed co-governance that appear differ importantly from one another. In comparison to the more classic mode that appears in the sectoral 'EHS arrangement', the mode that surfaces after the early 2000s in the integral '*Reconstructie* arrangement' has a more contemporary connotation. It shows signs of open co-governance, given the relatively large number of actors involved from

different backgrounds. As a consequence, the interaction rules that are manifest enable a relatively more flexible and competitive cooperation process. Furthermore, power is relatively more diffused. Nevertheless, closed co-governance instead of open co-governance is predominant, because the governance process continues to have a restricted character and because the various actors that are involved do strive for an eventual pooling of their respective resources.

Secondly, the character of self governance, predominant from the early 1970s to the early 1990s, changes over time. In the early 1970s, self governance has a rather unintentional connotation: non-governmental actors are left in a forerunning role, even though they call for more government support. Like on the Heuvelrug, this is caused by the lack of government priority for governing nature. From the mid 1970s, self governance assumes a defensive character, given the exploits of the most influential non-governmental policy entrepreneur, i.e. the NCB. This actor does not get involved in stimulating the governance of nature, but rather in marginalizing it.

7.1.4 Governance patterns from a comparative perspective

As outlined in section 7.1.1, the fourth research question has a comparative character, focusing on the differences and similarities in the governance modes and shifts that appear over time in the two cases. These differences and similarities, and the reason for their occurrence, is elaborated in this section, again in chronological order.

Before the mid 1990s: reversed shifts in the sectoral governance of nature

A first main similarity between the cases is the *reversed shift* from self governance to closed co-governance that takes place before the mid 1990s. This reversed shift is related to the sectoral approach to governing nature that is evident in both cases. Both in Midden-Brabant and in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, early 1970s' nature policy is characterized by weak and unintentional self governance. This similar situation is related to the importance of other sectors, respectively agriculture and forestry. As a consequence, the NCOs that are left with the responsibility for governing nature lack the resources (lands and government funding) to carry out their ambitions.

After that, in both cases, strong closed co-governance replaces weak self governance. However, this transformation appears about two decades earlier in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug than in Midden-Brabant. This disparity is mainly caused by a time difference in the weakening of the adjacent sectors in each case. On the Heuvelrug, the forestry sector loses its prominence relatively early, i.e. in the mid 1970s. As a consequence, land availability increases and government involvement becomes much more explicit, exemplified by the installation of the PND, a new department specifically focused on nature policy. In Midden-Brabant, on the other hand, the agricultural sector remains very important. Here, land availability remains low, and government involvement in the governance of nature remains limited. For example, an explicit provincial nature department, like the one installed on the Heuvelrug, is not yet established.

The first half of the 1990s is an important turning trajectory. Both regions are affected by similar developments, i.e. the introduction of the ecological networks concept and the large decentralization operation (which both happen on the national level) and the provincial prioritization of regions that tally with the new concept. However, these developments have a mirrored impact on the two cases. In Midden-Brabant, paired with the somewhat declining importance of the agricultural sector, they give the governance of nature a boost, enabling the reversed shift from weak self governance to closed co-governance. Government involvement increases, exemplified by the installation of a PND, and several governmental policy entrepreneurs initiate the realization of the EHS. On the Heuvelrug, on the other hand, closed co-governance weakens because of the new developments. The new provincial focus on the ecological networks concept draws government attention away from the region. Consequently, policy entrepreneurs are no longer in evidence, and Heuvelrug nature policy reaches a low point, also because the high level of land availability, caused by the decline of the forestry sector, has disappeared.

From this development, the conclusion can be drawn that the governance of nature, at least when it has a sectoral character, is constrained by competing sectors. The weak and unintentional modes of self governance that appear in the mid 1970s are related to the fact that the governance of nature is largely neglected by a government that prioritizes other sectors. The reversed shift that appears in both cases indicates a severe strengthening

of governance and correlates with the decline of the respective adjacent sectors. The two-decade difference between the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant is at least partially explained by the fact that the Heuvelrug forestry sector declines much earlier than the Midden-Brabant agricultural sector.

In addition, it can be concluded that the introduction of the ecological networks concept in the early 1990s as the new standard for Dutch nature policy is not beneficial to all Dutch regions. Attention seems to be drawn to those areas where the new concept is most applicable, such as Midden-Brabant; here, the new concept boosts the governance of nature, mainly because it addresses the infringement of agricultural activities on nature. However, on the Heuvelrug, the governance of nature weakens because of it, mainly because government attention is drawn to other regions.

After the mid 1990s: a shift in governance and an integral and regional discourse

A second main similarity is that after the above-outlined reversed shift, in both cases a *shift in governance* appears, originating from the mid 1990s. Closed co-governance is no longer predominant; instead, new modes of governance are in evidence (self governance on the Heuvelrug, open co-governance in Midden-Brabant). In both cases, this shift is interrelated with a change in terms of discourse, i.e. from a sectoral approach to governing nature to a more regional and integral one.

As a main nuance, it should be emphasised that the new approach does not so much *replace* as *complement* the old one. After all, on the Heuvelrug, the 'safeguarding arrangement' and its corresponding mode of closed co-governance remain visible, and, in Midden-Brabant, the implementation of the EHS, carried out in a closed co-governance fashion, also continues. However, from the mid 1990s comparatively more attention is paid to the integral and regional approach to governing nature. The Heuvelrug 'safeguarding arrangement' disappears into the background, and the Midden-Brabant EHS implementation is subsumed in the '*Groene Woud* arrangement'. Therefore, the new modes of governance *overshadow* the sectoral modes.

At the same time, given the shift that appears, a main difference emerges in relation to the involvement of the government. On the Heuvelrug, the role of government actors remains limited. This is exemplified by the fact that there are only non-

governmental policy entrepreneurs (private estate owners in the south of the region and the NCO HUL in the whole area). This leads to the predominance of self governance. In Midden-Brabant, though, governmental actors remain proactively involved, especially in the '*Groene Woud* arrangement'. Of the four policy entrepreneurs, two have government status and two represent non-governmental actors. These actors orchestrate a flexible collaborative process, and a diffusion of power is visible. Hence, open co-governance predominantly appears.

A second difference that stands out is the different scope of the governance of Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant nature. In the former case, the governance of nature concentrates on a small part of the region, i.e. the south. A mode of self governance also emerges in the comprehensive approach to governing Heuvelrug nature, but this mode has a weak and unintentional connotation; moreover, it disappears after several years. In Midden-Brabant, on the other hand, open co-governance acquires a comprehensive character, covering not only the nature core, but also the entire agricultural hinterland.

Both these differences are to some extent related to the different susceptibility of both regions to the abovementioned change in terms of discourse, and to the ecological networks concept introduced in the early 1990s. The situation in Midden-Brabant very much tallies with the new integral approach and the ecological networks concept. As a consequence, government actors and resources are drawn to the region. The Utrechtse Heuvelrug, however, is not very compatible with the new integral approach, mainly because this approach emphasizes the relation between nature and agriculture (and not for example that between nature and forestry). Moreover, ecological networks are not an issue either, at least according to the government, which regards the region as ecologically coherent already.

The main nuance: new modes juxtaposed with closed co-governance

A third main similarity is that, both in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant, in the early 2000s the existing new modes of governance are juxtaposed by closed co-governance. The recurrence of this "old" mode provides some evidence for the *non-shift in governance* claim, because after being predominant in the sectoral approach to governing nature, closed co-governance also surfaces in relation to the integral and

regional approach, respectively in the Heuvelrug 'central corridors arrangement' and in the Midden-Brabant '*Reconstructie* arrangement'. In both cases, the province establishes a coalition of governmental and non-governmental actors that in a restrictive cooperation process has to orchestrate a pooling of resources to elaborate a new policy.

However, it is clear that the modes of closed co-governance that appear in the early 2000s in a similar way deviate from the modes that were visible before the mid 1990s. In the latter case, due to the sectoral character of nature policy, only a select few actors are involved, with generally the same interests. The modes that appear in the early 2000s, on the other hand, have a more integral character. Therefore, by comparison, a lot more actors from different sectors are involved. This leads to a cooperation process that is relatively more flexible but at the same time much more competitive. Moreover, when compared to the sectoral approach to governing nature, power is relatively more diffused.

The juxtaposition also reflects the abovementioned difference in scope. In Midden-Brabant, two comprehensive modes of governance are visible, connected to the *Groene Woud* and *Reconstructie* policies. On the Heuvelrug, the modes that are manifest focus only on the south and centre. This continuing difference seems still to be related to the respective areas' different susceptibility to the discourse change that materializes after the mid 1990s. From an integral perspective, for the government Midden-Brabant continues to be more interesting than the Heuvelrug. The late 2000s merger attempts that appear in both cases reflect this difference. In Midden-Brabant, this attempt is intended to reduce the overlap between the two governance modes. On the Heuvelrug, it is meant to expand the governance of nature to the sub-regions that until now have been neglected.

This gives rise to a final claim. Above, it was mentioned that, when nature is governed in a sectoral way, the presence of competing sectors impedes the governance of nature. However, when nature is governed in a more integral way, the presence of such sectors seems to be *beneficial*. In Midden-Brabant, the continuing tension between nature and agriculture has attracted a lot of resources and government attention, giving the governance of nature a relatively large scope. On the Heuvelrug, this has not happened; here, with the exception of the centre of the region, the province has generally chosen to prioritize other regions, regions where a deadlock between nature and agriculture has to be solved.

7.1.5 Dutch nature policy in general: modes, shifts and two currents

The final research question discusses what the comparison presented in section 7.1.4 means for the governance of Dutch nature in general. First, each of the four modes discerned in this thesis are discussed. After that, the several shifts that have appeared are outlined and compared with the three claims of the governance puzzle, i.e. the shift, the reversed shift and the non-shift (see section 1.2.2). Then, as an overarching conclusion, two main governance currents that have appeared in relation to these shifts are presented.

The four modes of governance

From the case analyses, it can be deduced that *closed co-governance* is the mode that most often appears in the governance of Dutch nature. In both of the regions studied, this mode manifests itself both before and after the mid 1990s. Because this manifestation is visible in both cases, it may be representative of Dutch nature policy in general. The earlier manifestation is related to a sectoral discourse, the latter reflects a more integral discourse.

The difference between the two varieties is that the sectoral version closely resembles the ideal typical closed co-governance mode presented in section 2.2.3: a select few governmental and non-governmental actors pool their resources in a restrictive cooperation process. This more *classic* variety resembles the Dutch neo-corporatist tradition (Lijphart, 1968; Frouws, 1993) in which a select few non-governmental interest organizations are allowed to exert influence on government policy processes, in return organizing support for these policies among their constituencies. There is little discussion about the objectives and the way in which these should be reached.

In comparison, the mode that appears in the early 2000s does not as closely resemble the Dutch neo-corporatist tradition. In fact, this more *contemporary* mode harbours some characteristics of open co-governance, because of the focus on the integration of different functions. For instance, a larger number of actors from a larger variety of backgrounds are involved. This results in a somewhat more flexible and less restrictive cooperation process. In addition, the pooling of resources is not an automatism. The involved actors also use some of their resources to upload their own preferences into the governance process, which as a consequence has a much more competitive character

Furthermore, *self governance* is often visible as well. In the cases, it has manifested itself in two ways. First, *unintentional* self governance has appeared, resulting from government negligence: non-governmental actors that take the initiative are left in a forerunning role, although they often do require and call for government resources. This leads to a weak mode of governance that fails to strengthen because it depends on government support. In the early 1970s, this variety of self governance appears in both regions. Given this presence in both cases, it is likely that unintentional and weak self governance at that point in time is representative of Dutch nature policy in general. On the Heuvelrug, this mode of governance returns from the mid 1990s to the mid 2000s.

Secondly, self governance appears with a more *defensive* connotation. Non-governmental actors do take the lead, but not to adopt a proactive role and orchestrate a lot of change. Rather, their aim is to align the governance of nature with their own interests. These actors generally approve of the existing situation and want to make sure that it is not altered too severely. Defensive self governance does not seem to be connected to a certain time frame, appearing in Midden-Brabant from the mid 1970s until the early 1990s and in the south of the Heuvelrug from the mid 1990s. Respectively, agrarians and private owners are the defensive actors. It is evident that in both cases these actors react to policy initiatives introduced by the national government, respectively, the *Relatienota* and National Parks policies. This second variety of self governance therefore does not depend on government involvement but rather resists it.

In addition, *open co-governance* only comes to the fore in the Midden-Brabant case, from the mid 1990s to the late 2000s, first (but only weakly) in the 'WCL arrangement', subsequently (and more strongly) in the '*Groene Woud* arrangement'. Therefore, this mode of governance probably is not representative of Dutch nature policy. From the different development of the two abovementioned arrangements, it can be derived that open co-governance seems to strengthen only in a bottom-up fashion, due to many flexible and informal interactions. It also depends on the strong commitment of both governmental and non-governmental actors, who have to have the liberty to act as they see fit. Furthermore, the involvement of several very committed policy entrepreneurs who occupy key positions seems to be required. A disadvantage of this governance mode is that, due to its flexible character, governing activities occur in a rather unguided fashion.

Finally, *hierarchical governance* does not appear for any length of time in either of the cases. At the same time, though, government actors have played several essential roles: they can make – or break – the governance of nature in several ways, mainly because they control extensive and vital resources (often budgets, but also political support or capacity). In the 1970s and 1980s, government is mainly important from a financial perspective. In the first half of the 1990s, it introduces the more proactive EHS policy. Furthermore, government entrepreneurs play important mediating roles, mainly in the contemporary closed co-governance modes that appear in the early 2000s. Finally, government can also play an essential role by keeping its distance, as it has for example done in the unintentional self governance modes of the early 1970s and the mid 1990s that appeared in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. An overview of the various governance modes and varieties and their respective manifestation is presented in Table 7.3.

Governance mode	Visible in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug	Visible in Midden-Brabant
Closed co-governance - classic - contemporary	 Mid 1970s – Mid 1990s Early 2000s – Late 2000s	 Early 1990s – Mid 1990s Early 2000s – Late 2000s
Self governance - unintentional - defensive	 Early 1970s – Mid 1970s Mid 1990s – Late 2000s	 Early 1970s – Mid 1970s Mid 1970s – Early 1990s
Open co-governance	Not visible	Mid 1990s – Late 2000s
Hierarchical governance	Not visible	Not visible

Table 7.3: Manifestation of the four governance modes in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant cases

Shifts in governance: unravelling the governance puzzle

In the context of the governance puzzle that provided the incentive for this thesis (see sections 1.2.2 and 2.3.3) it can be concluded that, in the two cases, proof has been found for all three claims, i.e. for a *reversed shift*, a *shift* and a *non-shift*.

The *reversed shift in governance* takes place between the early 1970s and the mid 1990s, connected to a more sectoral discourse. Because it appears in both cases and has a similar form, i.e. from weak and unintentional self governance to strong and classic closed co-governance, it is likely to be representative of Dutch nature policy in general. Initially, the governance of nature is left to non-governmental NCOs who try to act as policy entrepreneurs. Gradually, however, government starts to pay more attention to nature policy. This results in the engagement of government policy entrepreneurs, mainly from the provincial policy tier. These actors join forces with several non-governmental NCOs. Therefore, throughout the 1970s, the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, the Dutch neo-corporatist tradition also finds its way into the (sectoral) governance of nature.

The point in time at which the reversed shift eventually appears in a particular region is closely related to what happens in other sectors that are visible in said region. In regions where agriculture plays an important role, the reversed shift is not likely to appear before the 1990s. Only when in the first half of the 1990s government attention to nature policy and to the deadlock between nature and agriculture increases, while at the same time the adjacent agricultural sector loses some of its prominence, does the reversed shift materialize. This is exemplified by the situation in the Midden-Brabant case. In regions where agriculture is less important, the reversed shift may perhaps start earlier, for example due to the decline of the forestry sector, as happened on the Heuvelrug.

Following the reversed shift, a *shift in governance* is evident, from the mid 1990s to the late 2000s. The existing sectoral governing activities continue to be visible, but they are complemented by new modes of governance with a more integral and regional character. Within these new modes, several actors that were also important before the mid 1990s play entrepreneurial roles, especially the non-governmental NCOs and the provinces. However, they are joined by several new entrepreneurs, for example private estate owners, farmers and local governments.

The shift in governance does not have a uniform character, though. In one of the studied cases, open co-governance surfaces, in the other self governance is predominant. Consequently, the fact that a shift appears after the mid 1990s may be representative of Dutch nature policy, as is the fact that this shift is related to a discourse change towards a

more integral and regional approach to governing nature. A generalization on the precise form this shift takes, though, is not possible.

It does seem to be the case that the scope of the new modes of governance that appear is generally larger in regions where the interests of nature and agriculture are to be integrated. Such regions receive a lot of attention, both from governmental and non-governmental actors. In the Midden-Brabant case, this has led to the appearance of a policy that covers the entire area. In regions where this type of integration is not visible, it is much harder to bring about a comprehensive approach to governing nature, as the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case has shown.

Finally, in the early 2000s, closed co-governance resurfaces. This to some extent supports the third claim of the governance puzzle, i.e. the *non-shift in governance*. After all, both in the sectoral and integral–regional approaches to governing nature, closed co-governance is predominantly visible. This third claim nuances the above-outlined shift in governance and is further sustained by the fact that the two sectoral modes of closed co-governance that appeared before the mid 1990s do not altogether disappear. The prominent appearance of closed co-governance seems to prove that the Dutch institutional tradition of neo-corporatism is also very much manifest in Dutch nature policy.

The non-shift claim has to be nuanced as well, however. First of all, closed co-governance is not always predominantly visible. For example, in Midden-Brabant, it is absent in the 1970s, the 1980s, the early 1990s and from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. On the Heuvelrug, it is not predominant from the mid 1990s to the early 2000s. Moreover, the cases have shown that closed co-governance itself is also susceptible to change. After all, the modes that appear in the early 2000s have a contemporary connotation when compared with their more classic pre-mid-1990s counterparts. In a way, this points at a shift in governance *within* closed co-governance, mainly due to the integral discourse that characterizes nature policy after the mid 1990s.

Conclusion: two governance currents

Based on the above-outlined governance modes and shifts, the conclusion can be drawn that there are two currents in the governance of Dutch nature. The first one, with a *sectoral* character, focuses on individual natural areas. In both cases, this current is

already present in the early 1970s, dating back even further. Within this current, in the early 1990s an important change occurs, with the introduction of the ecological networks concept. As a consequence, nature is not only protected, but also connected and expanded. The traditional landowning Dutch NCOs are the main policy entrepreneurs in this current, over time complemented with governmental policy entrepreneurs from the provincial tier.

This current is therefore characterized by a *reversed shift*. In the early 1970s, weak and unintentional modes of self governance are visible. The entrepreneurial role of the non-governmental NCOs is constrained, because these actors are not able to secure additional government involvement or resources. Consequently, even though signs of closed co-governance are already visible (given the presence of governmental actors and resources) this mode of governance, reflecting the neo-corporatist tradition, initially fails to surface. This is mainly due to the overshadowing effect of other sectors that do have the support of the government. In these sectors, a neo-corporatist setting does seem to be visible (this has not been explicitly studied in this thesis; however, other studies have pointed this out [e.g. Frouws, 1993]).

Eventually, closed co-governance materializes in the sectoral current, when the Dutch provinces start to work more closely with the landowning NCOs and SBB. This means that the governance of Dutch nature eventually does converge with the domestic institutional tradition. This convergence is enabled by external factors, such as the decline of the abovementioned adjacent sectors, but also the nationally orchestrated introduction of policies that reflect a general increase in government attention for nature, most especially the EHS. When the reversed shift precisely materializes depends on region-specific characteristics. However, it is likely to have appeared before the mid 1990s, given the governmental emphasis on the sectoral current in the first half of this decade.

Over time, this current continues to be visible. At the time of writing, it still exists. However, from the mid 1990s, it is no longer predominant in the governance of Dutch nature. It is complemented with a second current that has a *regional* and *integral* character. This new current envisages the protection of nature in a region-specific way, when feasible in interrelation with other functions of these regions. Its appearance is related to the trend towards regionalization and to policy initiatives with a GGB character, both appearing from the mid 1990s.

The integral and regional current does not have a governance signature that is comparable to the sectoral current. Instead, various governance modes materialize in it, both "new" modes of governance, i.e. self governance and open co-governance, and "old" modes of governance, i.e. closed co-governance. This results in a rather *pluralist* governance picture. As a main nuance, in comparison with their counterparts in the sectoral current, the modes of closed co-governance that appear have a more contemporary connotation, given the involvement of different actors from various sectors because of the much broader character of the second current.

In the second current also, the precise manifestation of governance seems to be influenced by region-specific circumstances. The efforts of various policy entrepreneurs in particular seem to determine which mode appears at which point in time. It is clear that both previously uninvolved entrepreneurs (for example private owners, local governments or proactive farmers) and traditional entrepreneurs (the NCOs and the provincial governments) are active. These entrepreneurs, sometimes in competition with one another, try to involve other actors when gaining access to new resources. They also try to make use of the opportunities offered by external factors. Examples of such factors are the outbreak of swine fever, a large military reorganization, or the introduction of GGB policies, such as National Landscapes.

As far as the *interrelation* between the two currents is concerned, it is possible – and perhaps even likely – that the second integral and regional current from the mid 1990s overshadows the sectoral current, since this is what has happened in both the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant regions. However, it is also imaginable that there are Dutch regions where the two currents are equally important, or where the sectoral current continues to be predominant. These various interrelation possibilities have important consequences for the manifestation of governance. If the two currents are equally important, a pluralist governance picture is also likely to be visible, with closed co-governance in both a classic and a contemporary fashion. If the sectoral current continues to be predominant, however, classic closed co-governance is likely to continue to be predominant as well; this means that self, open co- and contemporary closed co-governance, if visible at all, are overshadowed.

7.2 Theoretical, methodological and empirical reflection

This research is wrapped up with a reflection. First, in section 7.2.1 a theoretical reflection is presented that discusses the main conclusions of this thesis and the concepts that have been used. In section 7.2.2, the methodological choices that have been made are addressed. The empirical reflection of section 7.2.3 positions this research among other empirical studies related to governance and Dutch nature policy, gives some policy messages and presents an epilogue in which the future of nature-related governance is discussed.

7.2.1 Theoretical reflection

In this section, first of all the two governance currents outlined above are compared with claims in the governance literature. Furthermore, I reflect on the concepts that have been used (i.e. the PAA in interrelation with Kooiman's modes of governance) and on their applicability.

The sectoral current: reversed shift

This thesis has revealed two main currents. It is clear that, in these currents, a particular governance pattern is connected to a particular type of nature policy. First of all, evidence has been found for a reversed shift in governance, i.e. the transformation of weak and unintentional self governance into strong closed co-governance that is connected to a more sectoral current of nature-related governance.

In the early 1970s, nature policy does not yet have a strong position. Self governance therefore mainly appears as some sort of niche. Government involvement is visible, but it remains limited because governmental actors do not seem to be interested in playing a bigger role. This weak and unintentional self governance mode does not correspond with the ideal typical mode formulated in section 2.2.3, where self governance is the result of non-governmental actors enforcing the opportunity to orchestrate the governance of nature on their own terms.

The reversed shift eventually materializes when the government chooses to become more explicitly involved in Dutch nature policy. This is partially due to the rise of

post-modern values in the Netherlands (Van Tatenhove et al, 2000b; Inglehart, 1997; Veenman et al, 2009), but is also related to the declining influence of sectors adjacent to nature protection. The reversed shift constitutes a convergence of the governance of Dutch nature with the more general institutional tradition of the Netherlands. Consequently, closed co-governance materializes: the landowning NCOs start to cooperate more closely with the provinces, and the traditional Dutch *poldermodel*, a neo-corporatist policy network (Van Waarden, 1992), also manifests itself in Dutch nature policy.

It is evident that, in the Midden-Brabant case, weak self governance remains visible a lot longer than in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case, eventually assuming a defensive connotation. Non-governmental actors (i.e. Midden-Brabant agrarians) are not inclined to cooperate with the implementation of a governmental policy initiative (the *Relatienota*). This second variety of self governance does not tally with the ideal typical mode of section 2.2.3 either. It rather corresponds with a negative interpretation of new governance (Pierre, 2000b), indicating that non-governmental actors have their own ideas about what is best for them, using their power to take matters in their own hands while resisting undesired government interventions.

The appearance of the reversed shift generally does not correspond with claims in the governance literature, as argued in section 1.2.2. After all, most authors mainly focus on the appearance of a shift (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004) or on the continuing strength of the government (Goetz, 2008). An increase in government involvement therefore does not seem to be a generally visible societal phenomenon.

Instead, as argued in this thesis, a reversed shift corresponds with the gradual institutionalization of policy fields that have yet to be “discovered” by the government. Such fields are initially dominated by non-governmental actors but eventually find their place among existing policy fields, drawing the engagement of government actors. For example, a reversed shift also seems to be visible in the regulation of the internet, a policy field initially dominated by non-governmental influences (Knill and Lehmkuhl, 2002).

The integral and regional current: governance pluralism

In addition, in this thesis it has become clear that the sectoral current is, from the mid 1990s, complemented with an integral and regional current. Moreover, this development

correlates with the appearance of various modes of governance, i.e. self governance, open co-governance and closed co-governance. The coexistence of these modes provides evidence for both a shift in governance and a non-shift in governance, resulting in governance pluralism.

This pluralist situation concurs for example with the ideas of Scharpf (1997), who advocates a governance perception that envisions all kinds of hybrid governance manifestations. Kooiman (2003) also seems to herald this idea by claiming that governance is a mix of all kinds of governing activities conducted by all kinds of governmental and non-governmental actors. Furthermore, Hill and Lynn (2005) point at the coexistence of traditional governance modes with newer ones.

When the modes that appear in the integral and regional current are considered separately, self governance does not seem to be representative of Dutch nature policy in general, only surfacing in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case. Like in the sectoral current, self governance shows two faces, i.e. an unintentional and a defensive one. This means that, in the integral and regional current also, self governance does not resemble the mode that is generally conceptualized in the governance literature. In this thesis therefore, self governance does not appear as an inherent societal quality, as is for example claimed by Luhmann (1995) and Oström (1990). Rather, its existence seems to be interrelated with government involvement; it either depends on it or resists it. Consequently, developments like the hollowing out of the state or governance without government (Rhodes, 1997) do not seem to be in order.

Furthermore, open co-governance surfaces only in the Midden-Brabant case. It does not therefore seem to be representative of Dutch nature policy either. This mode resembles the most recent ideas about network governance, given its open character and the flexible interaction process that is visible (Sørensen and Törfing, 2005). It also has a very informal character (Christiansen and Piattoni, 2003) and most prominently shows signs of multi-actor and multi-sector governance, given the presence of many regional actors representing different interests. At the same time, open co-governance reflects some of the problems that confront present-day governance networks. For example, because it remains unclear who takes the lead, it is also unclear who is accountable for the

governance process (Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden, 2004; Sørensen and Törfing, 2009).

Finally, after dominating the sectoral current, closed co-governance also appears in the integral and regional current, alongside the abovementioned newer modes. The fact that it surfaces in both cases studied indicates that this recurrent appearance seems to be representative of Dutch nature policy in general. Furthermore, it indicates that this old mode of governance appears at all times. This seems to point at the resilience of the domestic institutional tradition, in the case of the Netherlands with a neo-corporatist character (Arts and Leroy, 2006b), and a certain degree of path dependency (Pierson, 2000).

However, this reappearance of closed co-governance has to be nuanced as well. Because of the integral and regional character of the second current, the reappearing closed co-governance modes have a more contemporary connotation than their sectoral counterparts. It seems therefore that, even though the domestic institutional tradition of neo-corporatism is resilient, it nevertheless is affected by the integral and regional character of post-mid-1990s nature policy.

Comparison of the second current with its predecessor reveals that in both currents networks of governmental and non-governmental actors are visible. Network governance (Rhodes, 1997; Törfing, 2006) is therefore no new feat in Dutch nature policy. However, because of the integral character of the new nature policies, the various governance modes that are visible involve a lot more actors that moreover stem from different sectors. This finding seems to support the claim of a shift towards multi-actor and multi-sector governance (Kohler-Koch and Eising, 1999; Wiering and Driessen, 2001; Van Bommel, 2008).

Furthermore, it is evident that the actors that operated as policy entrepreneurs in the sectoral current (i.e. the provinces and the landowning NCOs) continue to do so in the integral and regional current. They are able to do so because in the past they gained a strong position, the NCOs through an increase in their landownership, the provinces because of their increased mandates, consequent to the abovementioned decentralization operation.

At the same time, however, governmental actors in particular adopt a different kind of role over time. In the 1970s and 1980s, they were mainly important in a facilitative fashion, providing financial resources. In contemporary nature policy, however, government actors are not only facilitators but also initiators and mediators. This seems to sustain the claims in the governance literature that the role of the government does not so much diminish as change profoundly (Jordan et al, 2005).

Multi-level governance, which is often mentioned together with multi-actor and multi-sector governance (Crabbé, 2008; Arts et al, 2009), is less prominently visible. For example, the influence of the European level, important for Dutch nature policy in general (see section 1.1.2), to date remains rather limited on the regional level; it is mainly restricted to EU budgets that are mobilized by various project initiators, especially in the Midden-Brabant case. However, this limited influence is also partially due to a bias in the case selection (see section 7.2.2). It is clear that the role of the Dutch provinces increases over time, whereas the role of the national government diminishes as a consequence of a decentralization operation orchestrated by the latter. However, this trend had already surfaced in the sectoral current. Finally, it is evident that the importance of local actors in the regional governance of nature is also limited. This is especially visible in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug case.

The PAA, Kooiman's modes of governance and their interrelation and application

When reflecting on the concepts to be used in this thesis, early in this research process, I selected the PAA as the main analytical tool, combining it with the governance modes discerned by Kooiman (2003). This resulted in the construction of four ideal typical governance modes, interpreted in terms of actors, power and rules of the game. By comparing the policy arrangements found in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant cases with these ideal types, it could be determined which mode of governance was predominantly visible at a certain point in time.

Overall, this conceptualization has proven to be suited to realize the goal of this thesis, i.e. explain how governmental and non-governmental actors have shaped Dutch nature policy over time. As far as the PAA is concerned, the use of this approach has been especially fruitful because of the balance that it has offered between general conclusions

and a nuanced analysis. On the one hand, the focus on developing policy arrangements and subsequent governance modes has enabled a general picture of governance shifts in Dutch nature policy to be sketched. On the other hand, distinguishing between three organizational dimensions and one substantive dimension has enabled the unravelling of this more general picture in a much more detailed and nuanced analysis of said policy arrangements and governance shifts.

On the other hand, however, the four dimensions that together constitute a policy arrangement only provide analytical directions, rather than clear concepts (Crabbé, 2008). This means that there can be quite some overlap between them, for example concerning rules and resources. This requires a researcher to carefully demarcate his or her interpretation of said dimensions. For example, I have chosen to centralize the actor dimension, given the emphasis that this thesis puts on governmental and non-governmental actors. This meant that I also interpreted the other dimensions according to this focus. I therefore connected the discourse dimension to a framing perspective, looked at relational power rather than at structural power and chose to interpret rules of the game as interaction rules, focusing on the various roles that governmental and non-governmental actors can play vis-à-vis each other.

Furthermore, in the labelling of the arrangements constructed in Chapters 4 and 5, I have not always been consistent. I decided to roughly relate this exercise to the discourse dimension, alternately referring to the concepts and strategies that were predominant (for example the ‘purchase arrangement’ or ‘EHS arrangement’) but also to policy names (for example in the ‘*Groene Woud* arrangement’). I also sometimes gave the arrangements a geographical characterization (for example the ‘southern National Park arrangement’). I acted in this way because I wanted to use a name that best covered the contents of the arrangement. I found this a more important criterion than consistency.

The governance modes discerned by Kooiman (2003) have proven to be valuable concepts. However, as a drawback, it should be pointed out that these modes are rather abstract. Along the way, co-governance especially proved to be too broad to use as a concept. Therefore, as part of the iterative research process, I decided to split it up into a closed and an open variant. This distinction proved to be quite valuable, since it diminished the abstract character of the mode. Eventually, my analysis resulted in a

further narrowing down of two of the four modes, i.e. closed co-governance (which has been split up into a classic and a contemporary version) and self governance (which has shown a defensive and an unintentional variety).

Moreover, in the determination of the predominant governance character of arrangements encountered in the field, hybrid situations have appeared (see also Padt, 2007). For example the weak 'purchase arrangements' of the early 1970s and the 'southern National Park arrangement' appearing on the Heuvelrug harboured signs of both self governance and closed co-governance. However, because I wanted to provide a clear governance picture, I have always argued for the predominance of one mode, based on the actors, power and interaction rules that were visible. It should be noted, though, that in determining which mode predominated, I have not always valued the three PAA dimensions in the same way. For example, I characterized the 'purchase arrangements' as self governance because of the interaction rules that were visible, whereas I labelled the 'southern National Park arrangement' as self governance on the basis of the power dimension.

In addition, I encountered some problems on the interrelation between policy arrangements and governance modes. As mentioned, policy arrangements take into account both the substance and the organization of a certain policy field at a certain point in time, whereas governance modes predominantly focus on the organization. Consequently, eventually, I decided to interpret the governance modes in terms of actors, power and rules of the game, not in terms of discourse. This also meant that I decided to explicitly focus both on policy arrangements (in Chapters 4 and 5) and governance (in Chapter 6).

As a major drawback of this decision, however, this thesis constitutes quite some overlap, especially between the organization of the arrangements discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 and the governance modes outlined in Chapter 6. I tried to minimize this overlap by talking about the organization of the arrangements in more general terms in Chapters 4 and 5, whereas Chapter 6 focuses on the comparability of these organizational components with the ideal typical governance modes.

Finally, the twofold distinction introduced to indicate, respectively, the (lack of) stability of an arrangement and the (lack of) strength of a governance mode (see section

2.2.4) has proven to be a valuable addition. By using it, I have been able to emphasize nuances in the governance shift patterns that have appeared over time, for example pertaining to the weak character of early 1970s' self governance.

On the downside, taking into account this distinction obliged me to pay attention (albeit relatively limited) to governance processes that have not had a very large impact (for example the governing activities in the Midden-Brabant 'WCL arrangement'). Furthermore, it has proven a tricky exercise to determine when an arrangement or governance mode qualifies as respectively unstable or weak. I decided to qualify them as such if there were only few interactions, or if these interactions were characterized by struggles or disputes that persisted in hampering the further development of a certain policy.

Governance shifts; change factors and old versus new

This thesis has focused mainly on governance shifts, by placing the ideal typical modes of governance based on Kooiman (2003) and operationalized with the PAA in a chronological order. In section 2.3.1, it was argued that changes in policy arrangements, and therefore also shifts in governance modes, are caused by policy entrepreneurs (an endogenous or internal change factor) and by socio-political trends, policy initiatives, adjacent arrangements or shock events (exogenous or external change factors).

First of all, it should be noted that, as argued in section 2.3.1, one of the external change factors, i.e. policy initiatives, is not covered by the PAA (Arts and Leroy, 2006b). This change factor has been added in light of the iterative character of this research process. While analysing the cases, I found that nature-policy-related innovations stemming from the national, international or provincial level were important but that these were not covered by the four change factors that I was working with at that time. Hence, a fifth change factor was introduced.

Furthermore, in this thesis, it has become clear that arrangement change and governance shifts have been mainly brought about by governmental and/or non-governmental policy entrepreneurs that, with various levels of success, try to make use of the opportunities created by socio-political trends, policy initiatives, adjacent arrangements or shock events. Sometimes, they have to compete with other policy

entrepreneurs to achieve this. This idea of policy entrepreneurs navigating opportunities in a way resembles Kingdon's (1995) multiple streams framework from which the policy entrepreneurs concept was derived in the first place (see section 2.3.1).

In addition, it can be argued that the five discerned factors do not only bring about change; they can also stand in the way of change. For example, the same ecological networks policy initiative – albeit interpreted in a different fashion – causes both the rise of comprehensive self governance on the Heuvelrug in the mid 1990s and the failure of this mode to strengthen further. Moreover, the change factors can also be responsible for the further strengthening or weakening of a governance mode, for example visible in the continuing exploits of policy entrepreneurs in Midden-Brabant open co-governance.

Finally, the conceptualization of the three governance claims at the core of this thesis, i.e. the shift, the reversed shift and the non-shift, should be discussed. In section 2.3.2, it was argued that two of the four governance modes have an "old" character, i.e. hierarchical and closed co-governance, whereas the other two, i.e. open co-governance and self governance, are "new" modes. On the basis of this assumption, the shift (from old to new), the reversed shift (from new to old) and the non-shift (old remaining old or new remaining new) have been phrased.

The results of this thesis, however, give cause to doubt both the "oldness" of old governance and the "newness" of new governance. After all, a new mode has been discovered as far back as the early 1970s, whereas an old mode of governance has been visible in the early 2000s. This means that, as far as Dutch nature policy is concerned, the distinction between old and new governance is not very accurate. The various governance modes can occur at any time, with the exception of open co-governance, which only appeared from the mid 1990s. As a main nuance, it has to be mentioned that both the new modes appearing in the early 1970s and the old modes appearing in the early 2000s do not one on one match their ideal typical counterparts as constructed in section 2.2.3.

7.2.2 Methodological reflection

From a methodological point of view, I first of all want to discuss several demarcation issues that have come up in carrying out this research. I also want to address the

comparability of the two cases selected. Finally, the consequences of selecting a regional scope are discussed.

Demarcation issues

A first problem that I encountered when demarcating the focus of this research was deciding what a nature policy arrangement is, and what it is not. This especially became relevant when I encountered the appearance of integral arrangements, which surfaced mainly in the Midden-Brabant case. These arrangements dealt with nature policy, but in close interrelation with, for example, agricultural policy. I eventually decided to take them into account, because these arrangements proved to be at the core of nature policy.

There was one specific case where I took the decision not to incorporate an integral policy process, i.e. the ongoing re-allotment in Sint-Oedenrode. This process appeared in the late 1980s and was agricultural in character. However, it adopted integral characteristics over time. The re-allotment finished in the late 2000s. I initially included it, but decided to leave it out because the re-allotment predominantly remained an agricultural arrangement. Moreover, I found out that the re-allotment process was generally perceived as an isolated process. Furthermore, incorporating it would have deflected attention from the mainstream governance processes in the integral *Groene Woud* and integral *Reconstructie* arrangements.

If the demarcation exercise is viewed from a time-related perspective, it can be concluded that the diachronic–synchronic combination used to carry out the longitudinal case study has worked out pretty well. The study of four separate periods, demarcated with a starting and finishing point and three in between turning points, has functioned as a useful methodological tool.

Comparability of the cases

Another point that can be argued is that the selected regions in a way are incomparable. After all, it could be stated that the Utrechtse Heuvelrug entirely encompasses natural areas. Over time, its forests have become primarily regarded as nature. Midden-Brabant, on the other hand, mainly constitutes agricultural land, which to some extent has high natural and/or landscape values. Only the nature core in fact includes “pure” natural areas.

However, this bias has generated very interesting conclusions, for example concerning the role of adjacent arrangements and the different susceptibility of the two regions to a more integral discourse.

Furthermore, as another bias of the case selection, the influence of European nature policy has only marginally been addressed. Beforehand, I considered these to be absent on the Heuvelrug, but present in Midden-Brabant because of the designation of the large natural area *Kampina* as a Natura 2000 area. However, I did not encounter any proof that the Natura 2000 status of the *Kampina* was important for what has happened in the Midden-Brabant region so far. It should be noted, though, that the lack of findings in this respect is not that peculiar. After all, within the Netherlands, the debate on Natura 2000 until now has mainly taken place on the national level. Even though Natura 2000 sites have been designated and management plans are being prepared, the consequences of EU nature policy for the designated regions therefore had not yet materialized in 2008 (the point in time when the gathering of data for the purpose of this thesis stopped). It is expected that when the management plans take effect, such consequences will become more clear (Beunen, 2010).

Consequences of the regional scope

Finally, it seems that the selection of two regions as the main case studies also has had some consequences for the manifestation of governance, especially in relation to the explanation of shifts in governance that have appeared over time. The actors involved in the studied regions have been depicted as vessels of governance change, especially when adopting an entrepreneurial role. Influences from, for example, the national level have been captured in policy initiatives or socio-political trends.

However, if governance change had been studied on the national level, for example focusing on the impact of nationally orchestrated policies, the exploits of various actors, resulting in the pluralist appearance of various governance modes, would probably have been much less significant. On such a level, more structural characteristics such as the Dutch neo-corporatist tradition would have been even more important, standing in the way of the appearance of newer modes of governance. This is for example reflected in the

research of De Boer (2009), who studied cultural heritage preservation policy on the national level.

On the other hand, an even more narrowed down focus, i.e. not on regions but on separate natural areas or even individual projects, would probably have rendered a different perspective as well. In this research, it has been emphasized, for example, that the open co-governance mode that appears in Midden-Brabant has resulted in the launch of a lot of projects. However, how the implementation of such projects has fared has not been studied. It is quite possible that, on this very concrete level, the project initiators meet all kinds of problems that have a more structural or institutional character. This is for example the case in the research of Buizer (2008), who compared three local initiatives within the Netherlands. She concluded that such initiatives show a lot of potential, but that innovations that can be derived from them seldom find their way into established policies.

7.2.3 Empirical reflection

In this section, the results of this thesis are compared with other studies that focus on governance and Dutch nature policy. Furthermore, by means of an epilogue, some observations that may be relevant for policymakers are outlined.

The sectoral current

In this thesis it has been argued that, until the mid 1990s, the governance of Dutch nature is characterized by a current with a sectoral discourse in which eventually a classic closed co-governance mode materializes, succeeding unintentional and weak self governance. This claim seems to be sustained by other research that has focused on the ongoing development of Dutch nature policy. For example, the appearance of the reversed shift is visible in the work of Bogaert and Gersie (2006), even though these authors do not phrase it as such.

In addition, several studies have suggested that Dutch nature policy on a regional level is characterized by the appearance of certain networks in which a few governmental and non-governmental actors are involved. Examples of such regions are the Veluwe (Van

der Zouwen, 2006), the Drentsche Aa (Van Bommel, 2008) and the Gelderse Poort (De Jong, 1999).

What this thesis can add to these studies is the precise character of the networks that appear. The abovementioned studies for example do not address the difference between weak and unintentional self governance and closed co-governance. In addition, this thesis has added value in the fact that it shows the different influence that adjacent policy sectors can have on the functioning of the region-specific networks that are visible in the sectoral current.

The integral regional current

Furthermore, this thesis has addressed the appearance of a second current with a more integral and regional discourse. When this new current complements the already existing sectoral current, a rather pluralist and hybrid governance manifestation appears that reflects the specific regional characteristics of the two cases. On the one hand, a shift in governance is visible, due to the appearance of self and open-co-governance. At the same time, however, closed co-governance resurfaces, and this points at a non-shift.

It turns out that this picture of governance pluralism matches with the findings of a recent and quite extensive study on the manifestation of governance in the Dutch rural area (Breeman et al, 2009). One of the general conclusions of this study is also that over time there is no shift from government to governance, but rather a hybridization of governance. Moreover, it is argued that each situation has its own specific governance mode, developing its own “logic of appropriateness”. This corresponds with the region-specific character of the governance modes discovered in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant cases. The same picture appears in other studies as well (De Boer et al, 2007; Boonstra and Kuindersma, 2008).

Another general conclusion drawn by Breeman et al (2009) is that a contemporary mode of governance needs time to develop; it results from a certain process in which the governors have to find out which governance characteristics are required. Often, these governors grow closer to each other over time. Furthermore, government actors continue to be essential players, even though they can adopt various roles. These conclusions also tally with the findings of this thesis, for example given the strengthening processes that

both modes of contemporary closed co-governance experience. Moreover, this conclusion seems to support the essential role of governmental and non-governmental policy entrepreneurs.

Another point raised by Breeman et al (2009) that is supported by this thesis is that the appearance of a lot of dynamics or a significant deadlock in a relatively brief period of time can result in a new mode of governance. This happens for example on the Heuvelrug, when the private owners reject the initial governmental National Park proposal, leading to the rise of self governance. Furthermore, it occurs in Midden-Brabant, where the turbulent introduction of the EHS policy in the early 1990s provides the basis for the eventual rise of open co-governance.

Epilogue: some policy messages

Even though this research does not have an evaluative purpose, some of the results that it has rendered are very interesting for policymakers, both governmental and non-governmental ones. Consequently, by means of an epilogue, several messages are outlined, while at the same time an outlook on the near future of Dutch nature-related governance is presented.

Message I: resist the classic closed co-governance reflex

One of the general findings of this thesis is that, in the governance of Dutch nature, governmental and non-governmental actors work together. Hierarchical governance has not predominantly materialized, and the modes of self governance that have appeared have an important link with government involvement. In particular, closed co-governance, grounded in the neo-corporatist Dutch institutional tradition, seems to be the basic recipe when the government wants to engage in the governance of nature, and the Dutch NCOs also often try to seek a restrictive form of cooperation with a select few governmental actors.

As a first message, it seems advisable that nature policymakers broaden their minds beyond their traditional preference for closed co-governance. In the sectoral current, this mode functions rather well, so in this case, there is no immediate need to look for another way of governing. In the integral and regional current that appears after the

mid 1990s, however, nature policy has assumed a different character that no longer seems to tally with classic closed co-governance. The governance of nature is no longer the playing field of the Dutch provinces and the landowning NCOs but involves a large variety of other actors.

To date, closed co-governance has been opened up slightly, given the appearance of a more contemporary variety of said mode. However, the restrictive character of closed co-governance does not change. The *Reconstructie* policy in Midden-Brabant for example shows that the several new actors from different sectors also become "internalized" into the traditional restrictive cooperation structures (see also Boonstra and Kuindersma, 2008). Actors such as citizens, local NCOs or local businessmen often are not involved.

This can lead to resistance when a policy is about to be implemented, for example elsewhere in the province of Noord-Brabant, where citizens vehemently resist the expansion of agriculture agreed upon in a *Reconstructieplan* (http://www.megastallennee.nl). Moreover, the fact that new actors only become involved at a very late stage or not at all can have a detrimental effect on nature policy in the long term. It might for example eventually lead to negative publicity that in turn could cause a crumbling of societal support for nature policy in general, and more specifically for the various Dutch nature conservation organizations, which then would run the risk losing some of their benefactors.

Message II: orchestrate open co-governance processes

It thus seems to be feasible to open up the governance of nature even further, in order to avoid resistance and gain broader support, and eventually also the more proactive involvement of previously uninvolved actors. This leads to a second and interrelated message, i.e. to orchestrate governance processes that have an open co-governance character, such as the *Groene Woud* policy that appeared in Midden-Brabant from the late 1990s. The regional energy that has come to the fore in this policy process is very much treasured by the various actors that are involved in it, and it would be very advantageous if such energy could also be generated in other regions. At the same time, though, open co-governance has revealed a pitfall that needs to be avoided.

Even though it is rather difficult to design an open co-governance process, there seem to be several prerequisites. First, there has to be a group of "problem owners", policy entrepreneurs that adopt a region as their priority (see further Message IV). Preferably, these entrepreneurs should be found both within the main government institutes and among the most important non-governmental organizations.

Moreover, an open co-governance process seems to thrive in an informal setting. Many people have indicated that what they like most about the *Groene Woud* policy is the room they receive from the government to take part in the process as they see fit. In the words of one respondent, government is expected to create chaos; it should not try to capture a process in all kinds of rules or regulations. Instead, it should focus on the facilitation and stimulation of informal and bottom-up initiatives that stem from the region itself.

The downside of open co-governance is that it can remain unclear in which direction the governance process is heading. Because all involved actors launch initiatives of their own, it is very difficult to orchestrate a common course. Moreover, it is harder to determine who precisely is accountable when things go wrong. Therefore, at least some guidance seems to be required, for example an agreement on headlines or a code of conduct that determines how the various participants should behave and in what direction they are heading. Actors that want to become involve should then pledge to keep to such an agreement or code. There also should be a body that monitors whether the agreement or code is kept. For example, the provinces can do this, but it can also be delegated to specifically established bodies such as a board to oversee day-to-day activities or a regional council. The responsible body for example can provide extra facilitative means to actors that keep to the agreement or code. However, it is very important that, at the same time, the informal character of the governance process is preserved.

Message III: find a balance between engagement and distance

Thirdly, I would like to present some suggestions that relate to the role that government can play in contemporary Dutch nature policy. Over all, for governmental policymakers it is important to recognize when they should keep their distance and when more specific involvement is required. This can differ per region or even per natural area or project.

On the one hand, this thesis has shown that, in Dutch nature policy, it is difficult to orchestrate a governance process with a hierarchical character. In both the Midden-Brabant and the Utrechtse Heuvelrug regions, government attempts to install new top-down policies have failed because governmental actors did not manage to gain the support of regional actors. Government should be mindful of the fact that it generally needs the support of the main non-governmental actors, especially those that own land.

However, at the same time, there are also examples of government interventions that have had a constructive effect, for instance to resolve a persistent impasse between non-governmental NCOs and agrarians, as happened in Midden-Brabant in the early 1990s. It has to be emphasized that, in this case, government intervention only worked because the government explained its actions to local non-governmental actors. A connection with the local level therefore seems to be important. In this train of thought, it also seems important to involve the Dutch municipalities more significantly in the governance of nature. In this thesis, such actors have been largely absent, with the exception of the Midden-Brabant municipality of Boxtel.

In relation to the future in this respect, it will be very interesting to see how the implementation of the European Natura 2000 policy will evolve. On the national level, this policy has introduced rather hierarchical governance characteristics (Beunen, 2010; Arnouts and Arts, 2009). However, as argued in this thesis, on the regional level, hierarchical interventions are seldom appreciated, and, moreover, have not really worked; also, the introduction of Natura 2000 has already lead to a lot of resistance. As a consequence, the government has tried to rhyme the hierarchical character of Natura 2000 with the Dutch institutional tradition of co-governance by deciding that, for each allocated Natura 2000 site, specific management plans, negotiated by regional actors, have to be put in place. However, the process of creating and carrying out these plans proves to be rather toilsome (see for example Jacobs, 2009).

Message IV: cherish and promote leadership

In addition, as mentioned above, this thesis has shown that on the regional level, policy entrepreneurs can make an important difference. This thesis has indicated that, if such actors are lacking, it is very hard for a policy initiative to develop further. It has also

provided several good examples of both governmental and non-governmental policy entrepreneurs that have played essential roles, mainly because they have shown important leadership qualities. As a fourth message, some of these qualities are outlined.

First of all, it seems to be important that, when they are engaged in a regional governance process, policy entrepreneurs look at the region as a whole. This means that they should not focus on the provincial or local policy tiers, but on the regional level in between. For example, an absence of such a focus is one of the reasons why the Midden-Brabant WCL policy was not very successful. Moreover, entrepreneurs should be able to look beyond their own sectoral interests, taking into account the interests of other actors and appreciating that these are often interconnected with their own preferences. This has for example happened in the centre of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, where an NCO has developed a strategy that combines both “green” and “red” interests.

Secondly, although as just argued the entrepreneurs should operate mainly on a regional level, they should also visit other policy tiers, to look for support for their activities on the local, provincial, national and European levels. Examples of such actions, respectively, are the demarcation of the EHS in Midden-Brabant, where a member of the Provincial Executive involved local non-governmental actors, the lobbying campaign to get Midden-Brabant designated as a National Landscape and the mobilization of the many EU subsidies invested in the realization of *Groene Woud* projects.

Thirdly, policy entrepreneurs seem to need several personal qualities that enable them to get other people enthusiastic. By setting a good example or by telling a convincing story, they can persuade other actors to engage in the governance of nature. It seems to be an advantage if the policy entrepreneur in question has a charismatic personality and comes from the region itself. Their organizational capacities are also very important, for example to find funding to support a project or to orchestrate a large event designed to promote a region.

Fourthly, policy entrepreneurs should try to meet up with other policy entrepreneurs. By finding such partners, they are able to share the burden of carrying a regional policy process, while at the same time ensuring that this process does not come at an end when a main policy entrepreneur for some reason disappears from the scene. It would be ideal to find entrepreneurs with both a governmental and a non-governmental

status and representing different levels and interests. After all, an important reason behind the success of the *Groene Woud* policy is the involvement of two governmental entrepreneurs from the local and provincial level, and two non-governmental entrepreneurs, one representing an NCO, the other the agricultural sector.

Message V: integral governance when possible

In this thesis it has become clear that policies that envisage the integration of nature with one or more other functions are very much in vogue. Examples are the *Groene Woud* in Midden-Brabant and the land exchange process in the centre of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. On the basis of this observation, it seems advisable that actors willing to initiate a new nature policy should try to take into account other functions as well. If they manage to combine nature with for example agriculture, recreation, housing, water management, cultural history or climate adaptation it seems more likely that their efforts will be supported by other actors; this in turn may lead to additional investments, an improved regional image and the eventual stimulation of the regional economy.

This message is directed both at governmental and non-governmental actors, but especially at the provincial governments and the landowning NCOs, since, on the regional level, these actors seem to be the main initiators of new nature policies. These regional policymakers should investigate which functions besides nature are visible in their respective regions, and then try to find ways to combine these functions, looking for common denominators and win-win situations. It is also advisable to do this together with the actors that represent these other functions, i.e. municipalities, agrarians, local NCOs and private estate owners. Involving the general public may also be beneficial

At the same time, the involved actors have to be aware of the fact that they all have their own ideas about nature, and about the way in which it should be combined with the various other functions. This may lead to initial misunderstandings and disputes, but all these ideas should be considered, especially when they stem from landowning actors; after all, such actors can significantly hamper nature policy processes, as shown in both the Midden-Brabant and the Utrechtse Heuvelrug cases.

Ideally, an integration of nature with other functions results in a protection of natural values that is supported by the exploits of sustainable economic activities. This has

very interesting possibilities, for example given that the government at any time can decide to cut its expenditure on nature policy, as happened when a new Dutch cabinet came into office in the early 2000s. Furthermore, in view of the current economic crisis, extensive government budget cuts are pending, and nature policy may very well be amongst the policy fields that are in danger of such cuts.

All this may lead to a government withdrawal that leaves the non-governmental NCOs with the responsibility for governing nature, and a corresponding appearance of unintentional modes of self governance that resembles the situation of the early 1970s, even though it is rather unlikely that government withdrawal will be that extensive. In such a case, Dutch regions may be well advised to create win-win situations that would decrease their dependency on government support.

Message VI: sectoral governance where necessary

Although it seems to be a good idea to integrate nature with other functions, nature policymakers should keep in mind that there is also an important danger associated with this. Such integration, and the corresponding involvement of all kinds of actors, brings with it the risk of nature getting (also literally) trampled. This risk has for example been eminently visible in the centre of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, where a land exchange strategy enabled the removal of natural areas in favour of urban expansion activities. This caused an overwhelming flow of proposals from real estate developers who all opted to expand their activities onto the Heuvelrug.

Therefore, as a final message, the sectoral governance of nature should be retained as well. Areas with important and vulnerable natural qualities should always be protected, and, here, integration with other functions should be rejected, to create a so-called green infrastructure, as attempted with the realization of the EHS. To realize this ambition, government should be able to employ strong instruments, perhaps even the dispossession of landowners who are reluctant to sell their properties for nature development purposes. Outside this green infrastructure, nature and other functions can then be integrated.

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Annex I: List of abbreviations and acronyms

ANGW	*Agrarische Natuurvereniging Groene Woud* – Agrarian Nature Association *Groene Woud*
BC	*Beheerscommissie* – Management Committee
BHD	Bird and Habitat Directives
BIP	*Beheers- en Inrichtingsplan* – Management and Development Plan
HBL	*Het Brabants Landschap* – The Brabant Landscape
BMF	*Brabantse Milieufederatie* – Brabant Environmental Federation
BNLU	*Beleidsplan Natuur en Landschap Utrecht* – Utrecht Nature and Landscape Policy Plan
BPGW	*Bestuurlijk Platform Nationaal Landschap Groene Woud* – Management Platform National Landscape *Groene Woud*
BPHvdH	*Bestuurlijk Platform Hart van de Heuvelrug* – Management Platform Heart of the Heuvelrug
CCC	*Centrale Cultuurtechnische Commissie* – Central Culture-technical Committee
CD	*Cultuurtechnische Dienst* – Culture-technical Agency
CLC	*Centrale Landinrichtings Commissie* – Central Land Use Planning Committee
CRM	*(Ministerie van) Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk* - (Ministry of) Culture, Recreation and Social Work
DLG	*Dienst Landelijk Gebied* – Government Service for Land and Water Management
DVD	*Dienst Vastgoed Defensie* – Defence Real Estate Agency
EG	*Extensiveringsgebied* – Extensivation Area
EHS	*Ecologische Hoofdstructuur* – Ecological Main Structure
EU	European Union
EZ	*(Ministerie van) Economische Zaken* – (Ministry of) Economic Affairs
FFW	*Flora- en Faunawet* – Flora and Fauna Act
FNP	Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group
GCUH	*Gebiedscommissie Utrechtse Heuvelrug* – Regional Committee for the Utrechtse Heuvelrug
GB	*Geïntegreerd Bosbeheer* - Integrated Forest Management
GGB	*Geïntegreerd Gebiedsgericht Beleid* – Integrated Rural Area Policies
GHvdH	*Gebiedsvisie Hart van de Heuvelrug* – Regional Vision Heart of the Heuvelrug
GHS	*Groene Hoofdstructuur* – Green Main Structure
GoFOR	New Modes of Governance for Sustainable Forestry in Europe

GS	*Gedeputeerde Staten* – Provincial Executive
HGNR	*Het Goois Natuurreservaat* – The Gooi Nature Reserve
HUL	*Het Utrechts Landschap* – The Utrecht Landscape
IVN	*Instituut voor Natuurbeschermingseducatie* – Institute for Nature Protection Education
IDM	*Innovatieplatform Duurzame Meierij* – Innovation Platform Sustainable Meierij
ILG	*Inversteringsfonds Landelijk Gebied* – Investment Fund for the Rural Area
KvK	*Kamer van Koophandel* – Chamber of Commerce
LD	*Landinrichtingsdienst* – Government Service for Land Management
LEI	*Landbouw Economisch Instituut* – Agro-Economic Institute
LIW	*Landinrichtingswet* – Land Consolidation Act
LNV	*(Ministerie van) Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Voedselkwaliteit* – (Ministry of) Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (From 1989 to 2005, the V stood for *Visserij*, which means Fishery)
LOG	*Landbouw Ontwikkelings Gebied* – Agricultural Development Area
LSO	*Landinrichtingscommissie Sint-Oedenrode* – Land Use Planning Committee Sint-Oedenrode
LTO	*Land- en Tuinbouw Organisatie* – Organization for Agriculture and Horticulture
L&V	*(Ministerie van) Landbouw en Visserij* – (Ministry of) Agriculture and Fisheries
MJPB	*Meerjarenprogramma Bosbouw* – Multi-year Program on Forestry
NBP	*Natuurbeleidsplan* – Nature Policy Plan
NCB	*Noord-Brabantse Christelijke Boerenbond* – Northern Brabant Christian Agricultural Association
NCO	Nature Conservation Organization
NLOB	*Natuur- en Landschapsoffensief Brabant* – Nature and Landscape Offensive Brabant
NM	*Natuurmonumenten* – Nature Monuments
NMU	*Natuur- en Milieufederatie Utrecht* – Nature and Environmental Federation Utrecht
NNB	*Natuurbeleidsplan Noord-Brabant* – Nature Policy Plan Noord-Brabant
NSW	*Natuurschoonwet* – Beauty of Nature Act
NUBL	*Nadere Uitwerking Brabant-Limburg* – Further Elaboration Brabant-Limburg
NvM	*Natuur voor Mensen, Mensen voor Natuur* – Nature for People, People for Nature
NVNL	*Nota Veiligstellingsbeleid Natuur en Landschap* – Memorandum on the Safeguarding of Nature and Landscape

ONPUH	*Overlegorgaan Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug* – Deliberation Board National Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug
PAA	Policy Arrangement Approach
PAG	*Plan Aankoopwaardige Gebieden* – Plan for Purchase-Worthy Areas
PB	*Programma Beheer* – Management Program
PBL	*Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving* – Environmental Assessment Agency
PCROB	*Plaatselijke Commissie voor de Ruilverkaveling Oirschot-Best* – Local Committee for the Re-allotment Oirschot–Best
PCLG	*Provinciale Commissie Landelijk Gebied* – Provincial Committee for the Rural Area
PCNL	*Provinciale Commissie Natuur en Landschap* – Provincial Committee for Nature and Landscape
PIG	*Project Integrale Gebiedenbeleid* – Project for Integral Rural Area Policy
PND	*Provinciale Natuurdienst* – Provincial Nature Department
PPD	*Provinciale Planologische Dienst* – Provincial Planning Department
PS	*Provinciale Staten* – Provincial Parliament
PUN	*Provinciale Uitgangspunten Nota* – Memorandum on Provincial Headlines
PVG	*Plan Veiligstelling Gebieden* – Plan for the Safeguarding of Natural Areas
RBU	*Regionaal Bosplan Utrecht* – Regional Forestry Plan Utrecht
RC	*Reconstructiecommissie* – Reconstruction Committee
RECRON	*Vereniging van Recreatieondernemers Nederland* – Society for Dutch Recreational Entrepreneurs
REVZ	*Robuuste Ecologische Verbindings Zone* – Robust Ecological Connection Zone
RHvdH	*Raamovereenkomst Hart van de Heuvelrug* – General Agreement on Heart of the Heuvelrug
RLG	*Reconstructie Landelijk Gebied* – Reconstruction of the Rural Area
RNLE	*Regionale Natuur- en Landschaps Eenheid* – Regional Nature and Landscape Unit
RW	*Reconstructiewet* – Reconstruction Act
SBB	*Staatsbosbeheer* – State Forest Service
SBL	*Stichting Beheer Landbouwgronden* – Association for the Management of Agricultural Land
SGP	*Strategisch Groen Project* – Strategic Green Project
SGR	*Structuurschema Groene Ruimte* – Spatial Memorandum for the Rural Area
UPG	*Utrechts Particulier Grondbezit* – Utrecht Association for Privately Owned Land

VCNP	*Voorlopige Commissie Nationale Parken* – Interim Committee on National Parks
VG	*Verwevingsgebied* – Integration area
VGU	*Vereniging Gehandicaptenzorg Utrecht* – Utrecht Healthcare Association for Disabled People
VROM	*(Ministerie van) Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieu* – (Ministry of) Housing, Spatial Development and Environment
V&W	*(Ministerie van) Verkeer en Waterstaat* – (Ministry of) Transport, Public Works and Water Management
WEB	*Werkgroep Ecologische Hoofdstructuur Begrenzing* – Working Group EHS Demarcation
WCL	*Waardevol Cultuurlandschap* – Valuable Man-made Landscape
WRR	*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor Regeringsbeleid* – Scientific Council for Government Policy
WUR	*Werkgroep Uitvoering Relatienota* – Working Group on the Implementation of the *Relatienota*
WvhL	*Week van het Landschap* – Week of the Landscape
ZLTO	*Zuidelijke Land- en Tuinbouw Organisatie* – Southern Organization for Agriculture and Horticulture

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* Interviewed two times
** Interviewed three times

Utrechtse Heuvelrug

Bakker, Chris	Utrechts Landschap (UL) – policy officer
Bosman, Ton	Staatsbosbeheer (SBB) – former director of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug forestry district
De Pater, Jaap **	Province of Utrecht – policy officer of the Provinciale Natuurdienst (PND)
De Stigter, Let	Overlegorgaan Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug (ONPUH) – former chair
De Vos, Jurrie	Staatsbosbeheer (SBB) – former director of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug forestry district
Greeven, Patrick	Stichting Milieuzorg Zeist, IVN De Bilt (local NCOs) – director
Hogenboom, Joris	Natuur- en Milieufederatie Utrecht (NMU) – director
Janssen, Ton	Natuur- en Milieufederatie Utrecht (NMU) – former policy officer
Jonge Poerink, Ruurd	Province of Utrecht – Coordinator Hart van de Heuvelrug
Jorritsma, Johan	Province of Utrecht – senior policy officer of the Provinciale Natuurdienst (PND)
Karelse, Désiré *	Ministry of LNV – policy officer LNV West, former policy officer L&V
Klingen, Simon **	Utrechts Landschap (UL) – forestry officer
Koopmans, Gerard	Bosgroep Midden Nederland – forestry officer, supervisor of Heuvelrug estate Prattenburg
Landsmeer, Dick	Goois Natuurrevervaat (GNR) – policy officer
Lugtmeijer, Henk *	Utrechts Landschap (UL) – former director

Strijland, Peter	Recreatie Midden Nederland – policy officer
Van Notten, Jim *	Utrechts Particulier Grondbezit (UPG), Overlegorgaan Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug (ONPUH) – private owner of the estate Huis te Maarn
Van Oorspronk, Herman	Province of Utrecht – former policy officer of the Provinciale Planologische Dienst (PPD)
Van Arkel, Berry *	Province of Utrecht – policy officer of the Provinciale Natuurdienst (PND)
Veen, Peter	Province of Utrecht – former policy officer of the Provinciale Natuurdienst (PND)

Midden Brabant

Adema, Giudo	Province of Noord-Brabant – policy officer of the Reconstructie Landelijk Gebied (RLG)
Baan, Jan *	Brabants Landschap (BL) – director
Brinkhof, Rob *	Province of Noord-Brabant – former policy officer Werkgroep Uitvoering Relatienota (WUR), Provinciale Natuurdienst (PND) and Werkgroep Ecologische Hoofdstructuur Begrenzing (WEB)
Cooijmans, Toine	Brabantse Milieufederatie (BMF) – former policy officer
Duijf, Ger	Province of Noord-Brabant – former coordinator National Landscape Groene Woud
Frumau, Hans	Dienst Landelijk Gebied (DLG) – policy officer
Horlings, Ina	Telos, University of Tilburg – senior researcher
Iding, Jules	Province of Noord-Brabant – former policy officer Provinciale Natuurdienst (PND) and Werkgroep Ecologische Hoofdstructuur Begrenzing (WEB)
Kapteijns, Frans	Natuurmonumenten – supervisor
Lodewijks, Ron	Regional newspaper Brabants Dagblad – Journalist
Margry, Kees	Innovatieplatform Duurzame Meierij (IDM) – volunteer

Meulepas, Arie	Province of Noord-Brabant – former policy officer Provinciale Natuurdienst (PND), coordinator Waardevol Cultuurlandschap (WCL)
Middelkamp, Simon	Province of Noord-Brabant – head of the Provinciale Natuurdienst (PND)
Nieuwstraten, Eddy	Province of Noord-Brabant – former policy officer of the Provinciale Natuurdienst (PND) and the Werkgroep Ecologische Hoofdstructuur Begrenzing (WEB)
Scholten, Gerard	Landinrichtingscommissie Sint-Oedenrode (LSO) – former chair
Ter Hart, Gerard	Province of Noord-Brabant – policy officer Reconstructie Landelijk Gebied (RLG)
Thijssen, Willy	Province of Noord-Brabant – coordinator Reconstructiecommissie (RC) de Meierij
Van Beerendonk, Frans *	Zuidelijke Land- en Tuinbouw Organizatie (ZLTO), Agrarische Natuurvereniging het Groene Woud (ANGW), Innovatieplatform Duurzame Meierij (IDM) – respectively former official, co-chair, chair
Van de Berg, John	Staatsbosbeheer (SBB) – policy officer
Van den Oetelaar, Ger *	Municipality of Boxtel, Innovatieplatform Duurzame Meierij (IDM) – respectively alderman, co-chair
Van Dijk, Robin **	Province of Noord-Brabant – policy officer Provinciale Natuurdienst (PND), former Groene Woud coordinator
Verheijen, Lambert	Province of Noord-Brabant – former member of Gedeputeerde Staten (GS)

Summary

In the introductory chapter, the incentive for this PhD thesis is outlined. It is argued that the governance of policy fields that embody a collective interest (for example concerning the environment, infrastructure or national security) traditionally is taken care of by the government. Such governance is also named state centric or old governance. Over the last few years, however, policy scientists have begun to discern a decline in governmental predominance in such fields, while at the same time they discern an increase in governance by non-governmental actors, also called society centred or new governance. This phenomenon is often referred to as the shift in governance, or from government to governance.

In this respect, an initial glance at the development of Dutch nature policy reveals a rather confusing picture that seems to provide evidence for at least three different claims. First of all, the shift in governance thesis can be supported. Over time, government involvement has decreased, while all kinds of new non-governmental actors have become involved, especially when from the mid 1990s nature is governed more integrally. Secondly, however, it can also be argued that a *reversed* shift in governance occurs. Traditionally, non-governmental nature conversation organizations (NCOs) have governed Dutch nature, but over time, governmental actors have become more and more involved. Thirdly, it can also be claimed that there is a *non-shift* in governance. Governmental and non-governmental actors have always governed nature together, in a restricted fashion that resembles the Dutch neo-corporatist institutional tradition. The unraveling of this threefold governance puzzle is at the heart of this thesis. The main research goal is therefore phrased as follows:

> *To explain how governmental and non-governmental actors have shaped Dutch nature policy over time, in order to determine whether a shift, a reversed shift or a non-shift in governance is visible in relation to this policy field.*

In the second chapter, the analytical, theoretical and conceptual building blocks used to meet this research goal are presented. First of all, a state of the art on governance theory is given, ranging from state centric governance to network governance, society centred

governance, multi-actor, multi-level and multi-sector governance, informal governance, global governance, good governance, corporate governance and new public management. It is argued that within all these governance conceptions, several general perspectives are discernable. The first perspective refers to governance modes, i.e. types of governance with their own distinct characteristics. The second perspective addresses governance shifts, i.e. the transformation of one mode into another mode.

Governance modes and shifts are at the core of this thesis. To operationalize them, the policy arrangement approach (PAA) is introduced as the main analytical tool. A policy arrangement is a temporary stabilized policy field, constituting four dimensions, i.e. actors, discourse, power and rules of the game. Changes in these dimensions also cause changes in the arrangement.

As a next step, a modes of governance typology is constructed. It is argued that each policy arrangement embodies such a mode, reflected in the three organizational dimensions (actors, power and rules). Moreover, a relatively stable arrangement represents a strong mode, whereas a relatively unstable arrangement reflects a weak mode. As the basis for the typology, four different modes are introduced, i.e. hierarchical, closed co-, open co- and self governance, derived from the work of Kooiman (2003).

Hierarchical governance mainly constitutes governmental actors who are also in power, and the interaction rules enable government coercion. Closed co-governance comprises a select mixed group of actors. Power is pooled and the rules allow restricted cooperation. Open co-governance involves a large mixed group of actors. Power is diffused and the rules enable flexible collaboration. Self governance mainly involves non-governmental actors who also are in power. The rules allow non-governmental forerunning. Comparison of the policy arrangements that materialize in the field with the four ideal typical modes can determine which mode is visible at a particular point in time.

After that, shifts in governance are addressed. Five factors are outlined that can cause arrangement change, also bringing about governance shifts. One of them, policy entrepreneurs, has an internal character, originating from within an arrangement. The other four, i.e. socio-political trends, adjacent arrangements, shock events and policy initiatives, have an external character.

In addition, it is argued that two of the discerned modes, hierarchical governance and closed co-governance, qualify as “old” modes of governance, whereas the other two, open

co-governance and self governance, are “new” modes of governance. When this is translated in terms of the governance puzzle at the heart of this thesis, a shift goes from hierarchical and/or closed co-governance towards open co- and/or self governance. With a reversed shift, it is the other way around. In case of a non-shift, closed co-governance predominates over time, since this governance mode corresponds with the Dutch neo-corporatist institutional tradition.

The third chapter constitutes a methodological account. As main research strategy, the case study approach is selected, given the need to study in depth a complex phenomenon, i.e. Dutch nature policy. To narrow down this rather broad policy field, it is decided to select two large Dutch regions that contain extensive natural areas as the main cases, i.e. the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant.

Furthermore, it is determined that a relatively long time span of approximately four decades should be studied, with the early 1970s as the starting point. To enable such a study, these decades have been iteratively divided into four successive periods with five different measuring points (the early 1970s, 1990, the mid/late 1990s, the early 2000s and 2008). By determining the governance modes that are visible at these points in time and by studying the changes between them, a pattern of governance shifts can be constructed.

As main techniques for gathering data, in-depth interviews and document analysis have been used. First of all, 56 interviews were held, divided over two sessions of 28 interviews, i.e. 14 per case. The first session took place from April to June 2006, the second from February to July 2008. Secondly, the information derived from these interviews was complemented with data from various written sources, such as policy plans, transcripts of meetings, scientific publications, news paper clippings and website articles.

At the end of the third chapter, the initial research questions are rephrased in terms of the theoretical and methodological choices made in this thesis:

1. Which nature policy arrangements institutionalize in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant from the early 1970s until the late 2000s?

2. Which modes of governance appear over time in these nature policy arrangements?

3. Which change factors are responsible for the shifts that appear over time in these modes of governance?

4. Which differences and similarities are visible between the governance modes and shifts that have appeared in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and in Midden-Brabant, and why have these occurred?

5. What does the occurrence of these differences and similarities mean for the general manifestation of governance modes and shifts in Dutch nature policy?

In the fourth chapter, the first of the two cases is dealt with, i.e. the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. In this region, in the early 1970s there is already a nature policy arrangement, referred to as the 'purchase arrangement', given the focus on the protection of natural areas by buying them. However, the arrangement is rather unstable. Only one actor, the NCO *Het Utrechts Landschap* (The Utrecht Landscape: HUL) is proactively involved. To realize its ambitions, the NCO depends on government budgets and on lands that are owned by private estate owners. However, such resources are only intermittently available.

From the mid 1970s, the 'purchase arrangement' stabilizes profoundly. This is due to the installation of a provincial nature department (PND) that joins forces with the NCO HUL. Together, these actors establish a coalition that starts to orchestrate the large scale purchase of Heuvelrug forests, mobilizing an extensive amount of government funding. This coalition is able to do so because of the decline of the forestry sector. As a consequence of this decline, many private estate owners get into financial trouble and are forced to sell their lands.

This practice of extensive purchases continues until well into the 1990s. However, towards the mid 1990s, the 'purchase arrangement' destabilizes, on the one hand because most of the available lands have been bought by now, on the other hand because the province withdraws its resources from the Heuvelrug. This withdrawal is related to the introduction of the *Ecologische Hoofdstructuur* (Ecological Main Structure: EHS) policy. The ecological networks concept upon which the EHS is based is not very relevant for the

Heuvelrug, which seems to be a coherent ecological entity already. Consequently, government chooses to focus on regions where the concept seems more applicable.

Around the same time, two entirely new nature policy arrangements appear. In the south of the region, a group of private estate owners initiates a National Park. The rise of this 'southern National Park arrangement' is a response to an earlier attempt to establish such a park, undertaken by the government. However, this attempt is rejected by the private owners, who argue that they themselves, in cooperation with the other landowners in the south of the Heuvelrug, should take the lead. They therefore establish a sub-regional coalition that jointly initiates and carries out its own National Park policy.

The second new arrangement, referred to as the 'cohesion arrangement', covers the entire region and arises as the result of a new initiative of the NCO HUL. This actor argues that the Utrechtse Heuvelrug is not as ecologically coherent as it seems, and calls for de-fragmentation measures and more political attention. However, the arrangement remains rather unstable, mainly because the government does not really support HUL's initiative. On its own, the NCO is not powerful enough to bring its new ambitions further. As such, in the mid 2000s, the 'cohesion arrangement' disappears once again.

Meanwhile, the NCO HUL has narrowed down its comprehensive focus, arguing for the creation of two green corridors in the centre of the region. This leads to the appearance of the 'central corridors arrangement'. HUL wants to realize the corridors through a land exchange strategy. The province takes over this strategy and establishes a coalition to elaborate it. Within this coalition, two sub-coalitions, respectively lead by HUL and the PND and by the *Kamer van Koophandel* (Chamber of Commerce: KvK) compete for the precise interpretation of the new strategy. Eventually, an agreement is reached, and the realization of the corridors starts.

This means that, in the late 2000s, two sub-regional arrangements are visible, i.e. the 'southern National Park arrangement' and the 'central corridors arrangement'. At the time of writing, the province has plans to establish a more comprehensive Heuvelrug nature policy. This would imply a merger of the two arrangements and the introduction of new policies for the parts of the region that until now have been largely overlooked. However, these plans are not yet concrete.

The fifth chapter deals with the second case, i.e. Midden-Brabant, completing the answer to research question one. In this region also, an unstable 'purchase arrangement' is

visible in the early 1970s. Two NCOs, *Het Brabants Landschap* (The Brabant Landscape: HBL) and *Natuurmonumenten* (Nature Monuments: NM) try to buy natural areas, applying for government subsidies. However, such areas are only available when their current owners, usually agrarians, agree to sell them. Because the agrarians generally are not inclined to do so, only few patches of nature can be purchased.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the 'purchase arrangement' continues to be rather unstable, despite more explicit government engagement and the involvement of Midden-Brabant agrarians because of a national policy initiative, the *Relatienota*, a subsidy scheme meant to involve agrarians into nature policy. However, the agrarians remain unwilling to sell their lands or engage in nature management activities. A struggle consequently ensues between the NCOs and the *Noord-Brabantse Christelijke Boerenbond* (Northern Brabant Christian Agricultural Association: NCB), generally won by the latter. As a consequence, the amount of nature that is protected remains limited.

In the early 1990s, with the introduction of the ecological networks concept, the unstable 'purchase arrangement' transforms into the 'EHS arrangement'. The provincial government becomes more explicitly engaged, bringing together the Midden-Brabant agrarians and several local NCOs in a temporary coalition, allowing them to demarcate the EHS. The agrarians no longer resist nature policy as fiercely as before, mainly because their position is affected by the decline of the adjacent agricultural arrangement. Eventually, a new coalition is installed to implement the EHS, comprising the NCOs and several governmental actors.

From the mid 1990s, nature policies with a more integral character, also referred to as *Geintegreerd Gebiedsgericht Beleid* (Integrated Area Specific Policies: GGB) appear in Midden-Brabant. First, the region is designated as a *Waardevol Cultuurlandschap* (Valuable Man-made Landscape: WCL). However, the 'WCL arrangement' that as a consequence appears remains quite unstable, mainly because the WCL project group does not really elaborate the new integral policy. Members of this coalition pursue their own sectoral interests and argue that the government does not provide enough resources.

Not long after that, in the late 1990s, the *Groene Woud* policy appears. Initially a sectoral concept that envisages the realization of a nature park in Midden-Brabant, the *Groene Woud* broadens to take into account the entire region and all its functions. In the late 1990s, the 'EHS arrangement' and the 'WCL arrangement' merge and transform into

the ‘*Groene Woud* arrangement’. Over time, new actors become involved, initiating their own projects, only loosely working together. This is largely orchestrated by four actors, i.e. a member of *Gedeputeerde Staten* (the Provincial Executive: GS), the HBL director, an alderman of the municipality of Boxtel and a proactive farmer.

From the early 2000s, the ‘*Groene Woud* arrangement’ is complemented with the ‘*Reconstructie* arrangement’, which appears because of a GGB-related policy initiative, grounded in the 1997 outbreak of swine fever. The province establishes a comprehensive coalition, to create and realize an integral policy plan. Initially, a lengthy bargaining process ensues between two sub-coalitions, one lead by the *Zuidelijke Land- en Tuinbouworganisatie* (Southern Organization for Agriculture and Horticulture: ZLTO), the other by the *Brabantse Milieufederatie* (Brabant Environmental Federation: BMF). Eventually, when a compromise is reached, the policy is implemented by initiating *Reconstructie* projects.

In the late 2000s, therefore, there are two regional and integral policy arrangements in Midden-Brabant, the ‘*Groene Woud* arrangement’ and the ‘*Reconstructie* arrangement’. Because these arrangements show considerable overlap, at the time of writing, the province has started to bring about a merger between them. However, it is not clear yet how this enterprise has evolved and what the consequence are for Midden-Brabant.

The sixth chapter deals with and compares the governance modes and shifts that appear in the two cases, also outlining some generalizations. It argues that, as a first similarity, in both the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and Midden-Brabant, a reversed shift appears. In each case, despite signs of closed co-governance, self governance is the mode that predominantly appears in the early 1970s. However, the mode has an unintentional and weak connotation, because of the NCOs’ unheeded call for government engagement and their dependence on resources (budgets and lands) controlled by other actors.

From the mid 1970s, on the Heuvelrug, strong closed co-governance replaces weak self governance, when a small mixed coalition that, in a restricted cooperation process, pools its resources to buy a lot of nature. In Midden-Brabant, however, weak self governance remains. This is due to a struggle between the NCOs and the NCB, who respectively try to maximize or minimize the effect of the *Relatienota* policy initiative. The NCB turns out to be the most influential actor, occupying a defensive role.

This difference is on the one hand explained by the different involvement of the government. On the Heuvelrug, the new PND adopts an entrepreneurial role, together with the NCO HUL. In Midden-Brabant, such engagement is not yet visible. On the other hand, the difference is due to a different development in terms of adjacent arrangements. On the Heuvelrug, the forestry arrangement declines, which provides pivotal resources (lands) and draws the government to nature protection. In Midden-Brabant, such a development does not occur; the adjacent agricultural arrangement remains stable. Consequently, the agrarians remain influential, and the government continues to focus on agriculture. From this difference it can be derived that when nature is governed in a sectoral way, it is importantly affected by what happens in adjacent sectors.

The first half of the 1990s shows an interesting turning trajectory. In Midden-Brabant, two decades after this has happened on the Heuvelrug, weak self governance is replaced by strong closed co-governance, when a small mixed coalition in a restrictive fashion starts to implement the EHS policy. On the Heuvelrug, meanwhile, strong closed co-governance weakens considerably. The existing coalition no longer is able to orchestrate its purchase activities, and no one takes responsibility for governing Heuvelrug nature any longer.

This difference is due to the different susceptibility of the studied regions to a national policy initiative (ecological networks). This change factor draws government attention to Midden-Brabant, where the EHS realization is prioritized. However, it draws it away from the Heuvelrug, where the EHS is demarcated without much ado and is not further elaborated. As a consequence, governmental entrepreneurs come to the fore in Midden-Brabant, but disappear from the Heuvelrug. This means that the introduction of the ecological networks concept is not beneficial to all Dutch regions. In regions that do not tally with the concept, an atmosphere of neglect can arise.

After that, i.e. from the mid 1990s, in both cases a shift in governance materializes, from closed co-governance towards new modes of governance. On the Heuvelrug, two modes of self governance surface, one in the south, the other (although rather weak) covering the entire region. This is respectively related to the influential roles of the private estate owners and the NCO HUL. In Midden-Brabant, meanwhile, open co-governance emerges, first only weakly (in the ‘WCL arrangement’), later on much more strongly,

when a large mixed group of actors engages *Groene Woud* projects, collaborating in a flexible fashion while power is diffused, lead by four policy entrepreneurs.

The fact that in both cases a shift in governance appears is closely interrelated with a change in discourse (from sectoral to regional and integral) that materializes in both regions, introduced by entrepreneurs or by GGB-related policy initiatives. It is obvious, however, that there is a difference in government engagement. On the Heuvelrug, such engagement remains limited, whereas in Midden-Brabant it is quite profound. Moreover, on the Heuvelrug governance focuses mainly on the south of the region, whereas in Midden-Brabant a comprehensive mode is visible. These two differences are related to the different susceptibility of the two regions to the abovementioned new discourse. The governance of Midden-Brabant nature very much tallies with it, whereas the governance of Heuvelrug nature does not. This draws attention to the former region, but not so much to the latter one.

In the early 2000s, in both cases, the new modes of governance are complemented with closed co-governance. On the Heuvelrug, this is the result of the entrepreneurial exploits of the NCO HUL, which causes the rise of the 'central corridors arrangement'; in Midden-Brabant, a shock event and a policy initiative spark the appearance of the '*Reconstructie* arrangement'. The recurrent appearance of closed co-governance provides some evidence of the presence of a non-shift in governance. However, in both cases, the modes of closed co-governance that appear similarly deviate from the modes that arose before the mid 1990s. They have a more integral character; this means that power is relatively more diffused and the interaction rules are relatively more flexible.

Furthermore, the difference in scope that had already appeared after the mid 1990s (see above), remains visible; on the Heuvelrug, governance focuses on two parts of the region, whereas in Midden-Brabant, there are two comprehensive modes. From this continuing difference, it can be derived that, when nature is governed integrally, the presence of adjacent sectors seems to be beneficial. The tension between various regional functions, especially nature and agriculture, is likely to draw additional government resources to a particular region. Such resources do not find their way to regions that are not as "interesting" from an integral perspective.

From the above comparison, it can be deduced that closed co-governance is the mode that appears most often. In both cases, a sectoral and classic variety and a

contemporary and integral and regional variety materialize. Subsequently, self governance also appears often, showing a defensive and an unintentional connotation. Thirdly, open co-governance only comes to the fore in the Midden-Brabant case. It seems difficult to orchestrate the manifestation of this mode, which only seems to appear in a bottom-up fashion. Finally, hierarchical governance does not appear for any length of time in any of the cases, despite evidence that government has played an important role over time.

Evidence has therefore been found for all three claims that constitute the governance puzzle. The reversed shift materializes in the sectoral governance of nature, from the early 1970s to the mid 1990s, when weak and unintentional self governance is replaced by strong closed co-governance. It may commence at a different point in time, though. The shift in governance surfaces after that, when the sectoral governance of nature is complemented with a more integral and regional approach. However, this shift does not have a uniform character, given the appearance of various “new” modes. Evidence of the non-shift in governance can be found in the fact that closed co-governance reappears after several years of absence, in both cases materializing in the early 2000s. However, in comparison to the mode appearing before the mid 1990s, closed co-governance has a more contemporary connotation.

From the above-outlined developments, it can be concluded that the governance of nature takes place in two currents, i.e. a sectoral one, already visible for a very long time, and an integral and regional one, which complements the sectoral current from the mid 1990s. In the sectoral current, over time a reversed shift takes place, most likely materializing before the mid 1990s. In the integral and regional current, there is a more pluralist governance picture; various old and new modes appear beside one another, depending on region-specific characteristics.

In the seventh and final chapter, the research is wrapped up. First, the five research questions that have been expansively addressed in Chapters 4 to 6 are answered, avoiding conceptual language as much as possible. This means that, for each case, the developing nature policy arrangements and their corresponding governance modes and shifts are outlined. After that, the comparison of the modes and shifts that have appeared, and the generalizations that are derived from this comparison, are summarized.

Subsequently, a theoretical, methodological and empirical reflection is presented. In the theoretical reflection, the two governance currents are compared with governance claims in policy science literature. It is argued that the reversed shift appearing in the sectoral current does not correspond with most claims in governance literature. However, it does seem to be related to the institutionalization of new policy fields. The pluralist governance picture of the integral and regional current corresponds with several authors who claim a hybrid manifestation of governance. Moreover, this current reflects characteristics of multi-actor, multi-level and multi-sector governance.

Furthermore, the concepts that have been used in this thesis are reflected upon. It is outlined that the use of the PAA has enabled a balance between general conclusions and a nuanced analysis. However, before they can be applied, the four PAA dimensions first have to be narrowed down and interpreted in terms of the research at stake. The governance modes derived from Kooiman (2003) also have functioned well, although they have remained rather abstract. Furthermore, it has been quite difficult to distinguish between governance modes and policy arrangements, given the significant overlap between the two. Concerning shifts in governance, this thesis has given reason to question the “oldness” of old governance and the “newness” of new governance.

In the methodological reflection, the methods used are contemplated. It is mentioned that it sometimes has been difficult to determine what a nature policy arrangement is, especially in case of policies with an integral character. As well, it is argued that in the two cases that have been studied, the influence of European nature policy was negligible. This mainly seems to be due to the fact that such policy has not yet been elaborated on a regional level. Also the decision to focus on regions instead of national or local nature policies is discussed.

In the empirical reflection, the results of this thesis are compared with several other studies that focus on governance and Dutch nature policy. It is argued that the sectoral current is also visible in other Dutch regions, such as the Veluwe, Drentsche Aa and Gelderse Poort. Moreover, the pluralist governance picture that appears when the regional and integral current complements the sectoral current is also identified in other recent studies on governance in the Dutch rural area.

Finally, several policy messages are presented:

- Policy makers should not always give in to their inclination to invoke closed co-governance, mainly because this often results in processes that are not accessible to certain actors, actors that often do have a stake in the governance of nature.
- Instead, policy makers should try to orchestrate open co-governance processes, since such governance can invoke a lot of regional energy.
- For each region, governmental actors should try to find a balance between distance and engagement: sometimes a regional process needs additional government involvement, but sometimes it can better be left alone.
- Personal leadership by policy entrepreneurs should be promoted and cherished, since it can make an important difference.
- When possible, nature should be governed integrally, ideally leading to nature protection sustained by the exploits of sustainable economic activities.
- When necessary, nature should be governed in a sectoral fashion, for example in regions that contain important and vulnerable natural qualities.

Samenvatting

Het introductiehoofdstuk van dit proefschrift presenteert de aanleiding voor het promotieonderzoek. Het centrale thema is “governance”, een Engelse term die zich lastig laat vertalen. “Governance” behelst het sturen of coördineren van maatschappelijke processen door de staat, de markt en het maatschappelijk middenveld. Bij gebrek aan een adequate Nederlandse term zal vanaf nu de term sturing gebruikt worden. Bij beleidsvelden met een collectief belang, bijvoorbeeld milieu, infrastructuur of veiligheid, is dergelijke sturing traditioneel gezien een overheidstaak. In beleidswetenschappelijke literatuur noemt men dit ook wel “state centric governance” (sturing vanuit de staat) of “old governance” (oude sturing). De afgelopen jaren ontwaren beleidswetenschappers echter een afname aan overheidsdominantie in dergelijke beleidsvelden, terwijl ze tegelijkertijd een toenemende bemoeienis zien van partijen zonder overheidsachtergrond (vanaf nu niet-overheden of private partijen genoemd). Sturing door dergelijke partijen heet dan “society centred governance” (sturing vanuit de maatschappij) of “new governance” (nieuwe sturing). De verschuiving van de oude sturingsvorm naar de nieuwe sturingsvorm staat bekend als de “shift in governance” (verschuiving in sturing).

Als we vanuit dit perspectief kijken naar de ontwikkeling van het Nederlandse natuurbeleid ontstaat op het eerste gezicht echter een verwarrend beeld: drie verschillende beweringen lijken mogelijk. Ten eerste is er bewijs voor de verschuiving in sturing. In de loop van de tijd is de rol van de staat afgenomen, terwijl allerlei nieuwe niet-overheden bij het natuurbeleid betrokken zijn geraakt, vooral wanneer halverwege de jaren ’90 natuurbeleid een meer integraal karakter krijgt. Ten tweede echter, lijkt het of er een *omgekeerde* verschuiving in sturing plaatsvindt (een zogenaamde “reversed shift in governance”). Het is immers zo dat niet-overheden zoals Natuurmonumenten, de Provinciale Landschappen en de Vogelbescherming al langer een belangrijke rol spelen in het Nederlandse natuurbeleid, en dat de rol van de overheid is in de loop van de tijd alleen maar is toegenomen. Ten derde kan worden gesteld dat er geen noemenswaardige verschuiving heeft plaatsgevonden (de zogenaamde “non-shift in governance”). De overheid heeft altijd samen met niet-overheden het natuurbeleid vormgegeven, naar het model van de Nederlandse neo-corporatistische beleidstraditie.

Dit proefschrift beoogt het oplossen van deze sturingspuzzel door aan te geven welke van de drie beweringen van toepassing is - of zijn. De doelstelling van het promotieonderzoek is dan als volgt:

Uiteenzetten hoe overheden en niet-overheden in de loop van de tijd het Nederlandse natuurbeleid hebben vormgegeven om te bepalen of er sprake is van een verschuiving in sturing, een omgekeerde verschuiving of geen verschuiving.

Hoofdstuk 2 geeft de analytische, theoretische en conceptuele bouwstenen van het onderzoek. Het hoofdstuk begint met een globaal overzicht van verschillende sturingsconcepties die terug te vinden zijn in de veelal Engelstalige beleidswetenschappelijke literatuur over "governance". Uit deze verschillende concepties zijn enkele perspectieven op sturing af te leiden, met name *sturingsvormen* ("governance modes") en *sturingsverschuivingen* ("governance shifts"), wijzigingen die optreden tussen de verschillende sturingsvormen.

Sturingsvormen en sturingsverschuivingen zijn de centrale begrippen van dit proefschrift. Om ze te operationaliseren is de beleidsarrangementenbenadering (of BAB) gebruikt. Een beleidsarrangement is een tijdelijk gestabiliseerd beleidsveld, bestaande uit vier dimensies, te weten actoren, discours, macht en spelregels. Veranderingen in één of meer van deze dimensies zorgen ervoor dat ook het beleidsarrangement verandert.

De BAB is vervolgens gebruikt om een typologie van sturingsvormen te construeren. Daarbij is aangenomen dat elk beleidsarrangement een bepaalde sturingsvorm bevat, die naar voren komt in de drie organisatorische dimensies (actoren, macht en spelregels). Daarnaast bevat een relatief stabiel arrangement een sterke sturingsvorm, en een relatief onstabiel arrangement een zwakke sturingsvorm. De typologie bevat vier ideaaltypische sturingsvormen, afgeleid van het werk van Kooiman (2003): hiërarchische sturing, gesloten samenwerking, open samenwerking en zelfsturing.

Bij hiërarchische sturing zijn vooral overheden betrokken, die tevens de meeste macht bezitten. De spelregels geven aan dat de overheid bepaalt wat er gebeurt. Bij gesloten samenwerking geven de regels aan dat slechts een kleine groep overheden en niet-overheden samen stuurt, de macht delend. Open samenwerking daarentegen omvat een grote groep overheden en niet-overheden, met spelregels die flexibiliteit benadrukken.

Macht is verspreid over de verschillende actoren. Bij zelfsturing tenslotte, zijn niet-overheden de machtigste partij. De regels bieden hun de ruimte om de leiding te nemen. Door beleidsarrangementen uit de beleidspraktijk te vergelijken met deze vier ideaaltypen kan worden bepaald welke sturingsvorm dominant aanwezig is.

Als laatste stap zijn sturingsverschuivingen geoperationaliseerd. Daarbij is uitgegaan van vijf verschillende factoren die veranderingen in een bestaande sturingsvorm teweeg kunnen brengen. Eén daarvan, de factor beleidsondernemers, heeft een intern karakter, omdat dergelijke ondernemers zich in een beleidsarrangement bevinden. De andere vier, te weten sociaal-politieke trends, aangrenzende arrangementen, choquerende gebeurtenissen en beleidsinitiatieven, hebben een extern karakter.

Daarnaast is aangegeven dat hiërarchische sturing en gesloten samenwerking oude sturingsvormen zijn, terwijl de andere twee, open samenwerking en zelfsturing, nieuwe sturingsvormen zijn. Vertaald naar de drie beweringen die in het introductiehoofdstuk geformuleerd zijn betekent dit dat een gewone sturingsverschuiving van hiërarchische sturing en/of gesloten samenwerking naar open samenwerking en /of zelfsturing gaat. Bij een omgekeerde verschuiving is het juist andersom. Bij het ontbreken van een verschuiving is gesloten samenwerking continue dominant, aangezien deze sturingsvorm gelijkstaat aan de Nederlandse neo-corporatistische traditie.

Het derde hoofdstuk bevat het methodologische kader van het proefschrift. Als onderzoeksstrategie is de gevalsstudie gekozen, omdat het construeren van beleidsarrangementen, in dit geval gerelateerd aan het Nederlandse natuurbeleid, de nodige diepgang vereist, diepgang die met een gevalsstudie bereikt kan worden. Om het beleidsveld verder af te bakenen is het onderzoek toegespitst op twee casus, grote Nederlandse regio’s die voor een belangrijk deel uit natuur bestaan, te weten de Utrechtse Heuvelrug en Midden-Brabant.

Daarnaast is beargumenteerd dat om sturingsverschuivingen te kunnen bestuderen een relatief lange tijdsspanne onderzocht moet worden. Vandaar dat is besloten om het natuurbeleid in beide casus te bestuderen vanaf het begin van de jaren ’70. Eindpunt is het jaar 2008. De bestudeerde periode is op een iteratieve manier opgesplitst in vier perioden, waardoor vijf verschillende meetpunten zijn ontstaan (het begin van de jaren ’70, 1990, de late jaren ’90, het begin van de jaren 2000 en 2008). Door te bepalen welke

sturingsvormen er op deze meetpunten aanwezig zijn, kan een patroon van sturingsverschuivingen worden geconstrueerd.

Diepte-interviews en documentanalyse zijn de twee belangrijkste manieren van dataverzameling geweest. Om te beginnen zijn er 56 interviews gehouden, in twee sessies van 28 interviews, 14 per casus. De eerste sessie vond plaats van april tot juni 2006, de tweede van februari tot juli 2008. Vervolgens is de informatie uit de interviews aangevuld met gegevens uit verschillende soorten geschreven bronmateriaal, met name beleidsplannen, notulen van vergaderingen, artikelen, krantenknipsels en websites.

Aan het slot van het methodologische hoofdstuk zijn de onderzoeksvragen die aan de basis van het proefschrift liggen, opnieuw geformuleerd op basis van de keuzes die in de hoofdstukken 2 en 3 gemaakt zijn:

1. Welke natuurbeleidsarrangementen manifesteren zich op de Utrechtse Heuvelrug en in Midden-Brabant vanaf het begin van de jaren ’70 tot aan 2008?

2. Welke sturingsvormen komen in de loop van de tijd naar voren in deze arrangementen?

3. Welke veranderfactoren zijn verantwoordelijk voor de verschuivingen die in de loop van de tijd in deze sturingsvormen optreden?

4. Welke verschillen en overeenkomsten zijn zichtbaar tussen de sturingsvormen en sturingsverschuivingen die in beide casus naar voren zijn gekomen, en waardoor zijn deze verschillen en overeenkomsten veroorzaakt?

5. Wat betekent de aanwezigheid van de verschillen en overeenkomsten voor de manifestatie van sturingsvormen- en verschuivingen in het Nederlandse natuurbeleid in het algemeen?

Hoofdstuk 4 behandelt de beleidsarrangementen die ontstaan zijn in de Utrechtse Heuvelrug. In de vroege jaren ’70 is er al het zogenaamde ‘aankoop arrangement’, gefocust op het aankopen van stukken natuur. Het arrangement is echter relatief onstabiel.

Slechts één actor, Het Utrechts Landschap (HUL) is actief bezig met het uitvoeren van natuurbeleid. Deze private partij richt zich op het aankopen van landerijen van particuliere landgoedeigenaren. Ze is daarbij echter afhankelijk van de financiële steun van de overheid, en slaagt er slechts sporadisch in deze steun te verkrijgen, met name omdat de particuliere eigenaren niet geneigd zijn hun grond te verkopen.

Vanaf het midden van de jaren ’70 wordt het ‘aankoop arrangement’ stabieler. Dit komt door meer bemoeienis vanuit de provincie Utrecht. Het nieuwe provinciaal natuurdepartement (PND) gaat samen met HUL de grootschalige aankoop van bosgebied op de Utrechtse Heuvelrug organiseren. Dit wordt mogelijk gemaakt door het feit dat er steeds meer grond te koop is. Vanwege de ineenstorting van de bosbouwsector komen vele particuliere landgoedeigenaren financieel in de problemen waardoor ze steeds vaker genoodzaakt zijn hun landgoed te verkopen.

In het midden van de jaren ’90 is grootschalige aankoop niet meer mogelijk, waardoor het ‘aankoop arrangement’ verzwakt. Enerzijds is er al veel grond gekocht, waardoor het aanbod afneemt. Anderzijds zet de provincie Utrecht haar financiële middelen steeds minder in om bestaand bosgebied te kopen. Vanwege de introductie van de Ecologische Hoofdstructuur (EHS) richt de provincie zich vooral op regio’s die erg versnipperd zijn of waar veel strijd is tussen natuur en landbouw. Omdat de Heuvelrug op het eerste gezicht al een coherent ecologisch geheel is krijgt ze nog maar weinig aandacht.

Rond dezelfde tijd ontstaan er twee nieuwe arrangementen. In het zuiden van de regio neemt een groep particuliere landgoedeigenaren het initiatief om een Nationaal Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug te realiseren. Een overheidspoging om een dergelijk park te installeren hebben ze afgewezen, omdat ze het niet eens zijn met het voorgestelde beleid. Ze stellen daarom een eigen commissie in die de wensen van de streek in ogenschouw neemt. Dit leidt tot het ontstaan van het ‘zuidelijke Nationaal Park arrangement’.

Het tweede nieuwe arrangement, het ‘cohesie arrangement’, beslaat de hele regio. Het ontstaat door een nieuw initiatief van HUL. Deze actor stelt dat de Utrechste Heuvelrug ecologisch niet zo coherent is als altijd is aangenomen. Ze roept op tot nieuwe ontsnipperingsmaatregelen en vraagt de politiek meer aandacht aan de regio te schenken. Het ‘cohesie arrangement’ blijft echter vrij onstabiel, omdat de overheid niet echt aan de oproep van HUL gehoor geeft. In het midden van de jaren 2000 verdwijnt het ‘cohesie arrangement’ dan ook.

In de tussentijd heeft HUL zich gericht op het midden van de Utrechtse Heuvelrug. HUL wil twee groene corridors realiseren door het opzetten van een landuitwisselingsproject, waarmee bebouwing (‘rood’) en natuur (‘groen’) verplaatst worden. De provincie besluit tot het instellen van een gebiedsplatform, om de strategie verder te ontwikkelen. Al gauw blijkt dat de deelnemers aan het ‘centrale corridors arrangement’ grofweg op te delen zijn in twee subcoalities. Eén daarvan, geleid door de Kamer van Koophandel, pleit voor meer “rood”, de ander, waar HUL de leider van is, wil zoveel mogelijk “groen” realiseren. Uiteindelijk komen de partijen tot een overeenkomst, waarna de realisering van de corridors begint.

Dit betekent dat er aan het einde van de jaren 2000 twee arrangementen bestaan, elk gericht op een afzonderlijk deel van de Utrechtse Heuvelrug. In 2008 heeft de provincie het plan opgevat om een nieuw beleid op te zetten waarbij ze de Utrechtse Heuvelrug als één geheel beschouwt. Dit zou betekenen dat de twee bestaande arrangementen samengevoegd worden en dat er plannen komen voor delen van de regio waarvoor nog geen apart beleid geldt. Deze ambitie is echter nog niet heel concreet.

Hoofdstuk vijf gaat over de tweede casus, Midden-Brabant. Ook hier zien we in de vroege jaren ’70 een onstabiel ‘aankoop arrangement’. Twee natuurbeschermingsorganisaties, Het Brabants Landschap (HBL) en Natuurmonumenten (NM) houden zich bezig met het aankopen van natuurgebieden met financiële steun van de overheid. Deze steun is echter alleen beschikbaar als de bestaande eigenaren van de natuurgebieden, vaak agrariërs, hun land te koop aanbieden. Omdat maar weinig boeren dit doen kunnen de twee natuurbeschermingsorganisaties maar zelden een natuurgebied kopen.

Tot en met de jaren ’80 blijft het ‘aankoop arrangement’ relatief onstabiel, ondanks de introductie van de Relatienota, een beleidsplan van de overheid dat bedoeld is om landbouwgrond met natuurwaarden te beschermen. Door de introductie van dit plan bemoeit de provincie zich wat meer met het natuurbeleid, terwijl ook agrarische belangenorganisaties aan tafel zitten. De boeren in Midden-Brabant zijn echter nog steeds niet van plan hun land te verkopen. Als gevolg hiervan ontstaat er een strijd tussen de natuurbeschermingsorganisaties enerzijds en de Noord-Brabantse Christelijke Boerenbond (NCB) anderzijds, een strijd die laatstgenoemde partij veelal wint. Hierdoor blijft het aantal hectaren beschermde natuur relatief beperkt.

In de vroege jaren ’90 wordt ook in de provincie Noord-Brabant de Ecologische Hoofdstructuur (EHS) geïntroduceerd. Als gevolg hiervan transformeert het onstabiele ‘aankoop arrangement’ in het ‘EHS arrangement’. De provinciale overheid gaat zich zeer nadrukkelijk met het natuurbeleid bemoeien. Ze brengt de boeren uit Midden-Brabant samen met verschillende lokale natuurbeschermers en laat deze partijen in onderling overleg de EHS afbakenen. De boeren zijn niet langer bij machte om hun verzet vol te houden, met name doordat hun positie is aangetast door de verzwakking van de agrarische sector. Nadat de EHS is afgebakend, stelt de provincie een nieuwe coalitie in die het EHS beleid gaat uitvoeren.

Vanaf het midden van de jaren ’90 wordt het eerste Geïntegreerd Gebiedsgericht Beleid (GGB) geïntroduceerd. Midden-Brabant wordt een Waardevol Cultuurlandschap, onder de historische naam “De Meierij”. Het ‘WCL arrangement’ dat als gevolg hiervan ontstaat blijft echter onstabiel, vooral doordat de WCL projectgroep, door de provincie ingesteld om het beleid verder gestalte te geven, niet optimaal functioneert. De leden benadrukken de belangen van hun eigen sector en geven aan dat er niet genoeg middelen zijn om de geformuleerde ambities waar te maken.

Niet lang daarna, in de late jaren ’90, komt het Groene Woud beleid op. In eerste instantie heeft dit beleid een sectoraal karakter en beoogt het de realisering van een natuurpark in het hart van Midden-Brabant. In de loop van de tijd omvat het echter steeds meer verschillende functies en beslaat het de gehele regio. Uiteindelijk ontstaat hierdoor het ‘Groene Woud arrangement’, waarin ook het ‘EHS arrangement’ en het ‘WCL arrangement’ opgaan. Steeds meer partijen starten een eigen project, in losse samenwerkingsverbanden met elkaar. Het vliegwieleffect dat hierdoor ontstaat, wordt in belangrijke mate gevoed door een aantal belanghebbenden: een lid van Gedeputeerde Staten, de directeur van HBL, een wethouder van de gemeente Boxtel en een proactieve agrariër.

In de vroege jaren ’2000 ontstaat als gevolg van het Reconstructiebeleid dat na de varkenspest van 1997 wordt geïntroduceerd, naast het ‘Groene Woud arrangement’ het ‘Reconstructie arrangement’. Dit arrangement krijgt gestalte als de provincie de reconstructiecommissie “de Meierij” instelt. In eerste instantie ontstaat in deze coalitie een langdurig onderhandelingsproces, waarbij twee subcoalities te onderscheiden zijn, de één geleid door de Zuidelijke Land- en Tuinbouworganisatie (ZLTO), de ander door de

Brabantse Milieufederatie (BMF). Uiteindelijk sluiten de verschillende partijen een compromis, vastgelegd in een reconstructieplan, dat ze vervolgens gaan uitvoeren.

Aan het einde van de jaren ’2000 zijn er dus twee arrangementen in Midden-Brabant, beide met een regionaal en integraal karakter. Omdat deze arrangementen elkaar in belangrijke mate overlappen, heeft de provincie in 2008 een samensmelting tussen beide teweeggebracht. Wat de uiteindelijke consequenties hiervan zijn, is echter nog niet uitgekristalliseerd.

Hoofdstuk 6 behandelt en vergelijkt de sturingsvormen- en verschuivingen die in de twee casus naar voren komen, waarbij ook enkele generaliseringen over het Nederlandse natuurbeleid gepresenteerd worden. Een eerste constatering is dat er zowel op de Utrechtse Heuvelrug als in Midden-Brabant een omgekeerde sturingsverschuiving plaatsvindt. In de vroege jaren ’70 is zelfsturing aanwezig. Deze sturingsvorm is echter relatief zwak en heeft een onvrijwillig karakter. De natuurorganisaties die met het natuurbeleid bezig zijn, zijn namelijk afhankelijk van andere partijen en ze proberen zonder succes de overheid meer nadrukkelijk te betrekken bij hun activiteiten.

Op de Utrechtse Heuvelrug vervangt vanaf het midden van de jaren ’70 gesloten samenwerking deze vorm van zelfsturing, wanneer een kleine coalitie van overheden en private partijen haar krachten bundelt om een groot aantal natuurgebieden aan te kopen. In Midden-Brabant echter, blijft zelfsturing bestaan, terwijl er een strijd ontstaat tussen de natuurorganisaties en de georganiseerde landbouw, die eerder een verdedigende dan een voortrekkende rol speelt.

Dit verschil heeft enerzijds te maken met de diverse rollen die de betrokken overheden spelen. Op de Utrechtse Heuvelrug opereert een nieuwe en zeer proactieve overheidsactor, de PND. In Midden-Brabant is dit niet het geval. Anderzijds is er een verschillende ontwikkeling van aangrenzende arrangementen. Het bosbouwarrangement op de Heuvelrug verzwakt, doordat bosbouw niet langer economisch rendabel is. Dit heeft een positief effect op de ontwikkeling van het natuurbeleid. In Midden-Brabant blijft een dergelijk effect uit, doordat het aangrenzende agrarische arrangement dominant blijft. Hieruit blijkt dat de ontwikkeling van sectoraal natuurbeleid afhankelijk is van wat er in aangrenzende beleidssectoren gebeurt.

De eerste helft van de jaren ’90 is een interessante ‘gespiegelde’ omslagperiode. In Midden-Brabant ontstaat een omgekeerde sturingsverschuiving, bijna twintig jaar nadat deze op de Utrechtse Heuvelrug heeft plaatsgevonden. Een sterke vorm van gesloten samenwerking vervangt zelfsturing, wanneer een kleine coalitie met zowel overheden als niet-overheden op een besloten manier het EHS beleid gaat uitvoeren. Op de Utrechtse Heuvelrug intussen, verzwakt de gesloten samenwerking juist. De bestaande coalitie is niet langer in staat haar aankoopactiviteiten te handhaven.

Dit verschil hangt samen met de ontvankelijkheid van beide regio’s ten aanzien van een nieuw beleidsinitiatief uit de vroege jaren ’90, i.c. de EHS en het achterliggende ecologische netwerk concept. Dit beleid trekt de aandacht van de overheid naar Midden-Brabant. Op de Utrechtse Heuvelrug is de impact van het nieuwe beleid echter gering, omdat dit gebied al ecologisch coherent lijkt. Als gevolg hiervan fungeert de provincie in Midden-Brabant als beleidsondernemer, terwijl dit op de Utrechtse Heuvelrug niet langer het geval is. Hieruit kan worden afgeleid dat de introductie van de EHS niet in alle Nederlandse regio’s een positief effect heeft gehad.

In de tweede helft van de jaren ’90 ontstaat er in beide casus een sturingsverschuiving van gesloten samenwerking naar nieuwe sturingsvormen. Op de Utrechtse Heuvelrug komen twee vormen van zelfsturing naar voren, één in zuiden van de regio, de ander - relatief zwak - in het hele gebied. Dit is het gevolg van de inspanningen van private partijen, respectievelijk de particuliere eigenaren en HUL. In Midden-Brabant ontstaat open samenwerking, eerst relatief zwak (in het ‘WCL arrangement’), daarna veel sterker, wanneer een grote groep overheden en niet-overheden aan de slag gaat met Groene Woud projecten. Vier beleidsondernemers zijn de drijvende kracht achter het ontstaan van de open samenwerking.

De sturingsverschuiving die in beide casus optreedt hangt nauw samen met een discoursverandering (van sectoraal naar integraal en regionaal) in beide regio’s. Het verschil in inbreng vanuit de overheid is echter evident. Op de Heuvelrug is een dergelijke inbreng relatief gering, terwijl ze in Midden-Brabant aanzienlijk is. Bovendien valt op dat op de Heuvelrug de nadruk slechts ligt op een gedeelte van de regio, terwijl sturing in Midden-Brabant een veelomvattend karakter heeft. Deze verschillen zijn te wijten aan het verschil in ontvankelijkheid voor het hierboven genoemde integrale discours. Midden-

Brabant sluit hier goed bij aan, de Utrechtse Heuvelrug een stuk minder. Dit zorgt ervoor dat Midden-Brabant in vergelijking met de Heuvelrug sterk in de belangstelling staat.

Aan het begin van de jaren ’2000 keert in beide casus de gesloten samenwerking terug als sturingsvorm. Op de Heuvelrug is dit te danken aan de inspanningen van HUL, die resulteren in het ‘centrale corridors arrangement’; in Midden-Brabant zijn het een de uitbraak van varkenspest – een choquerende gebeurtenis – en een daaropvolgend beleidsinitiatief – de Reconstructie – die resulteren in het ‘Reconstructie arrangement’. De terugkeer van gesloten samenwerking lijkt het bewijs te zijn voor het ontbreken van een sturingsverschuiving. De nieuw ontstane vormen van gesloten samenwerking verschillen echter op een vergelijkbare manier van de vormen die in de jaren ’90 aanwezig waren; ze hebben een meer integraal karakter, waardoor macht relatief meer verspreid is en waardoor de interactieregels relatief flexibeler zijn.

Verder is het verschil in omvang van de verschillende sturingsvormen nog steeds aanwezig. Op de Heuvelrug worden twee aparte delen van de regio benadrukt. In Midden-Brabant daarentegen, hebben beide sturingsvormen een alomvattend karakter. Dit verschil in omvang lijkt opnieuw gerelateerd aan het verschil in ontvankelijkheid voor het integrale discours dat vanaf het midden van de jaren ’90 is opgekomen. Hieruit valt te concluderen dat integraal natuurbeleid kan profiteren van sterke aangrenzende sectoren. Spanningen tussen de verschillende functies die een regio kan hebben, met name natuur en landbouw, resulteren daarbij in meer aandacht en extra middelen van de overheid.

Uit de vergelijking blijkt dat gesloten samenwerking de sturingsvorm is die het vaakst naar voren komt. In beide casus komen zowel een meer klassieke sectorale variant als een meer eigentijdse integrale variant naar voren. Vervolgens valt op dat ook zelfsturing relatief vaak aanwezig is, hoewel deze een defensief of onvrijwillig karakter heeft. Open samenwerking is alleen aan de orde in Midden-Brabant. Het blijkt lastig te zijn een dergelijke sturingsvorm bewust in te voeren; ze lijkt vooral van onderop te ontstaan. Tenslotte blijkt dat hiërarchische sturing niet dominant aanwezig is geweest in de beide gebieden.

Derhalve is bewijs aan te voeren voor alle drie claims uit hoofdstuk 1. De omgekeerde sturingsverschuiving komt naar voren in het sectorale natuurbeleid dat vanaf de vroege jaren ’70 tot aan het midden van de jaren ’90 dominant is, namelijk van zwakke en onvrijwillige zelfsturing naar klassieke gesloten samenwerking. Daarna vindt een

sturingsverschuiving plaats, wanneer een integrale en regionale vorm van natuurbeleid in zwang raakt. Deze verschuiving heeft geen uniform karakter, gezien de verschillende 'nieuwe' sturingsvormen die ontstaan. Bewijs voor het uitblijven van een verandering tenslotte, kan worden gevonden in het feit dat gesloten samenwerking zich zowel in het sectorale als in het integrale natuurbeleid manifesteert.

Uit de bevindingen van deze thesis is af te leiden dat sturing in het Nederlandse natuurbeleid twee stromingen kent. Ten eerste is er een sectorale stroming, reeds zichtbaar in de vroege jaren '70. Ten tweede ontstaat er naast deze stroming vanaf het midden van de jaren '90 een integraal-regionale stroming. In de sectorale stroming vindt voordat de tweede stroming begint een omgekeerde sturingsverschuiving plaats, in de integrale en regionale stroming die daarna ontstaat, bestaat een meer pluriform sturingsbeeld. Verschillende oude en nieuwe sturingsvormen bestaan naast elkaar, en hun manifestatie hangt af van regiospecifieke kenmerken.

Het zevende en laatste hoofdstuk sluit het onderzoek af. Ten eerste behandelt het hoofdstuk in het kort de vijf onderzoeksvragen die aan het proefschrift ten grondslag liggen. Dit betekent dat een overzicht wordt gegeven van de zich ontwikkelende beleidsarrangementen, van de sturingsvormen- en verschuivingen die daarbij naar voren komen, van de vergelijking van de twee casus en van de generaliseringen die dit oplevert.

Daarna volgt een theoretische, methodische en empirische reflectie. De theoretische reflectie vergelijkt de twee sturingsstromingen met claims uit de beleidswetenschappelijke literatuur. Hieruit blijkt dat de omgekeerde verschuiving niet gangbaar is, maar wel kan optreden wanneer een nieuw beleidsveld zich een plaats verwerft tussen al bestaande en aangrenzende beleidsvelden. Het pluriforme sturingsbeeld uit de integraal-regionale stroming is te rijmen met verschillende bronnen die verwijzen naar het hybride karakter van sturing in de huidige maatschappij. Bovendien vertoont deze stroming tekenen van sturing door meerdere partijen, vanuit meerdere schaalniveaus en vanuit meerdere sectoren ("multi-actor, multi-level and multi-sector governance").

Vervolgens volgt een reflectie op de concepten die in dit proefschrift gebruikt zijn. Het gebruik van de BAB heeft een balans opgeleverd tussen algemene conclusies en een zeer genuanceerde analyse. Een onderzoeker lijkt de vier dimensies echter eerst te moeten aanscherpen voordat ze toepasbaar zijn. De sturingsvormen afgeleid van Kooiman (2003)

zijn een nuttige operationalisering van sturing gebleken, hoewel ze nog vrij abstract zijn. Het is verder lastig gebleken om een onderscheid te maken tussen een beleidsarrangement en een sturingsvorm, gezien de aanzienlijke overlap tussen beiden. Ten aanzien van sturingsverschuivingen geeft deze thesis tenslotte aanleiding tot het aan de kaak stellen van de 'nieuwheid' van nieuwe sturing en de 'oudheid' van oude sturing.

De methodologische reflectie kijkt terug op de gebruikte onderzoeksmethodiek. Er is aangehaald dat het soms lastig is gebleken om precies aan te duiden wat een natuurbeleidsarrangement is, vooral wanneer er sprake is van arrangementen met een integraal karakter. Ook de beslissing om te focussen op regio's in plaats van nationaal of lokaal natuurbeleid wordt bediscussieerd. Tenslotte is aangegeven dat in de casus die bestudeerd zijn de invloed van het Europese natuurbeleid relatief klein is geweest. Dit lijkt echter vooral te liggen aan het feit dat dergelijk beleid nog niet op regionaal niveau is uitgewerkt.

De empirische reflectie vergelijkt de resultaten van dit onderzoek met andere studies die zich richten op sturing in het Nederlandse natuurbeleid. De sectorale stroming blijkt ook zichtbaar in andere regio's, zoals de Veluwe, Drentsche Aa en Gelderse Poort. Ook het bestaan van het meer pluriforme sturingsbeeld dat is gekoppeld aan de regionaal-integrale stroming wordt onderkend, onder andere in enkele recente studies naar sturing in het Nederlandse landelijk gebied.

Tot slot zijn verschillende beleidsboodschappen geformuleerd:

- Beleidsmakers zouden niet direct moeten toegeven aan de vaak ingebakken gewoonte om gesloten samenwerking te initiëren, met name omdat dit vaak resulteert in processen die niet toegankelijk zijn voor bepaalde groepen, groepen die vaak wel een belang hebben in het natuurbeleid.
- Beleidsmakers zouden zich in plaats daarvan moeten richten op het tot stand brengen van een open samenwerking, aangezien deze sturingsvorm een grote hoeveelheid regionale energie kan genereren.
- Overheden zouden voor elke regio een goede balans moeten zoeken tussen afstand bewaren en ingrijpen: soms heeft een regionaal proces behoefte aan overheidsbemoeienis, soms kan het het beste met rust gelaten worden.
- Persoonlijk leiderschap door beleidsondernemers zou gepromoot en gekoesterd moeten worden, omdat dit vaak het verschil kan betekenen tussen succes of falen.

- Natuurbeleid zou, wanneer mogelijk, een integraal karakter moeten hebben. Idealiter zou dat per regio kunnen leiden tot natuurbescherming, bekostigd door de opbrengsten van duurzame economische activiteiten.
- In sommige gevallen zou natuurbeleid echter een sectoraal karakter moeten behouden, bijvoorbeeld in die delen van een regio die belangrijke en kwetsbare natuurwaarden bevatten.

Training- and Supervision Plan

Name of the course	Department / Institute	Year	Credits
I. General part			
PhD course Scientific Writing	CENTA	2005	1,8
PhD Competence assessment	WGS	2005	0,3
Project & Time Management	WGS	2007	1,5
II. Mansholt-specific part			
Mansholt Introduction course	Mansholt Graduate School	2005	1,5
Working group "Political theory for forest and nature conservation policy" (PTWe)	WUR (FNP) & GAU Göttingen, Germany	2007 - 2009	4
Presentation GoFOR project Budapest	GoFOR	2007	2
Mansholt Multidisciplinary Seminar	Mansholt Graduate School	2009	1
III. Discipline-specific part			
Discussion group on governance	WUR	2005 - 2008	1,5
Research seminars Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group	WUR (FNP)	2005 - 2009	1,5
Realism, Empiricism and Constructivism	Dutch - Flemish Network for Philosophy of Science & Technology	2006	2
Network governance; between democracy and efficiency	Roskilde University, Denmark	2006	5
The Narrative Turn in Research Methodology	Aalborg University, Denmark	2006	5
Governance	Mansholt Disc. Course	2007	3
IV. Teaching and supervising activities			
Course Introduction in Forest & Nature Conservation Policies FNP 21806	WUR (FNP)	2006 - 2007	1
Course Forest & Nature Conservation Policy FNP 31806	WUR (FNP)	2007	0,5
MSc thesis Sonja van Wolfswinkel	WUR (FNP)	2007	0,5
MSc thesis Laura van Vuurde	WUR (FNP)	2007	0,5
Total			**32,6**

Curriculum Vitae

Rikke Catrinus Marie Arnouts was born on the 27th of April 1980 in the Noord-Brabant village of Leende, where he also grew up. In July 1999, he completed his secondary education at the Sint-Joris College in Eindhoven. He then moved to Nijmegen to study social and political sciences of the environment. In August 2002, he completed his Bachelor Degree, investigating the attempt of the province of Noord-Brabant to speed up the implementation of the *Ecologische Hoofdstructuur* (Ecological Main Structure: EHS). After that, he spent six months as an Erasmus exchange student at the School of Town and Regional Planning, Dundee University, Scotland, where he studied Environmental Management, and six months as a voluntary researcher at Alterra, Wageningen, team 'Crossing Borders', where he participated in a research project on international nature conventions. Subsequently, he returned to Nijmegen to obtain his Masters Degree, writing a thesis on the problem-solving capacity of multi-actor and multi-level governance in the implementation phase of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives in the Netherlands, combining this with an internship at the abovementioned team, 'Crossing Borders'. With a paper based on his thesis, in June 2004 he won the Governance and Places (GaP) award of the Nijmegen School of Management.

Having completed his university education, Rikke decided to keep on studying governance in combination with Dutch nature policy. In February 2005, he continued his academic career by taking up a post as PhD student at the Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group at Wageningen University. For almost three years, he participated in an international project under the Sixth EU Framework Programme, called GoFOR (acronym for New Modes of Governance for Sustainable Forestry in Europe). After this project finished in November 2008, he spent almost two additional years finalizing this PhD thesis. During that time, in November 2009, he returned to Alterra, Wageningen, joining the team 'The Human Factor' as a policy researcher.

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