Active citizenship in green space governance

Thomas Mattijssen

Propositions

1. Citizens' ecological contributions are overestimated, their societal contributions are undervalued.
   (this thesis)

2. The uniqueness of citizens' green practices asks authorities for tailor-made governance approaches.
   (this thesis)

3. There is no 'best' way to protect nature.

4. One does not need to be critical of society to be a good social scientist.

5. New forms of governance are not always better.

6. If Dutch universities had to pay overtime, they would be bankrupt.

7. The participation society does not exist

Propositions belonging to the thesis entitled:

Active citizenship in green space governance

Thomas Mattijssen
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Active citizenship in green space governance

Thomas Mattijssen

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Active citizenship in green space governance

Thomas Mattijssen

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While some would describe the path towards the PhD as a lonely walk, that's not at all my experience. For this, I owe many of the colleagues with whom I've had the pleasure to work over the years. Just having lunch together, a walk outside or a chat at the coffee machine on a busy day already made such a difference in not feeling lonely and being more relaxed. I also enjoyed working on different research projects with various people, discussing our work in the corridor or during seminars and of course all team outings and team drinks. It's an honour to have been colleagues with so many great people, and I hope to meet many of you in the future.

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Combining a PhD with a regular job was not only a challenge for me, but also required understanding, flexibility and support from colleagues and especially my supervisors. In the final year before submitting this thesis, I owe many thanks

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Disclaimer

The work which led to the writing of this PhD-thesis has been a personal journey of over 4 years, starting December 1st 2013. While my PhD has been conducted at the Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group of Wageningen University, I have also been employed as a scientist for four other employers during this period. With this, my PhD thesis integrates work conducted across different research projects for different commissioners.

Because this PhD integrates different bodies of work with my own research experiences, there are some developments in the use of concepts and theory throughout the empirical chapters 4 – 7. Most importantly, while the empirical work in chapters 4 and 5 uses the term *self-governance*, chapters 6 and 7 discuss *active citizenship*. This is not so much a difference in the subject of study, but more of a change in conceptual focus due to research experiences, on which I will reflect later in this thesis.

The empirical papers published in this thesis are largely part of two research projects. Chapters 4, 5 and 7 have been written as part of the research project 'Monitoring Energetic Society' (translated from Dutch), funded by the Dutch Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL). I have been working on this project while I was employed at Wageningen University (NL) and Radboud University Nijmegen (NL). Chapter 6 has been written as part of the EU FP7-project 'GREEN SURGE', funded by the European Commission. I have been working for this project while I was employed at Wageningen University (NL), Forest Research (UK) and the University of Copenhagen (DK). My work throughout this thesis also uses insights derived from several other projects, conducted for the above employers as well as for Wageningen Economic Research (NL).

I wish to emphasize that there are no conflicts of interest between my employment as a contract researcher and the scientific and ethical standards required for completing a PhD. All of the work presented in this thesis has been executed with scientific rigour and subjected to scientific procedures, including peer review for the work which has already been published in scientific journals (chapters 4 – 6). There was no external pressure to remove or falsely modify any research data included in the empirical chapters 4 – 7 or elsewhere in this thesis.

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List of abbreviations

CEG	Core group Elisabeth Green
CLA	Cooperation of groups for a Liveable Amersfoort
D66	Democrats 66
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
FB	Foundation Heiligenbergerbeekdal
FEG	Foundation Elisabeth Green
IT	Italy
n.s.	Not significant
N2000	Natura 2000
NCOs	Nature Conservation Organizations
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NL	The Netherlands
NNN	National Nature Network
p.	Probability
PAA	Policy Arrangement Approach
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
TNC	The New Collaboration
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

Chapter 1

Active citizenship in green space governance

1.1 The role of citizens in nature conservation

Inspired by the beauty of nature and concerned about its vulnerability, the Western movement for nature conservation originated from the passion and care of citizens (Van der Windt, 1995). At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, this led to the first large movements of citizens to protect nature across Europe and the USA (Van Koppen and Markham, 2007; Csaba et al., 2007). While these movements started locally and out of idealism, they steadily professionalized into large, (inter)nationally operating NGOs over the next decades (Van Koppen and Markham, 2007). After the Second World War, and especially after the environmental movements of the 1960s and 1970s, authorities gained an increasingly prominent role in nature conservation by designing and implementing policies to protect nature (Jongman, 1995; Arnouts, 2010). By the 1980s, the management and protection of nature and landscape in many European countries had become primarily a responsibility of authorities, large environmental NGOs and, in some countries, private landowners (Duffey, 1990; Van Koppen and Markham, 2007).

As a result, one could say that the responsibilities for protecting nature had formally become somewhat detached from the citizens who had initiated the original movement to conserve nature and landscape. While nature conservation had its roots in civil movements, it became professionalized and heavily regulated (Van Koppen and Markham, 2007; Rootes, 1999). This institutionalization was arguably very important and successful for the conservation of biodiversity (Duffey, 1990; Van Koppen and Markham, 2007). However, it also led to critical views in which nature conservation was labelled as a 'technocratic' and expertise-driven exercise that had become disconnected from citizens (Ferranti et al., 2014; Rauschmayer et al., 2009; Rientjes, 2002). In Europe, the original Natura 2000 policy aiming to create a network of protected areas is seen as exemplary of this by some critics: designed by scientists and policy-makers and implemented by authorities and large environmental NGOs (Beunen and De Vries, 2011; Ferranti et al., 2014).

Despite the high level of institutionalization of nature conservation, there are plenty of examples of mobilization of Western citizens for the benefit of nature

and landscape in the 1960s to 1980s (Jongman, 1995; Van Koppen and Markham, 2007). Engaged citizens donated money to green charities, became members or volunteers of environmental NGOs, or voted for political parties with a green agenda. But they also initiated new NGOs, became active in the management of local public green space, organized protests, started green social enterprises, managed private nature areas on estates, and created and managed green spaces in their own gardens (Elands and Van Koppen, 2007; Van der Windt, 1995; Lawrence and Ambrose-Oji, 2015). Nonetheless, research and policy paid limited attention to these activities of citizens in nature conservation (Van Koppen and Markham, 2007; Ferranti et al., 2014).

Since the early 1990s and especially in the last 10 to 15 years, there has been a revival of interest in the role of Western citizens in nature protection. Originating from studies in non-Western countries (Ostrom, 1990; Agrawal and Gibson, 1999), a new focus arose on the capabilities of citizens to manage and conserve natural resources. The importance of citizens' contributions to public services and the realization of public values was also increasingly recognized, in green as well as non-green domains, such as science or health and well-being (Leadbeater and Miller, 2004; Alford, 1998). In socio-political debates, an increasing desire was expressed to more directly engage citizens in the creation and implementation of policy, born out of the democratic ideals of participation, empowerment and (good) governance (Fung and Wright, 2001; Smith, 2009). In recent years, austerity and neoliberal ideals have in some instances resulted in a less active role of authorities in green space management (Perkins, 2010; Blanco et al., 2014).

As a result of the above, an emphasis arose on more inclusive approaches to nature conservation: nature conservation not on behalf of, but *together with* or *driven by* citizens. The spotlight in European nature conservation is thus once again focused on "the citizen".

1.2 Active citizenship

In today's 'energetic society' (Hajer et al., 2015), there are many citizens who want to act and who want to change things. Across Europe, many people are well-educated these days and knowledge is widely available due to technologies such as

the internet (Leadbeater and Miller, 2004; Hajer et al., 2015). The attention for the role of citizens in the public domain is therefore not limited to the field of nature conservation: also in other domains, such as renewable energy, social care and sustainable agriculture, scholars have noted an increased focus on the activities of citizens (Hoskins and Mascherini, 2009; Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013; Leadbeater and Miller, 2004).

In the last 10 years, the term *active citizenship* has become prominent in debates centred on the role of citizens in public domains (Moro, 2012; Hoskins, 2009). With this, citizens are no longer merely regarded as passive subjects of policy, but rather as agents who actively pursue their own interests, objectives and ideals through their engagement with public life (Van Dam et al., 2015). The increasing interest in active citizenship can also be seen in scientific research: in scientific search engine SCOPUS, more than half of the papers found via the query "active citizenship", has been published in the last 5 years and more than 80 per cent in the last 10 years[1]; the number of publications increasing every year. This growth in attention for active citizenship visible in political discourses and scientific writings is closely linked to the growing responsibilities of citizens and their more prominent role in public life across many different domains (Moro, 2012; Teles, 2012; Hoskins, 2009).

The image of citizens today is that they are knowledgeable and pro-active, but also demanding (Hajer et al., 2015; Uitermark, 2015). These active citizens pursue their own interests through engaging in public life and they demand accountability from authorities, policy-makers, scientists and experts (Van Dam et al., 2015; Milana, 2008; Bovaird, 2007). Many people have genuine concerns about the world they live in and want to contribute towards the realization of public values (Hajer et al., 2015). When citizens feel challenged and motivated to address their concerns, and when they are sufficiently equipped and skilled to do so, they can be expected to act in the public domain (Scientific Council for Government Policy, 2013) – with or without the involvement of authorities.

This renewed focus on active citizenship in Western societies at large is reflected in the green domain (Van Dam et al., 2015). In literature, many interesting examples of active citizenship in this regard can be found across Europe. With this, research has highlighted the increasingly important role of European citizens

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[1] 20-06-2017: 406 out of a total of 802 papers has been published since 2012, 656 have been published since 2007.

in the management and protection of nature and biodiversity (Paloniemi et al., 2015). Dennis and James (2016) described how citizens contributed to the creation and management of community gardens in Manchester. Van Dam et al. (2014) showed how residents of the Dutch town of Hellevoetsluis developed a vision for an ecological corridor of 7 hectares that was implemented in cooperation with local and regional authorities and NGOs; and how another group of Dutch residents of the hamlet Wessinghuizen restored and managed cultural elements in the surrounding rural landscape. In the city of Berlin (Germany), Rosol (2010) described different forms of community gardening and green space maintenance with an important role for active citizens. Cvejić et al. (2015) showed how about a hundred volunteers transformed a dormant construction pit in the city of Ljubljana (Slovenia) into an urban agricultural hotspot. Across the Netherlands, Van Dijk and Van der Wulp (2010) found forms of civic activism striving to protect public green and natural resources. While many more examples can be found in literature, the aforementioned ones illustrate that active citizenship with regard to green space can be found in many places and in many different forms.

1.3 From government to governance

The rise of and increasing attention for active citizenship is often linked to a broader ongoing shift from government to governance (Moro, 2012). In this shift, traditional centralized decision-making by authorities ('government') has increasingly been complemented by governance processes that involve a broad range of actors on different spatial scales in decision-making (Arts, 2014). In urbanized Western societies, this governance frequently takes place in networks that involve multiple actors on multiple scales (Eizaguirre et al., 2012). Decision-making is usually spread across different scale levels (García, 2006; Shore, 2011) and power is often shared between multiple actors (Shore, 2011). These actors include authorities, businesses and NGOs, but also citizen groups and individual citizens (Moro, 2012; Simmons et al., 2007).

The concept of governance has been employed in many scientific disciplines and policy domains, including political sciences, sociology and public administration,

as well as in different domains within the socio-environmental sciences (Ayana, 2014; Derkzen and Bock, 2009). Across these disciplines, researchers argue that governance is a dynamic phenomenon (Liefferink, 2006; Arnouts et al., 2012; Lawrence et al., 2013; Flinders, 2002). Governance is thus not a given state, but a process (Flinders, 2002). In this thesis, I understand governance as 'the many ways in which public and private actors from the state, market and/or civil society govern public issues at multiple scales, autonomously or in mutual interaction' (Arts and Visseren-Hamakers, 2012). This definition explicitly incorporates the various styles of governance (from bottom-up to government-led), the fact that it often involves multiple actors, its situatedness in the public domain, and the multiple scales on which governance takes place. Within the scope of this thesis, the daily management and maintenance of green space is an important operational aspect of governance (Nagendra and Ostrom, 2012; Molin and Konijnendijk, 2014).

1.3.1. Active citizenship in governance

With the shift from government to governance, the boundaries between the public and private sectors have become somewhat blurred in the context of green space governance (Derkzen, 2008; Colding et al., 2013) as well as in general society (Stoker, 1998). Governance is very much a multi-dimensional concept, which encompasses many (new) forms of steering, policy practices, organizational structures, interactions and beliefs on governing (Leroy and Arts, 2006). With this, the concept of governance is increasingly used as an umbrella term encompassing all forms of governing, rather than as an opposite to government (Colebatch, 2014). In this line of thought, forms of active citizenship in the public domain are now understood as part of governance systems, rather than as something external to governance (Buijs et al., 2016a; Simmons et al., 2007; Warren, 2012).

Although authorities retain a central role in current Western governance, their role may be shifting from 'rowing' to 'steering' (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992): from a sole focus on providing public services towards also facilitating and regulating public services provided by other actors (Rosol, 2010). Via many forms of co-production or co-governance, studies show how government and non-government actors work together for the realization of common benefits (Mitlin, 2008; Bovaird, 2007). There are also many autonomous forms of governance where self-organizing communities or NGOs are the leading actor in governance and where authorities have a facilitating role or are even absent (Arnouts et al., 2012; Sørensen and Triantafillou, 2009).

In the classic 'triangle' of state, market and civil society (Figure 1), the shift from government to governance implies a downward movement of responsibilities from the state towards civil society and the market, expanding the 'domain' of governance. This domain of governance nowadays very much includes civil society. There are many forms of governance where public and private interests, and profit and non-profit actors meet each other with an aim of realizing public values (Evers and Laville, 2004).
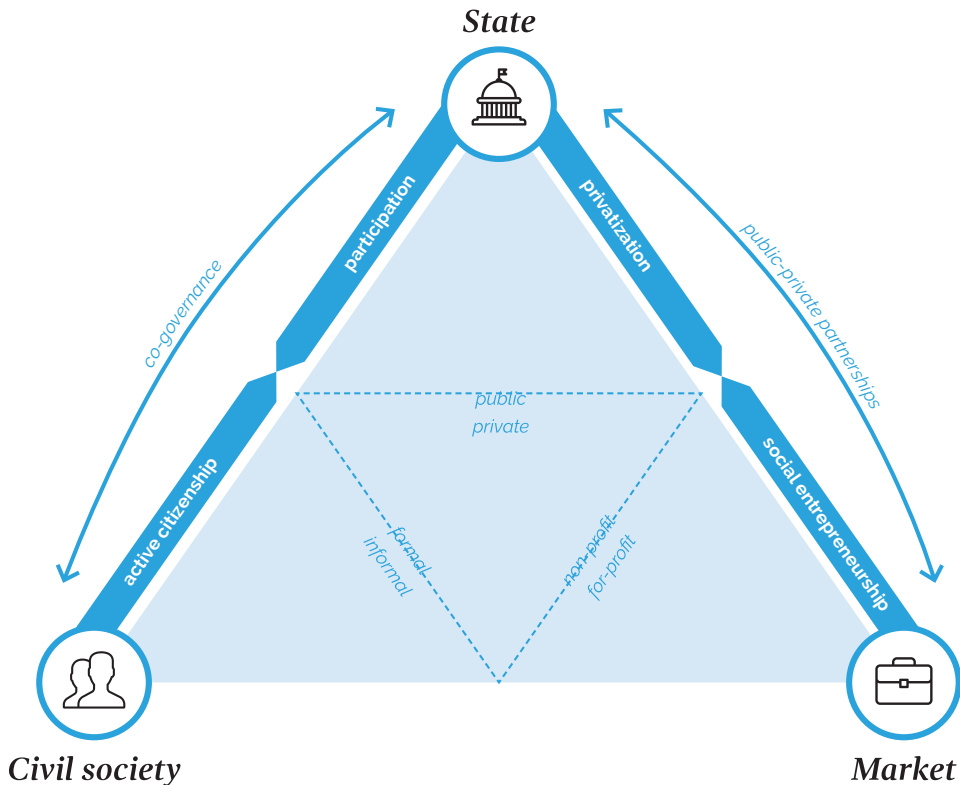
Figure 1: State, Market and Civil society - based on Evers and Laville (2004) and Van der Steen et al. (2014)

As a result of this shift, governance systems in different societal domains have become more and more complex (Teisman et al., 2009; Ostrom, 2010). Modern governance systems are increasingly characterized by the co-existence of many different governance *practices* through which different actors aim to accomplish certain objectives on different levels of scale (García, 2006; Blanco et al., 2014; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010). In this thesis, governance practices are understood as those practices in which actors engage to accomplish their

objectives through decision-making in the public domain (De Wilde et al., 2014; García, 2006). In contrast to the centralized steering systems that were characteristic of many Westerns societies in the years after the Second World War, current-day governance is much more polycentric and pluralist – meaning that it is found in various forms on different levels of scale (Ostrom, 2010; Van Assche et al., 2014a; Hooghe and Marks, 2001). In this, researchers have noticed an ongoing rise of new or 'innovative' forms of governance (Uitermark, 2015; Michels, 2011; Warren, 2012).

1.3.2. Green space governance and the role of citizens

Because of the general shift towards governance and its increasing polycentrism and pluralism, many scholars see a growing opportunity for non-government actors to engage in the governance of many types of green spaces (Ambrose-Oji et al., 2011; Rosol, 2010; Van der Jagt et al., 2016; Fors et al., 2015). While there is no clear overview of the scope and nature of this active citizenship in green space governance, many interesting examples are described in various case studies. These examples also show that this involvement spans many types of green space: European scholars have observed the involvement of citizens in the governance of urban green (e.g. Fors et al., 2015; Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp, 2009); cultural and rural landscapes (e.g. Mattijssen et al., 2015; Derkzen and Bock, 2009; Van der Sluis, 2017); and protected nature reserves (e.g. Beunen and De Vries, 2011; Apostolopoulou et al., 2014).

As Figure 1 also shows, this involvement of active citizens does not only include traditional forms of 'participation' where citizens play a role in green space governance processes supervised by authorities and generally work towards government aims (Buono et al., 2012; Rauschmayer et al., 2009). As in general society, the involvement of citizens in green space governance is also reflected in forms of co-production or co-governance where citizens and authorities work together on a more or less equal basis (Molin and Konijnendijk, 2014; Olsson et al., 2004), as well as in the manifestation of many bottom-up initiatives with varying degrees of autonomy for citizens (Van der Jagt et al., 2016; Colding et al., 2013). In these forms of governance, the objectives and motivations of citizens themselves have a more central position (Arnouts et al., 2012).

The term *self-governance* is often used to describe forms of governance in which citizens have a high degree of autonomy and act on their own initiative (Arnouts et al., 2012; Sørensen and Triantafillou, 2009). In contrast to traditional forms of

participation or voluntary work, citizens in practices of self-governance formulate their own objectives with a relatively large degree of independency from external forces/state powers. Self-governance is thus not based on government aims or interventions, but inspired by the motivations of citizens themselves (Van Dam, 2016). While there is some overlap in terminology, active citizenship and self-governance are not synonymous. Rather, self-governance is an autonomous form of active citizenship in governance. In this thesis, I use the term *green self-governance* to describe forms of governance where active citizens play a leading and somewhat autonomous role in realizing, protecting and/or managing public green space.

1.4 Public policy and the role of authorities

1.4.1. Active citizenship and the realization of public values

While there is no clear overview of the nature and scope of the effects of active citizenship in green space, several case studies suggest that citizens may contribute to biodiversity and nature conservation (Lawrence and Ambrose-Oji, 2015; Bendt et al., 2013; Dennis and James, 2016), and additionally to environmental education (Bendt et al., 2013) and social cohesion (Krasny et al., 2014).

By producing such outcomes, active citizenship in the green domain can potentially contribute to the realization of public policy objectives (Buijs et al., 2016a; Raymond et al., 2017). This can include outcomes concerning the protection and management of green space, but also associated outcomes related to for instance health and well-being, social cohesion, water management or new employment opportunities (Raymond et al., 2017). Authorities recognize this potential of active citizenship. Nowadays, many authorities see a potential for citizens to positively contribute to the governance and/or management of green space, possibly realizing public values and cost savings in the process (Perkins, 2010; Rosol, 2010).

1.4.2. Active citizenship and the role of authorities

While active citizenship and self-governance have become popular terms in the green domain, authorities still play an important role in green space matters and the design and management of green spaces (Mathers et al., 2015; Mattijssen et al., 2015). Nevertheless, various studies show that also in the green domain the role of authorities has diversified. Strategic planning and top-down approaches to governance have been expanded with public participation in the planning and implementation of green space policies (Fors et al., 2015; Van der Jagt et al., 2016). The role of authorities in green space governance also increasingly encompasses more intensive collaboration with citizens and other non-government actors, as well as more laissez-faire approaches to green space governance in which authorities play a supporting role or hardly any role at all (Kabisch, 2015; Buijs et al., 2016a; Rosol, 2010).

Yet, as emphasized at the beginning of this thesis, nature conservation is still highly regulated in European societies. In Europe, there is hardly any piece of land for which there are no formal regulations and policies on different levels of scale (Colding et al., 2013; Ferranti et al., 2014). Nature protection is strongly steered by central (inter)national policies and implemented by authorities in many EU-states, with a formally limited role for citizens in realizing and managing large green networks such as Natura 2000 (Ferranti et al., 2014). While an increase in active citizenship incurs more responsibilities for citizens in the protection and management of green space, most authorities also have their own policy objectives regarding green space. Local, regional and national authorities are also responsible for the realization of (inter)national policy goals, related to for instance national ecological networks or Natura 2000 (Beunen and De Vries, 2011).

Although a shift towards governance implies a decreasing role for authorities in the provision of public services (Stoker, 1998), authorities will in the end thus still be held accountable for many of these services. In this complex governance context, it becomes a difficult task to assess how policy objectives can best be realized (Teisman et al., 2009). A decreasing role for authorities might imply that their public values will be realized to a lesser degree. However, there is little knowledge on the relation between a withdrawal of governments from the green domain and this realization of public values.

In order to understand how green space is governed, it therefore becomes important to study the relationship between authorities and active citizens

(Hassink et al., 2016; Hajer et al., 2015). Even practices of self-governance might be a response to government policies, certain (local) developments or societal trends (Buizer, 2008; Sørensen and Triantafillou, 2009). This points towards a need to understand the interaction and mutual influence between governance practices involving active citizens and ongoing existing practices of governance in which authorities play an important role.

1.4.3. Tensions and inequalities

When I discuss the role of citizens vis-à-vis authorities in the realization of public policy objectives, it is important to realize that citizens and policy-makers are far from identical actors: they have different motives, access to different resources, and often work according to different rules and logics (Eizaguirre et al., 2012; Klein et al., 2017; Van Dam, 2016). Sometimes, the activities of active citizens will align with policy objectives set by authorities, but at other times they will not (Van Dijk and Van der Wulp, 2010; Eizaguirre et al., 2012). Power relations between citizens and authorities are often asymmetrical. While citizens can influence authorities, citizens in most circumstances do not have the authority to enforce certain rules or regulations – in contrast to authorities (Turnhout et al., 2010; Kenis et al., 2016).

In addition, not all citizens are interested in being active citizens in the public domain (Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013; Milana, 2008); not all citizens have the time and capabilities to be successful as active citizens (Putnam, 2000; Van Dam, 2016); and active citizens face difficulties in scaling up their activities (Aiken, 2017; Aalbers and Sehested, 2018). Since social and cultural capital are also not equally distributed among citizens and communities, a retreating government might lead to inequalities between citizens or between communities when people are expected to take care of themselves (Rydin and Pennington, 2000). With poorer neighbourhoods and citizens with less social capital generally ending up being worse off, a shift towards active citizenship can possibly lead to a reinforcement of existing inequalities (De Wilde et al., 2014).

On top of this, one should be aware that active citizenship is not always harmonious and might lead to conflicts between different groups of citizens or between citizens and authorities, businesses or NGOs. Conflicts between authorities and active citizens are plentiful in current Western society, but this notion of conflict is often overlooked in policy discussions on active citizenship (Eizaguirre et al., 2012). Rather, policy-makers often tend to focus on successful examples of active

citizenship providing public services, overlooking failures in this respect (Uitermark, 2015). Some forms of active citizenship, including protest, are sometimes framed as NIMBY (Vierikko and Niemelä, 2016; McClymont and O'Hare, 2008), creating a dichotomy between 'good' and 'bad' forms of active citizenship (McClymont and O'Hare, 2008). The current focus on active citizenship is thus not politically 'neutral', but also incurs possible tensions and political debates.

1.5 Active citizenship and democratic debates

When looking at political debates on active citizenship, one can see that the expectations that are placed on active citizens are high. David Cameron, the former British prime minister, wrote in The Guardian in 2009: 'our future depends on putting more political responsibility in the hands of local people' (Cameron, 2009). King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands, said in the 2013 annual king's speech, an official government statement: 'It is an undeniable reality that in today's network and information society people are both more assertive and more independent than in the past. This, combined with the need to reduce the budget deficit, means that the classical welfare state is slowly but surely evolving into a participation society. Everyone who is able will be asked to take responsibility for their own lives and immediate surroundings' (Royal House of the Netherlands, 2013).

The term responsibility is key in both these quotes. Active citizens apparently also need to be *responsible* citizens, and there is often the implicit or explicit expectation that these active citizens will take over tasks formerly performed by the retreating state in order to provide similar services (Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013; Buser, 2013; Raco and Imrie, 2000; Turnhout et al., 2010; Bailey and Pill, 2011). In debates on 'Big Society' and 'Localism' in the United Kingdom (Buser, 2013; Bailey and Pill, 2011), 'Participation Society' or 'Energetic Society' in the Netherlands (Salemink et al., 2016; Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013; Hajer et al., 2015), or other European debates on active citizenship (European Commission, 1998; Hoskins, 2009), the notions of responsible, active and empowered citizens are often linked to discourses related to a retreating state and government budget cuts (Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013; Buser, 2013).

1.5.1. Active citizenship and neoliberalism

Due to the close link between the discourses of active citizenship and state retrenchment, many scholars have been critical of the attention of politicians and authorities for the role of active citizens in the public domain (Turnhout et al., 2010; Crossan et al., 2016; Buser, 2013). In the eyes of these scholars, the current focus on active citizenship is closely associated with political ideals of neoliberalism (Blanco et al., 2014; Swyngedouw, 2005; McCarthy and Prudham, 2004). Neoliberalism strives for a greater extent of societal self-regulation, which is often manifested in a roll-back or restructuring of government institutions and in budget cuts (McCarthy and Prudham, 2004), generally combined with a focus on individualism (Buser, 2013) and privatization (Jessop, 2002).

While I do not aim to criticize the political ideals of neoliberalism per se, many of the scholars whom I cited in the previous two paragraphs see the focus on active citizenship not so much as a consequence of democratic ideals that promote a more active role for citizens in society, but rather as a vehicle to reduce government spending or even to 'responsibilize' citizens. In this context, the term *governmentality* is often used to highlight how authorities allocate responsibilities to citizens and aim to steer the behaviour of these citizens through responsibilizing and/or disciplining them (Shore, 2011; Swyngedouw, 2005), thus exercising 'control at a distance' (Arts, 2014: p.21). Such scholars see the focus on active citizenship not so much as following from democratic ideals, but rather as a way of getting citizens to execute the (neoliberal) government agenda. In this context, the 'responsibilization' of citizens (Klein et al., 2017) is viewed as an instrumental approach to enlist citizens for the realization of policy goals and for delegating responsibilities from authorities to citizens (Tonkens et al., 2013; Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013).

In the green domain, Agrawal (2005) also describes techniques that authorities use to steer people's behaviour in order to promote environmentally friendly citizenship. Some scholars claim that authorities are pushing forward a neoliberal 'green' agenda by transferring their responsibilities for nature conservation and taking care of the environment to citizens (Apostolopoulou et al., 2014; Paloniemi et al., 2015; Agrawal, 2005). While this can be criticized from a governmentality perspective, Agrawal (2005) emphasizes that this can also have positive consequences. He underlines that a focus on responsible environmental citizenship can indeed result in an increased care for the environment among citizens, both in attitude and behaviour, but also in the fostering of cooperation and mutual understanding between citizens and authorities.

1.5.2. **Active citizenship in an energetic society**

The broad range of practices that include European active citizens in governance in different societal domains (Teles, 2012) demonstrate that a shift or trend from 'citizenship' to 'active citizenship' (Hoskins and Mascherini, 2009) is not only visible in discourse, but also in practice. Citizens have become more active in pursuing their objectives through governance, entering the political arena themselves and demanding action from authorities. In this sense, active citizenship is also something that authorities need to deal with, whether they like it or not. The trend towards active citizenship is thus not merely a consequence of new steering philosophies and democratic ideals that are emphasized under the concept of governance, but also very much a result of the emancipation of citizens themselves. This ongoing emancipation implies a *transformative potential* as it can redefine the relationship between citizens and the government (Hajer et al., 2015; Wagenaar et al., 2015).

In many publications about active citizenship, the focus is not so much on strategic approaches towards policy objectives, but much more on the objectives, motivations and activities of citizens themselves (e.g. De Haan et al., 2017; Liebert et al., 2013; Moro, 2012; Wagenaar et al., 2015). Framing the interest of authorities in active citizenship as an expression of neoliberalism or as a reaction to demands from society is therefore only a part of the picture. The need for authorities to engage in new forms of governance does not merely rest with the efficiency of policy implementation and the safeguarding of the accomplishment of formal policy objectives: there is also a close link with (new) democratic ideals on how society should be governed.

This includes democratic ideals of empowerment, inclusiveness, popular control, deliberative democracy, transparency, direct democracy and good governance (Fung and Wright, 2001; Smith, 2009; Stirling, 2006; Warren, 2012). With these ideals, many scholars and policy-makers express a desire for more direct forms of democracy and for the inclusion of citizens in governance processes, as well as for a stronger influence of citizens on policy and governance (Fung and Wright, 2001; Smith, 2009; Warren, 2012; Commission of the European Communities, 2001). This contrasts with the representative democratic system where policy creation is the domain of elected politicians and public officials lead its implementation.

In the green domain, this desire for more direct forms of democracy can mostly be observed at the local scale, where many authorities actively seek cooperation with

citizens and other non-governmental actors in green space governance (Hassink et al., 2016; Molin and Konijnendijk, 2014). On the European and national level, there is also an emphasis on more inclusive approaches to nature conservation (Suškevičs et al., 2013; Ferranti et al., 2014), in line with ambitions expressed in general policy documents (Commission of the European Communities, 2001; OECD, 2011). With this, policies very much seem to promote active citizenship and direct democracy in green space governance.

Even so, in line with the critical voices on governmentality and/or environmentality, there are also critics who argue that this emphasis on active citizenship, participation and bottom-up governance can be seen in rhetoric, but not as much in actual practices. Here, scholars show how much policy is still implemented from a top-down perspective (Rauschmayer et al., 2009; Apostolopoulou et al., 2014), arguing that citizens are often insufficiently supported or even constrained by policies (Hajer et al., 2015; García, 2006). In the green domain, the ad-hoc and local nature of active citizenship contrasts with the centralized and coordinated ways through which ecological networks are planned. Therefore, the actual transformative potential of active citizenship in green space governance (Franklin and Marsden, 2015; Buijs et al., 2016a) as well as in general society (Raco and Imrie, 2000; García, 2006; Aiken, 2017; Swyngedouw, 2005) is still very much debated.

1.6 Challenges for active citizenship in green space

In this age of ongoing urbanization, population growth, technological development and emancipated citizenship, European green spaces are very much under pressure. Especially in urban areas, encroachment and ongoing urban sprawl combined with declining maintenance budgets have put pressure on the quantity and quality of many green spaces (Burton et al., 2014; Kabisch, 2015). In rural areas, where many nature reserves can be found, there are important challenges for biodiversity conservation and nature protection, but also for economic development, the well-being of the population and the conservation of cultural landscapes (Ferranti et al., 2014; Kati et al., 2015; Derkzen, 2008; Van der Sluis, 2017; Admiraal et al., 2017).

In the first sections of this thesis, I have highlighted how citizens have played an important role in establishing the Western movement for nature conservation at the beginning of the twentieth century. In our time, there are scholars who argue that active citizens can potentially play an important role in addressing some of the current challenges (Colding et al., 2013; De Haan et al., 2017; Wagenaar et al., 2015; Barthel et al., 2015). However, these and many other scholars also highlight that citizens still face important challenges, obstacles, and difficulties along the way. It is important to know how and under what circumstances citizens can actually realize their intended aims in public domains, and how this can contribute towards important challenges regarding the protection of nature, landscapes and urban green.

1.6.1. Active citizenship in a complex society
Through their involvement in green space governance, active citizens do not only interact with the material world, but also participate in social and political processes (Colding et al., 2013; Krasny and Tidball, 2012). As a consequence, active citizens in the green domain are sometimes confronted with heavily regulated issues in a complex institutional environment (Termeer et al., 2013; Olsson et al., 2004). On the local scale, there are (inter)national, regional and municipal policies that all might guide the activities of citizens. A specific green area can be a part of the European Nature Network of Natura 2000 and thus be governed according to international policies, but it can at the same time be subject to a recreation policy of the local municipality and national legislations on water safety. One particular area might host many different practices of for instance nature conservation, recreation, agriculture, transportation and the production of drinking water; each of these practices likely involving different actors.

Active citizens often also have to interact with many different stakeholders pursuing different interests (Eizaguirre et al., 2012; García, 2006; Buijs et al., 2016a). There are many societal demands for the ecosystem services and benefits that are provided by green spaces (McDonald, 2015; Kremer et al., 2016). All these different demands relate to the interests of different actors, and there are many different views in society on the importance of green spaces and how they can best be expanded, managed or protected. Efforts to protect green spaces are therefore underpinned by a multitude of views and motives (Mace, 2014), which is manifested in a large diversity of practices. This can potentially lead to land use conflicts and clashes between active citizens, governments, NGOs, businesses and other actors in the public domain (Eizaguirre et al., 2012; Rauschmayer et al.,

2009). As I already touched upon in the previous paragraph, a shift towards active citizenship can also lead to democratic tensions.

All this complexity can make it difficult for citizens to successfully pursue their objectives through engaging in governance. When so many different actors take part in different forms of governance, it becomes somewhat unclear who is responsible for what, with the blurring boundaries between public and private domains (Raco and Imrie, 2000; Buser, 2013; Klein et al., 2017). It is also important to realize that the 'citizens' of whom I speak are not a uniform group by themselves. Many different citizens have an interest in green spaces, and these green spaces provide different and often multiple services to and have different meanings for different people (Hansen and Pauleit, 2014; Elands et al., 2015), which can motivate them to partake in varying practices. Through all these different practices, the role of active citizenship in the governance of green space has become layered and multidimensional, making it difficult to measure the diversity and impact of this active citizenship (Mace, 2014; Fors et al., 2015; Kabisch and Haase, 2014).

1.6.2. Success and continuity

As Uitermark (2015) emphasizes, active citizenship is not always successful. While case studies often describe flourishing examples of active citizenship in the green domain, it would be somewhat naïve to expect that these cases will be representative of the success of others. After all, there is no solid overview of the broad spectrum of practices that involve active citizens in green space governance. Because of this, current literature on this topic offers little insight into whether these citizens are successful in accomplishing their objectives and under what circumstances. This makes it difficult to make educated claims about the effects of a shift towards active citizenship when we look at the protection and governance of European green spaces.

Another important returning point of discussion in debates about active citizenship is concerned with its long-term continuity (Dempsey et al., 2014b; Smith et al., 2014). The concept of *place-keeping* highlights that managing and protecting green spaces typically requires ongoing and long-term commitment (Dempsey and Burton, 2012). While authorities have managed green spaces for long periods of time, the shift towards active citizenship is a recent development. In contrast to long-term strategic policy, a much more bottom-up and ad-hoc nature is ascribed to active citizenship (Eizaguirre et al., 2012; Buijs et al., 2016a).

Practices that include active citizens arise and disappear over time. Consequently, there is still uncertainty about the long-term continuity of active citizenship in green space and what a more prominent role of citizens in green space governance means for the place-keeping of these spaces (Dempsey et al., 2014b).

1.7 Thesis aims and research questions

The main aim of this thesis is *to contribute to scientific and societal debates on active citizenship in green space by studying its relevance for the governance, management and protection of green space.*

So far, this chapter has shown that there are many debates about the role of citizens in governance and management of green space. I have critically discussed the shift in the governance of green space and the role of active citizenship in this. Below, I will identify four main knowledge gaps addressed in this thesis, accompanied by four main research questions.

1.7.1. The nature and diversity of active citizenship in green space governance

Citizens engage in the governance and management of green space in a wide variety of local practices (Van der Jagt et al., 2016; Rosol, 2010). There is no clear overview of all the different forms of active citizenship in the green domain and of how these affect the natural environment (Mehmood and Parra, 2013; Fors et al., 2015; Mace, 2014). Existing empirical evidence is often based on case studies that provide important information (e.g. Van Dam, 2016; Mathers et al., 2015). In contrast to this, there is a scarcity of broader empirical evidence and good quality baseline data based on a more comprehensive overview of practices of active citizenship in the green domain.

With empirical evidence being scattered and focused on individual cases, it becomes difficult to assess the role and importance of active citizenship in the governance of green spaces. Such insights are important if one aims to understand the broader role of active citizenship within green space governance. In order to

base an assessment of active citizenship on more than anecdotal examples from a limited number of case studies, we need a better and more general insight into the character, size and variety of active citizenship in green space governance. For this, purpose, the following research question has been formulated:

What are the overall scope and key characteristics of active citizenship in green space governance?

1.7.2. The different effects of active citizenship in green space governance

Through their involvement in green space governance, active citizens can have an impact on their environment, and produce broader social, cultural and economic effects as well (Lawrence and Ambrose-Oji, 2015; Bendt et al., 2013; Raymond et al., 2017; Buijs et al., 2016a). While their activities do not necessarily align with policy objectives, active citizens in the green domain can potentially contribute towards the realization of public policy objectives (Buijs et al., 2016a; Raymond et al., 2017).

However, in line with the previous knowledge gap, a broader view on these effects and their implications is lacking. Without insight into the nature and scope of these effects, it is difficult to fully comprehend the implications of a shift towards active citizenship in green space governance, both for the environment and the population. A deeper insight into these implications, including the relation to policy objectives, thus requires an understanding and overview of different effects. This includes benefits (ecological and environmental effects), but also co-benefits: social, cultural and economic effects (Bain et al., 2016; Raymond et al., 2017). The following research question addresses this:

What are the benefits and co-benefits of different types of active citizenship in green space governance?

1.7.3. Long-term continuity of active citizenship in green space governance

The continuity of active citizenship has been a returning point of discussion for policy-makers and scientists alike. The concept of place-keeping underlines that managing and protecting green spaces typically requires a long-term and ongoing commitment (Dempsey and Burton, 2012). However, there is little knowledge about the long-term implications of an increased engagement of citizens in

green space governance. As a consequence, we lack understanding about what is required for citizens to engage in such governance over longer periods of time. This points towards a need for a study into factors that contribute to and constrain the continuity of active citizenship in green space, as emphasized in the research question below:

What factors contribute to or constrain the long-term continuity of active citizenship in green space governance

1.7.4. Transformative potential of active citizenship in green space governance

Citizens enter a complex arena when they become active in the governance of green space. Some of these citizens do not only aim to realize certain environmental values, but also they want to influence the ways in which society is governed: they want to transform existing governance practices (Moro, 2012; Wagenaar et al., 2015). Some studies highlight the transformative potential of active citizenship: its potential to redefine the relationship between citizens and the government in the design and provision of local products and services (Hajer et al., 2015; Wagenaar et al., 2015; Spijker and Parra, 2017). However, many scholars are rather sceptical of this transformative potential (Colding et al., 2013; Swyngedouw, 2005; Raco and Imrie, 2000; García, 2006). Such studies emphasize that active citizenship rarely produces effects on a more institutional level and point to the conditioning influence of institutions on these citizens.

In the green domain, there is surprisingly little empirical attention for how citizens bring about transformations in governance. Such insight is important to understand if and how citizens can transform existing governance practices. Therefore, there is a need for a better understanding of the role of active citizenship in the transformation of governance practices. This is addressed by the following research question:

How can the transformative potential of active citizenship in green space governance be understood?

1.8 The spatial focus of my work

My work in this thesis has a specific focus on urbanized societies in Europe. As a consequence, the empirical data I will present were mostly collected in what can be considered to be urban and peri-urban areas. Most of the fieldwork in this thesis was conducted in the Netherlands, a European country with a population density of approximately 505 people per square kilometre of land. With this, the Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries in the West (The World Bank, 2017). In addition, I conducted case studies in the cities of Berlin (Germany) and Milan (Italy), also in countries that are part of the European Union.

1.8.1. The Dutch landscape

Being situated in one of the major river estuaries of Europe, the Netherlands has a long and intensive history of landscape and water management, and mostly consists of man-made cultural landscapes, with nature and culture being highly interwoven (Coeterier, 1996). While the Netherlands is seen as an urbanized country, especially in the western provinces, it also features rural areas where the population density is below 100 people per square kilometre.

Landscapes across the Netherlands are highly diverse, ranging from wetlands, peat bogs and polders to sandy, hilly areas and dunes (Berendse, 2011). Slightly more than half of the land is used for agricultural purposes, while around 13 per cent of the land is used for infrastructure and building. Around 12 per cent of the land consists of forest or so-called green 'natural areas', while about 20 per cent of the surface area of the Netherlands consists of water (Centraal bureau voor de Statistiek, 2017) – some of which can also be seen as natural areas.

1.8.2. Dutch policy and debates

As in many Western countries, there are currently important debates in the Netherlands about a changing relationship between citizens and governments (Tonkens et al., 2013). This is very much reflected in the green domain, where there is a long history of volunteering by citizens (Van de Wijdeven et al., 2013). Despite this long-standing tradition, the governance of green space in the Netherlands has historically been centrally organized, with an important steering role for authorities and large environmental NGOs (Buijs et al., 2014; Van Melik and Van Der Krabben, 2016).

In recent years, however, nature policy in the Netherlands has rapidly changed. This includes large budget cuts on nature conservation and green space management as well as a reassessment of the National Nature Network (NNN), which has been decreased in size (Buijs et al., 2014). Important responsibilities for nature conservation have been decentralized from national to regional authorities (Buijs et al., 2014). In line with these changes in policy, there has been a sharp change in discourse, with more focus on local ownership, economic development and public support (Buijs et al., 2014). Simultaneously, a growing emphasis was placed on the roles and responsibilities of citizens in green space management (Buijs et al., 2014; Van Dam et al., 2015). As a consequence, there is a strong focus on active citizenship in the green domain now (Van Dam et al., 2015).

1.9 Structure of this thesis

The empirical chapters of this thesis present four journal articles on active citizenship in green space. Before these empirical chapters, I will first discuss my use of scientific theory in chapter 2. I will then introduce my research methodology in chapter 3 in order to explain how I have collected and analysed my data, and also to reflect upon my own position as a researcher.

In line with the first research question, chapter 4 is specifically focused on an overview of characteristics of practices that involve active citizens in self-governance of green space in the Netherlands. In line with the second research question, chapter 5 is focused on the effects or outcomes of different kinds of self-governance in green space, followed by a discussion on how these outcomes contribute towards a diversity of ecological, social, cultural and economic values. In chapter 6, I discuss how citizens can contribute towards a responsive and long-term management of public green spaces, employing the concept of place-keeping. Chapter 7 features a discussion on the transformative potential of active citizenship in green space. To examine this potential, I studied interactions between different practices of active citizenship and governance practices in which authorities play an important role.

The results and analysis of these four chapters are integrated in the eighth and final chapter of this thesis, a synthesis in which I return to the above research questions and reflect on them.

02

Chapter 2

Theory and conceptual framework

2.1 Background

This PhD-thesis is very much the product of an iterative process that integrates literature studies and empirical understandings from several research projects across the years 2013-2017. The theory presented in this section is therefore the result of a reflexive and iterative integration of analytical frameworks employed in these research projects and of a study of theory conducted as part of this PhD. This was not a linear process: theory was not only developed before fieldwork, but also during data collection and even afterwards during data analysis, while writing official reports and while working on the empirical chapters of this thesis.

In order to be transparent about this process and to accurately present the theoretical journey that was part of this PhD-project, the structure of this chapter more or less follows this research process. Rather than starting from a strictly theoretical perspective, I will first briefly introduce the Policy Arrangement Approach , which is the main analytical framework that I used in the 'GREEN SURGE' and 'Monitoring Energetic Society' research projects. Although these research projects differed in scope and subject, I used this framework in both studies as the main tool for collecting and analysing data. The PAA therefore provided the starting point for the theoretical work for this thesis.

After introducing the PAA, I will expand on the theoretical roots of this approach and discuss the relevance of practice theory for my work. With the use of this theory, I will show that the Policy Arrangement Approach faces a number of issues that need to be addressed in order to study practices of active citizenship in local governance. Based on my problem statement and following my specific focus on active citizenship and self-governance in green space, I then return to the PAA and use theoretical insights to expand and operationalize the PAA into a framework for studying *governance practices* or elements thereof, as I did in the four empirical chapters of this thesis.

2.2 The Policy Arrangement Approach

The Policy Arrangement Approach or PAA (Van Tatenhove et al., 2000) provides an analytical framework to study the governance of natural resources. Drawing upon important debates in the social sciences, the PAA integrates relevant theoretical and empirical insights for studying policy and/or governance processes (Van Tatenhove et al., 2000; Van Tatenhove and Leroy, 2003; Arts and Leroy, 2006). Over the years, this approach has been employed by researchers in a wide range of contexts and on different levels of scale, as shown by the variety of studies that are cited in this paragraph. On Google Scholar, the query "policy arrangement approach" reveals around 300 publications[2]. This shows that the PAA has become an established framework for analysing governance processes.

Central in the PAA is the concept of a *policy arrangement*, which was originally defined as 'the temporary stabilisation of the organisation and substance of a policy domain at a specific level of policy making' (Van Tatenhove et al., 2000: p.54) and later as 'the way in which a certain policy domain is temporarily shaped in terms of discourses, actors, resources and rules' (Arts and Buizer, 2009: p. 343). These discourses, actors, resources and rules comprise the four main analytical dimensions of the PAA, which it uses to analyse specific governance- or policy processes (Arts et al., 2006a). Through these four dimensions, the PAA can study patterns of change and stability over time (Leroy and Arts, 2006).

Since its conception (Van Tatenhove et al., 2000), the PAA has made an important contribution to empirical research on policy and governance by helping to put flesh on the bones of structuration theory. This has helped researchers to overcome some of the empirical difficulties in studying governance practices, for example in getting a clear grip on both the substance and the organization of these practices (see also Ayana, 2014). In the last decade, the approach has been employed in a broad spectrum of studies on green space governance in a local or regional context (notable research in this respect includes Arnouts, 2010; Lawrence et al., 2013; Van der Jagt et al., 2016; Van der Zouwen, 2006b; Buizer, 2008; Molin and Konijnendijk, 2014; Ayana, 2014).

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[2] 24-04-2018: 305 results

2.2.1. The duality of structure

The Policy Arrangement Approach departs from Giddens' understanding of a duality between agency and structure (Arts et al., 2006a). With this understanding, Giddens (1979, 1981, 1984) argues that social reality should not be understood by merely focusing on either individual agents or on structures, but by studying the interactions between both. Agency and structure should analytically not be seen as a strict *dualism*, in which both are separate entities to be studied, but as a *duality*, in which both are connected and exercise mutual influence (Willmott, 1999). Giddens (1981: p.54) writes: 'all human action is carried on by knowledgeable agents who both construct the social world through their action, but yet whose action is also conditioned and constrained by the very world of their creation'.

By employing this notion of duality, the PAA embraces critiques on structuralist thinking for ascribing too much power to structures and too little to the capabilities of actors (e.g. Schmidt, 2017; Arts and De Koning, 2017; Schmidt, 2008), as well as critiques on actor-centred approaches for attributing too much power and autonomy to agents (e.g. Shove and Walker, 2010; Behagel et al., 2013). As a consequence, the PAA takes a midway position in the agency-structure debate by putting emphasis on the interaction between the both (Ayana, 2014). In the PAA, agency and structure meet each other in the policy arrangement, where it is emphasized that empirical research needs to study both the actions and views of actors, and the role of structures (Van Leeuwen, 2010).

Compared to actor-centred perspectives, the concept of agency has a different meaning in structuration theory, which is reflected in the PAA. While agency refers to the ability of actors to affect their environment, these actors are guided and influenced by structures, which define available actions (Giddens, 1984). While the actor has some freedom to act autonomously, this should thus be understood within the context of existing structures (Berard, 2005). Even so, individual actors do have the possibility to modify structures by drawing upon them in new ways (Orlikowski, 2000). With this, structure is seen as both 'medium' and 'outcome' of social action: structures are created and maintained through human activity (Giddens, 1984). Social structure is thus not above-and-beyond human agency, but rather internal to it: it has an influence on actors, yet it is also modified by those same actors (Willmott, 1999).

02

2.2.2. The PAA as an analytical framework

With its four analytical dimensions, the PAA provides a holistic and comprehensive perspective on governance as an ongoing process (Ayana, 2014; Buizer, 2008; Liefferink, 2006). The dimension of *discourse* refers to the content or substance of governance and scrutinizes the interpretative schemes that actors use to give meaning to physical and social realities (Hajer, 1995). This includes the views, norms, values and narratives of those involved in a specific arrangement (Arts et al., 2006b). The *actors* dimension refers to the individuals and organizations involved in governance and their specific role in this (Van Tatenhove et al., 2000). The *rules* include laws and regulations, and formal and informal procedures that set the barriers and opportunities for actors to act in a policy process (Van der Zouwen, 2006a). Finally, the dimension of *resources* analyses the financial and material resources and the skills that actors can mobilize to achieve certain outcomes (Arts and Leroy, 2006).

These four dimensions are seen as interlinked: changes in one dimension influence the other three dimensions (Liefferink, 2006). This approach thus recognizes the mutual influence between discourse, rules, resources and actors, where for instance. dynamics in discourse can be the result of a new set of rules, causing a shift in the arrangement as a whole (Buizer, 2008). This interrelatedness is symbolized in the tetrahedron in Figure 2 below, which presents a graphical representation of the analytical dimensions within the PAA. I will come back to these dimensions in paragraph 2.5.
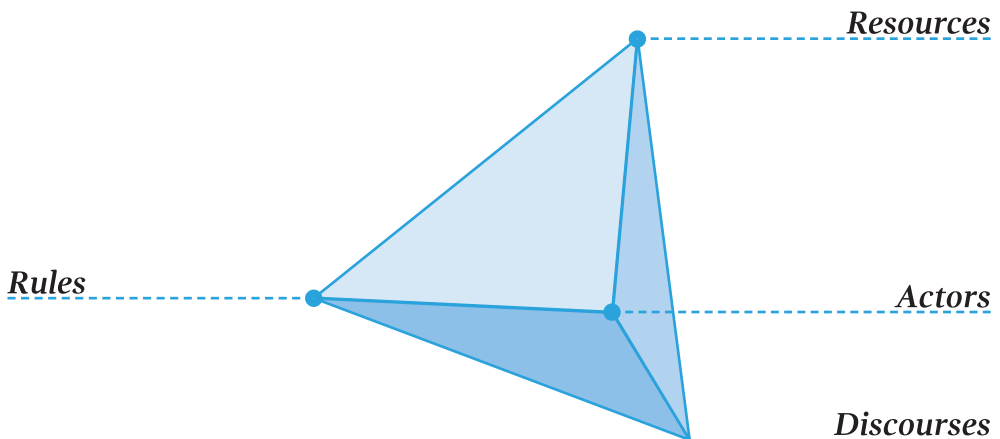
Figure 2: the four dimensions of the PAA and their interconnectedness (adapted from Liefferink, 2006)

2.2.3. From policy domains to local governance

In structuration theory, the basic focus of study is not on agents or structures, but on social *practices*. As Giddens (1984: p.2) explains: 'the basic domain of study of the social sciences [...] is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time'. While scholars in structuration theory employ the concept of practice in this way, their work mainly uses the idea of practice to find a middle way in the structure-agency divide. In fieldwork, the work of Giddens and others in structuration theory has a limited conceptual focus on practices, as it mostly focuses on the ideas of agency and structure in explaining social reality.

This limited conceptual focus on practices is reflected in the PAA, which was originally developed as a neo-institutional, policy-oriented approach for studying governance (Van Tatenhove et al., 2000). Early iterations of the PAA primarily concentrated on studying governance in large-scale policy domains, such as the development of organic agriculture in the Netherlands (Arts and Leroy, 2006). In contrast to my work in this thesis, these studies did not focus on studying local governance and had only a limited conceptual attention for the idea of practices. The original focus of the PAA is therefore rather different from the scope of my work, which explicitly focuses on local practices that involve active citizens in green space governance.

However, this is not to say that the PAA has not been used to study practices. In line with my work in this thesis, other recent studies employing the PAA have focused on the scrutiny of more concrete (spatial) practices within a local domain. Examples of studies that employ the PAA to scrutinize specific local practices are plentiful. Such practices include the development of a park (Lawrence et al., 2013); participation of citizens in local green space management practices (Molin and Konijnendijk, 2014); the interactive development of a plan for developing nature in combination with business opportunities (Buizer, 2008); participatory forest management (Ayana et al., 2017); the development of urban community gardens (Van der Jagt et al., 2017); and local tree and urban forest management (Lawrence et al., 2013). These and other examples highlight that the PAA is nowadays increasingly used to study specific local practices of governance or 'governance arrangements', in the terminology of Arnouts et al. (2012).

2.2.4. A focus on practices

The broad range of recent studies employing the PAA to study governance shows that the PAA is a holistic, comprehensive and also quite flexible approach to study the governance of natural resources. However, my focus on local practices is very different in scope from a focus on the policy domain (Buizer, 2008). While the PAA is often employed to study local governance and active citizenship, this difference in scope is insufficiently addressed – often not problematized at all – by most of the studies that employ it in this way. While scholars such as Arnouts et al. (2012), Van der Jagt et al. (2016), Molin and Konijnendijk (2014) and Van der Zouwen (2006b) have used the PAA in their studies on practices, they do so more or less implicitly. As a consequence, the work of these and other scholars still lacks a specific conceptual focus on *practices* and retains much of the original neo-institutional scope of the PAA.

For this focus on practices, I will turn towards *practice theory*, a body of scientific theory, which builds on structuration theory and is specifically employed to study practices (Berard, 2005; Schatzki et al., 2001). Through a critical assessment of theoretical, methodological and empirical debates on the study of practices, I will show that the PAA has inadequately been fine-tuned to study local governance practices in green space – missing or insufficiently addressing a number of crucial elements. Compared to the PAA, my work has a more local scope and a stronger conceptual focus on practices. For the specific study of local governance practices in the conservation, protection and management of green space, I will identify three key issues that need to be addressed within the PAA:
- A lack of focus on daily human activity;
- A limited focus on the material world;
- A lack of understanding of why and how governance practices come about.

I will first introduce practice theory in paragraph 2.3 and elaborate on important foundations, topics and positions within this body of theory in the subsections of this paragraph. In paragraph 2.4, I will use insights from practice theory to address the three issues, explaining why these have to be attended to within the PAA in order to be able to properly study local governance practices. After this, I will return to the PAA in paragraph 2.5 and present my analytical framework to study active citizenship in green space governance.

2.3 Practice theory

While Giddens (1984) puts emphasis on the concept of practice, structuration theory provides a rather limited focus on the role of practices within the structure-agency duality in both theory and fieldwork (Bräuchler and Postill, 2010). In the 1990s and especially the 2000s, a group of social scientists placed the concept of practice at the core of their work (Bräuchler and Postill, 2010; Reckwitz, 2002b). The work of these scholars has become known as *practice theory* (Reckwitz, 2002b). Practice theory is not uniform in the sense that it is theorized and operationalized in a similar fashion by different scholars (Schatzki et al., 2001; Nicolini, 2012). It has also been applied to many different subject areas, among many others accounting, consumption, technology use, learning, social innovation and decision-making (Nicolini, 2012). Rather than a uniform body of theory, practice theory should be seen as an important movement of thought that puts emphasis on the idea of practice in analysing and explaining social reality (Røpke, 2009; Jonas et al., 2017).

'Social practices' form the basic units of analysis in practice theory. A practice (such as maintaining a garden, driving a car, playing a game, engaging in participatory planning) consists of an organized set of activities which is discernible across time and space (Schatzki, 2002; Reckwitz, 2002b). With the idea of a practice, social reality is understood as being constituted by human activity (Schatzki, 1996; Schatzki, 2012). This social reality is not singular, but consists of a plethora of different practices that each consist of different elements and are carried out by different practitioners (Behagel, 2012; Røpke, 2009). These practitioners have a limited availability of time to engage in practices, leading Røpke (2009) to conclude that practices 'compete for the attention of practitioners' (p. 2493).

In practice theory, human behaviour is not guided by external structures beyond human influence, but rather by principles embedded in practices (Arts et al., 2013b). Agency is therefore intertwined with the situation in which practitioners find themselves, as emphasized in the term *situated agency* (Bevir, 2005). The concept of practice thus takes a middle position in the structure-agency debate as it recognizes the influence of structures, which are seen as both medium and result of practices (Schatzki, 1997; Fuchs, 2003), but also emphasizes the important role of 'practitioners' in shaping or transforming practices (Bourdieu, 1977).

Both agency and institutions are seen as 'indigenous' to practice. This means that institutions are embedded in and negotiated through everyday practices (De Koning and Benneker, 2013). Similarly, agency is exercised through engaging in practices (Behagel, 2012).

2.3.1. The integration of doings, sayings and things

Practice theory rejects dualisms between structure and agency; between individuals and institutions; between 'nature' and 'culture'; and between cognition and action. With this, most practice theorists emphasize the need to assess a practice as a whole while integrating all the above concepts (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). Some researchers use the concept of practice to primarily study the role of objects in human activity; to focus on the idea of language as a discursive practice; or as a tradition reproduced in time by a specific community (Nicolini, 2012). In contrast to these studies, my thesis has a more coordinated practice-oriented outlook on society where the social world is seen as 'a contingent and ever-changing texture of human practices' (Nicolini, 2012: p. 15). In this outlook, practices are the main means of societal order, with both agency and structure being embedded and enacted within practices (Schatzki, 2002).

This constitutive understanding of practices aligns with the characterization of governance systems as being an aggregate of many different governance practices (García, 2006; Blanco et al., 2014; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010), as well as with the important role of language, activity and materiality in governance practices. In recognition of the importance hereof, I adopt the definition of a practice as 'an ensemble of doings, sayings and things in a specific field of activity' (Arts et al., 2013b: p.9). These doings, sayings and things comprise the elements of which a practice is constituted. While a practice consists of such different elements, scholars argue that it cannot be reduced to these individual elements, but should be seen and assessed as a whole (Reckwitz, 2002b; Shove et al., 2012; Schatzki, 1997). When we study a practice, we study the association of these elements (Nicolini, 2017).

Specific elements of one or more practices, such as a discourse or a tool, gain their meaning through the practices in which they are used (Reckwitz, 2002b). Even so, practices can be compared based on the elements of which they consist (Shove et al., 2012). A mobile phone can be used in many different practices, and while it is given its meaning as part of these practices, we can analyse the phone as a materially composed object, how it is verbally represented, for what activities it is

used, et cetera. However, this analysis takes place in the context of the practices in which it is used (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). So, while a mobile phone is a mobile phone in itself, its meaning is made up as part of practices in which it is used: telephoning, mobile banking, texting, et cetera. Similarly, one can employ practice theory to analyse what activities active citizens in green space undertake across different practices or how these citizens legally organize themselves, as long as this is done within the context of these practices.

2.3.2. Practice and materiality

The material world has an important place in many recent iterations of practice theory (Shove et al., 2012; Røpke, 2009; Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Gherardi, 2016; Arts et al., 2013a). These scholars do not see the material world as merely the context in which practices are embedded, but very much as a part of these practices. Practice and materiality are thus interwoven (Schatzki et al., 2001), as emphasized in the term socio-material practices (Orlikowski, 2007; Gherardi, 2016). For example, engaging in a practice of gardening involves specific tools, such as a shovel, and a cycling practice involves a bicycle and also material infrastructure (roads).

In practice theory, there is no primacy of doings over things (Orlikowski, 2007): what people do and say has no primacy over the material world (Reckwitz, 2002a). For posthumanist scholars, including many practice theorists, the material world is an active 'agent' that can influence practices: 'nature is neither a passive surface awaiting the mark of culture nor the end product of cultural performances' (Barad, 2003: p. 827). Nonhuman elements such as natural objects and technological artefacts thus play a constitutive role in producing social life (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011).

A good example of this is how many communication practices were reshaped after the introduction of mobile phone technology (Orlikowski, 2007). Another example is the location of roads, which influences where people drive or cycle. If a new road were to be created, this could have an influence on a person's daily practice of cycling to work if this person changes his or her route because of this new road. Similarly, the introduction of E-bikes has changed cycling practices by increasing the cyclists' speed, thus allowing longer travel distances. Changes in the material world but also technological and/or socio-spatial developments therefore have a potential to influence and change specific practices (Hoffman, 2013). While my main focus in this thesis is on the roles of citizens in green space governance,

it is thus important to realize that the green spaces and their biotic and abiotic components also influence the activities of the practitioners.

While the material world is considered as an active agent in theories of practices, it is recognized that social practices also influence and modify the material world itself (Shove et al., 2012). By planting trees, emitting gasses, creating technological objects and through many other activities, human activity changes the material world. In my study of active citizenship in green space, it is important to understand how these practices affect the material world. After all, nature conservation takes place at the interface between human activity and nature itself (Torkar and McGregor, 2012), and the actions of active citizens will have an influence on the green spaces in which they are active.

2.3.3. Words, symbols and understandings

Practice theory makes an explicit link between cognition and action by recognizing that a practice is not only visible through activity, but that it also gains meaning in the words and symbols that make sense of these activities (Røpke, 2009). Human agency is thus linked to the vocabulary and discourses by which it is influenced (Arts et al., 2013b). When active citizens organize a protest against the implementation of a certain policy, this protest not only has a meaning through the activities of protesting, but also through the vocabulary and symbolism used. In practice theory, doings and saying are thus intertwined (Reckwitz, 2016).

The understanding and interpretation of the material world is also linked to the verbal component of practices. Through their engagement in practices, people also make sense of the materiality that is a part of these practices by verbally representing it. This includes the physical (green) space that is part of the practices studied for this thesis. As West et al. (2006) explain: 'space is produced through social practices, science, planning, and technology [...] and lived and understood through symbols, language and images' (p. 264). With this, space is both materially and culturally represented in practices (Reckwitz, 2016).

2.3.4. Teleoaffectivity

This importance of the verbal in practices is made explicit in the notions of teleology and affectivity (Schatzki, 1996). The concept of teleology emphasizes that a practice is oriented towards an end, a *telos*. This teleology of practice is extremely important – Schatzki (2010) describes it as the prime organizing axis of activity. Practices do not exist in and for themselves, but because the activities

that are part of a practice are performed for the sake of an end. With this, the motivations of individuals and/or groups are understood as being constitutive of the activity in which they engage (Manidis and Scheeres, 2013).

So a practice is always oriented towards a telos. A specific gardening practice might include the watering of plants on one day and the weeding of flower beds on another. However, being part of the same practice, both these activities work towards the same telos of maintaining a nice garden. The notion of a telos highlights that an action within a practice is employed in the light of a purpose, an objective (Seligman et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2011). The concept of teleology therefore indicates a direction or 'future dimension' in practices (Blue and Spurling, 2016), and this teleology can be seen in the goals and in the motivation of those who act (Johnson et al., 2011). Active citizens involved in green space governance engage in a certain practice because they want to accomplish something through this practice: for example, they want to maintain a communal garden in their street.

When studying practices an understanding of how things matter is also important. Schatzki (2010) calls this affectivity. While teleology indicates the end towards which a practice is performed, affectivity is concerned with what motivates practitioners towards this end. Affects are 'states of physical arousal, of pleasure or displeasure, directed at some definite person, object or idea' (Reckwitz, 2016: p. 118-119). Residents might help maintain that communal garden in their street because they like being outside, care about biodiversity, like to interact with their neighbours, or get some other emotional fulfilment from doing so. In practice theory, the motivation to perform such a practice is not merely seen as an attribute of the individual, but also as a property of the practice that incentivizes people to engage in it (Reckwitz, 2016). Since people interact with other people and the material world in their role as practitioners, the affectivity of a practice is interpreted within this practice and not seen as merely a trait of the individual practitioner (Reckwitz, 2016) – although this does not mean that individual preferences do not differ among practitioners.

Why people participate in a practice is thus largely dependent on what they are prepared to act for, what they consider suitable actions towards this goal, and on how things matter to them: it depends on the teleology and affectivity of a practice. People 'do what makes sense for them to do' (Schatzki, 2001: p. 56). As Reckwitz (2016) underlines, materiality can also sort effects. With this, the

green spaces that are governed by active citizens can be an important source of *teleoaffectivity*, which is understood as the ways in which teleology and affectivity are embodied in activity (Schatzki, 1997).

2.3.5. Stability, dynamics and institutionalization

The idea of practice assumes some degree of regularity and recurrence in order for practices to be visible across space and time (Røpke, 2009). Practices tend to stabilize and reproduce themselves unless there is a reason for change (Shove et al., 2012; Reckwitz, 2002b). Even so, practices are dynamic and have a temporal dimension (Lizardo, 2010): practices change over time, new practices emerge and old practices disappear (Shove et al., 2012). While practices are open to change, there is a contingency in this (Behagel et al., 2017): human activity is never fully predetermined and is therefore impossible to predict with absolute certainty (Nicolini, 2017).

A seed of change might stem from the social situation (new actors entering the governance scene, a new law being introduced), the material situation (the introduction of a new tool or technology, the migration of a certain species into a specific green space), or from a change in teleoaffectivity (new end-goals or the demise of old ones). In any case, such a seed has to be in line with the existing teleoaffectivity of a practice, coincide with a change in this, or spark the rise of a new practice (Shove and Spurling, 2013). Practices of horse riding are a good example of the shifting teleoaffectivity, horses used to be an important mode of transportation, but nowadays, people mostly ride horses for recreation and sports. A practice only exists for as long as it is performed (Nicolini, 2017) and when a practice loses its telos, there is no longer a reason for people to be involved in it (Schatzki, 2010).

Dynamics within a practice can be observed in a change in one or more elements of which it consists (see e.g. Shove and Walker, 2010). When a practice changes, the association of these elements also does. For example, a sporting practice changes when new rules are introduced (Collinet et al., 2013). This might produce new tactical strategies and attract new practitioners for this sport, but can also change its perceived identity (ibid.). When residents taking care of a local garden introduce a new gardening tool, this may change the way they remove unwanted vegetation, which in turn can have an impact on the presence of certain insect species in this garden.

In both structuration theory and practice theory, the emergence of macro-social changes is found in practices (Giddens, 1984; Hargreaves et al., 2013). When we talk about a shift from government to governance, about political modernization or about a rise of active citizenship, these trends are in essence a result of changes across many practices. Social structures 'exist in and through the productive practices and relationships of human actors' (Fuchs, 2003: p.133). A change in social structures should thus be understood as a result of changing practices (Hargreaves et al., 2013). With this, practice theory sees 'external' institutions as embedded in practices (Behagel et al., 2013). Although there are some disputes among authors, the term *institutions* is used by many practice scholars to highlight elements that are deeply embedded within practices (Røpke, 2009; Schatzki et al., 2001; Collinet et al., 2013; Reckwitz, 2002b; Kostova and Roth, 2002).

In practice theory, institutions are thus 'structured by the routines of social practices' (Reckwitz, 2002b: p.255). Institutions therefore indicate elements that are routinely reproduced in practices (Kostova and Roth, 2002; Reckwitz, 2002b). Examples of such institutions can include laws (tax regulations, legal ownership contracts), cultural traditions (driving/walking/cycling on a certain side of the road, using a certain language, shaking hands when introducing oneself), the use of certain objects or technologies (mobile phones, electricity) or standardized ways of working (using email to communicate with colleagues). Institutionalized elements are seen as such because they span various social practices (but not necessarily all practices). Because they span various practices, institutionalized elements work like 'glue' within practices, reinforcing their stability or instigating renewal once these elements are changing.

With this understanding, rules and laws only become institutionalized through their embedding in concrete practices (Buitelaar et al., 2011; Collinet et al., 2013). When a new law prevents farmers from using a certain pesticide, this law has become institutionalized as soon as farmers change their practices because of this pesticide ban. This might already happen before the law is formally introduced if farmers start to adapt their practices in anticipation of this ban. It might also happen at the moment that the ban is formally introduced if farmers immediately act upon these rules once they are formalized. This law might also become institutionalized sometime after its introduction if farmers take some time to adapt – or not at all if rules are not acted upon by anybody. A change in institutions can thus be understood as a change of institutionalized elements *across* practices (Hargreaves et al., 2013).

2.3.6. Praxeology

In empirical research, it is often difficult to see what exactly comprises a practice and what elements are part of it. Is washing the car a practice in itself or is it a part of the practice of car driving? And how about washing hands after visiting the toilet? Is this a practice in itself, a part of the practice of visiting the toilet, a part of the practice of hygiene, an element of both practices, or is it perhaps all three? Here, major difficulties become visible: it has proven to be notoriously difficult to describe what exactly constitutes a practice and how it can be observed (Røpke, 2009; Krott and Giessen, 2014)) – where one practice begins and another one ends, and which elements are part of a practice and which are not. This has been, and still is, a major point of discussion among practice theorists. Many of the most prominent practice scholars have written about how practices should be analysed and observed in the field (e.g. Nicolini, 2017; Schatzki, 2002; Reckwitz, 2002b; Shove et al., 2012; Røpke, 2009; such as Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). These authors present a broad range of diverging views depending on the topic and field of study.

In this light, to study social practices, researchers should strive to understand these practices by engaging with these in the field, rather than trying to define defining what exactly constitutes a practice from the outside (Schmidt, 2017). 'One has to engage with practice itself and allow the phenomenon to bite back' (Nicolini, 2017: p.25). A practice thus unfolds itself during research. This process of understanding practices through engaging with them in the field is called *praxeologizing* and integrates theoretical and empirical understandings of practice(s) in an iterative research process (Schmidt, 2017). A good framework for studying social practices needs to remain open, and the idea of praxeology is therefore a central principle for conducting practice-oriented research. This certainly does not mean that a research framework for studying practices should not provide guidelines for how and where to look, based on the topic of research. However, it does imply that such a framework should be 'allowing the world to speak through it' (Nicolini, 2017: p.25), rather than strictly predefining how practices will be identified in the field.

This praxeological point of departure is an important epistemological starting point for the analytical framework presented below. My employed definition of a practice as an 'ensemble of doings, sayings and things in a specific field of activity' (Arts et al., 2013b: p.9) does not exactly specify what is part of a practice and what is not, and also does not strictly specify what exactly constitutes the doings,

sayings and things of these practices. Nonetheless, the principle of praxeology does recognize the need of a starting point to provide some concrete handles for fieldwork and analysis (Jonas et al., 2017). This is where I return to where I started: to the Policy Arrangement Approach.

2.4 The PAA as a framework for studying governance practices

In section 2.2.4, I have introduced three key issues that the PAA needs to address for the specific study of local governance practices in the conservation, protection and management of green space:
- A lack of focus on daily human activity;
- A limited focus on the material world;
- A lack of understanding of why and how governance practices come about.

In this section, I will return to the above three points. For each of these points, I will start by explaining why these are important issues that the PAA needs to address in order to study local governance practices, followed by a discussion and clarification of how this will be incorporated in my research. After this, I will return to the PAA and present my analytical framework to study active citizenship in green space governance.

2.4.1. A focus on human activity
A focus on human activity is of central importance to understand how the green environment is being managed and modified (Torkar and McGregor, 2012). The notion of activity or 'doings' has a central position in practice theory and practice-oriented analytical frameworks, where it provides a principal point of departure (Schatzki, 2012; Arts et al., 2014; Nicolini, 2017). But whilst the importance of daily activities in shaping social reality is very much central in the notion of practice, the notion of 'doings' often remains implicit in the PAA. With this implicit focus on activity, the PAA generally pays little attention to what happens when an arrangement 'hits the ground' (Ayana et al., 2017: p.34).

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That is not to say that the PAA completely overlooks human activities, which can be (and have been) studied as contributions made by actors; as the physical manifestation of discourses; as a mobilization of resources; or as a compliance with or enactment of implicit or explicit rules. However, the notion of human activity remains implicit in most research frameworks that employ the PAA as it is generally interpreted as an attribute of one or more other dimensions. This might not be problematic when studying policy arrangements in an institutional context, but in my research it is very much the daily on-site activities that create and maintain specific green spaces (Burton et al., 2014). A clearer focus on human activity is therefore necessary for this thesis.

In local arrangements through which green space is governed, the activities are very much interwoven with the four dimensions offered by the PAA. Simply attributing the activities to one of the other dimensions would not do justice to the key role of activity in practices. By merely expressing human activity as a manifestation of discourse one would assign a primacy to discourse, while in practice theory doings and sayings are equal (Behagel et al., 2017). By solely explaining activities as an attribute of an actor, one would place agency above structures. In contrast, merely seeing activity as an enactment of rules would result in an overly institutional account. A narrow focus on resources in explaining human activity would also result in a simplified account of activity as merely an employment of resources. A focus on human activity therefore needs to align with a focus on all the other four dimensions. Activities are thus not merely an attribute of a single dimension of the PAA: they are very much at the heart of the local governance practice and connected to all four dimensions. For the purpose of my research, I will therefore add a fifth dimension to the PAA: *activities* (Figure 3).
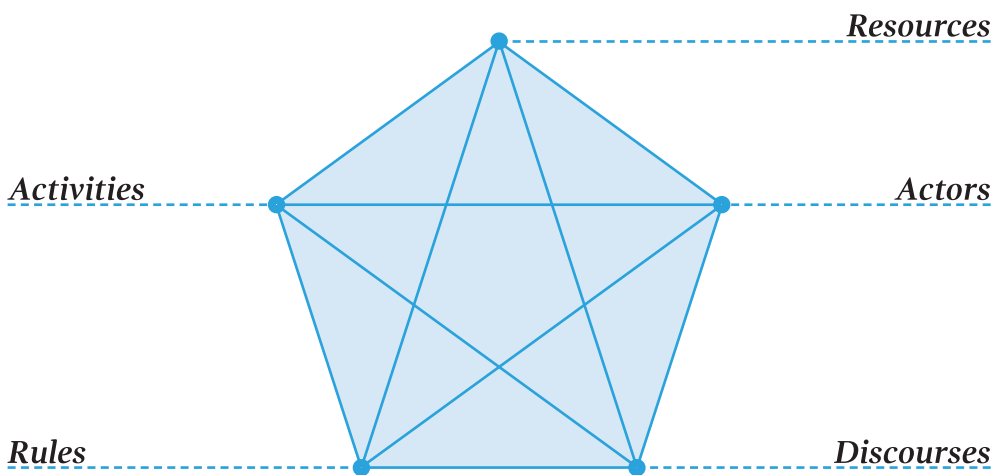
Figure 3: the five dimensions of my analytical framework for studying local governance practices

2.4.2. A focus on materiality

While this thesis spatially focuses on green spaces, nature and landscape, the PAA generally pays little attention to the role of materiality in the policy arrangement. In studies where it is discussed, the material world is seen as a resource that actors can strategically employ to achieve certain outcomes. In this respect, Buizer (2008), Van der Zouwen (2006b) and Van der Jagt et al. (2017) stress that land is an important resource, and the use of certain material 'tools' or 'instruments' is also discussed in studies that employ the PAA. However, in such research the material world is generally perceived as merely a passive resource that is to be mobilized by people.

Yet, as many practice scholars have argued, the material world is an important and integral component of practices (Reckwitz, 2002a; Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Shove et al., 2012). In practice theory, the material world is seen as an active agent that is not merely the subject of practices but actively influences them (Barad, 2003). In my research, things like extreme weather events or the migration of a rare species into a certain area have material agency in the practices through which green spaces are governed. The activities of human agents in turn also modify or maintain the green spaces, and can thus have an influence on for instance species composition and stormwater retention.

The activities of citizens in a specific green space are thus influenced by and connected with the character of this space. Simply put: people will not pollard willows if there are no willows to be pollarded. They generally also will not try to plant willow trees if the soil is not considered appropriate for these trees. Similarly, different types of green space will likely be linked to different sets of rules and formal regulations on for instance water safety, subject to different discourses on, say, the protection of bird species, et cetera. Hence, the material world is not merely a resource for actors to strategically employ: it is also an agent, a locus of activity, a site that is verbally represented, and a place connected to and embedded in human regulations.

The limited position of the material world in the Policy Arrangement Approach does not require a fundamental redefinition of the PAA per se. However, it does require a broader consideration of the role of materiality and an explicit recognition of the relationship between materiality and practice. As I discussed in section 2.3.1, practice is always linked to materiality (Figure 4). This entanglement between practice and materiality is not a new dimension in my analytical framework, but more of a general principle in recognition of this intertwinement.

In my framework, materiality can be seen in all five dimensions: as material flows (activities), human bodies (actors), natural resources or physical tools (resources), written regulations or for example traffic signs (rules) and materialized meanings, for example in written symbols (discourse). With this, the PAA can be used to holistically discuss the role of materiality in practices, recognizing it as an integral part of the (spatial) governance practice.
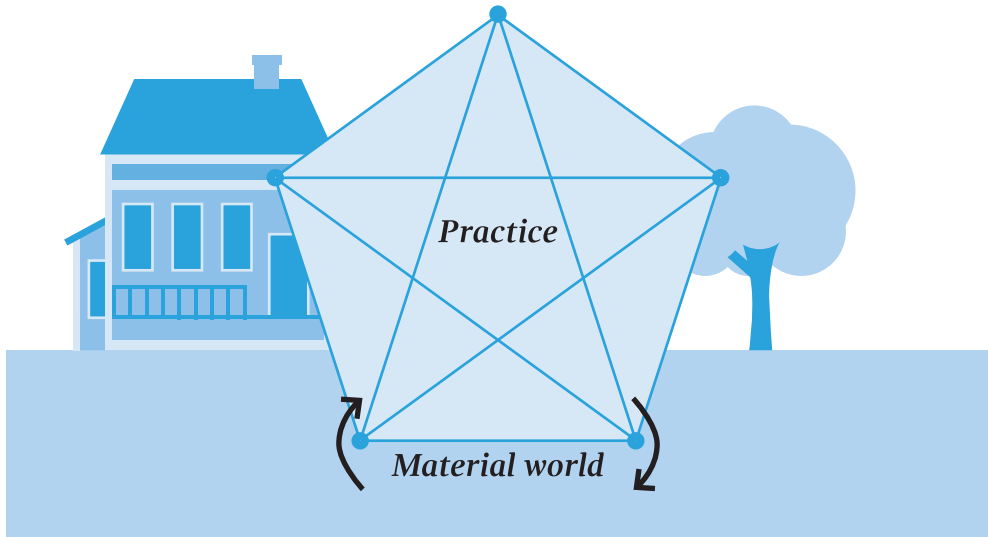
Figure 4: the entwinement of practices and the material world

2.4.3. An understanding of why practices exist

People engage in certain practices because there is a reason for them to do so (Seligman et al., 2013). As explained in 2.3.4, the notion of teleoaffectivity emphasizes that practitioners affectively orient their activities towards a telos (Schatzki, 1997). This telos concerns the predicted or estimated consequences of action and highlights the end to which a practice is performed (Schatzki, 1996; Johnson et al., 2011), while affectivity concerns what motivates practitioners towards this end (Schatzki, 2010) and encompasses 'states of physical arousal, of pleasure or displeasure, directed at some definite person, object or idea' (Reckwitz, 2016: p. 118-119).

These notions are not central in the PAA, where a broader focus on teleology and affectivity is lacking. Yet, it is important to recognize that active citizens do need to have a reason to engage in green space governance: after all, the motivations of practitioners are entwined with their actions (Manidis and Scheeres, 2013). Like

all practices, the practices I have studied for this thesis are thus oriented towards a future dimension (Shove and Spurling, 2013). A shift in the elements of which a practice is composed has to work towards the existing telos of a practice, coincide with a change in telos, or be a cause for the rise of a new practice (Schatzki, 2010).

In order to understand how and why practices emerge, change and disappear, it is thus of key importance to study the teleology and affectivity of these practices. In my study, teleoaffectivity involves the intended outcomes in terms of the effects that are realized, but also the personal fulfilment and other personal and social benefits that motivate active citizens to engage in certain practices in their green environment. As emphasized by Schatzki (2010), all 'sayings', 'doings' and 'things' in a practice are oriented towards a telos. The practice as a whole can therefore be seen as an expression of teleoaffectivity.

Therefore, the telos is not so much a dimension that is to be analysed, but rather the prime organizing axis towards which all dimensions are oriented (Figure 5). Rather than a new dimension or a reinterpretation of an existing one, this notion requires a reinterpretation or contextualization of the governance practice as a whole: not just as a practice that exists in and for itself, but as a practice that affectively serves as a means to an end for its practitioners. With this, my adoption of teleoaffectivity points towards a need to understand the raison d'être of these practices.
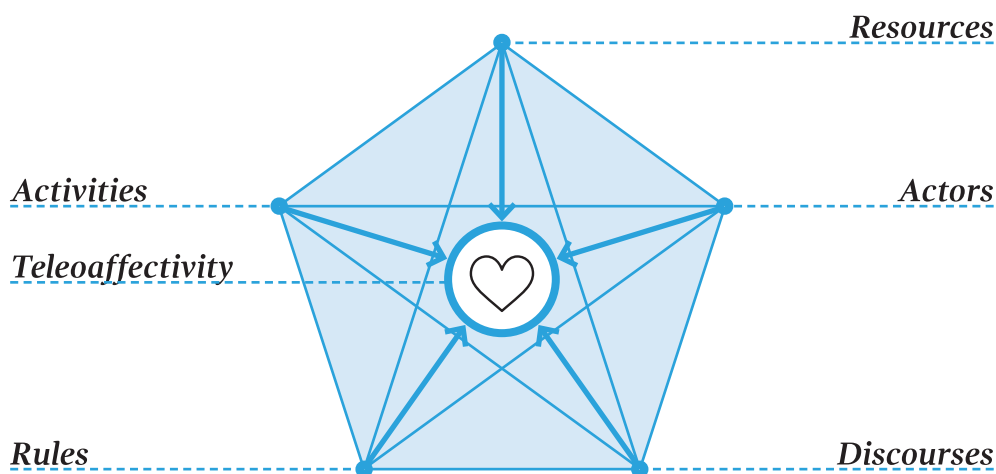
Figure 5: the orientation of a practice and its elements towards the telos

2.5 The PAA as an analytical framework in this thesis

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In my fieldwork, I used the five dimensions *actors*, *activities*, *discourse*, *rules* and *resources* as sensitizing concepts to investigate and describe relevant elements of local governance practices. These five dimensions do not merely 'add up' to form the practice: like in the original PAA, they are very much interwoven and their interrelatedness is crucial for an in-depth understanding of specific arrangements or practices (Liefferink, 2006).

While I focus on governance practices rather than on policy arrangements, my framework for studying practices with the PAA still shares a number of similarities with the original approach. As Arts and Van Tatenhove (2004) also recognize, there are important similarities between the notions of a policy arrangement and of a practice, as both aim to grasp social dynamics in the interplay of agency and structures. In line with the notion of practice, the PAA also recognizes that a policy arrangement is more than just the sum of its parts and that its elements derive their meaning from the broader arrangement in which they are embedded. Also in line is the notion that these elements or dimensions mutually influence each other, with changes in one element often resulting in shifts in others and thus in the arrangement or practice as a whole. Like practice theory, the PAA is thus a holistic, dynamic and context-sensitive approach.

2.5.1. Actors

With the dimension of actors, I study the people and organizations involved in governance practices (Van Tatenhove et al., 2000). Actors are involved in these practices for the sake of their teleoaffectivity – they engage in governance because they want to achieve a certain goal.

My study of actors includes an analysis of who is involved in a governance practice as well as a study of the roles of and relationships between actors (Arts et al., 2006b). In order to specifically focus the PAA-analyses on practices, I will also adopt the notion of *situated agency*. This notion emphasizes that agency always takes place in a broader context of rules, resources, discourses and the physical world (Bevir, 2005). In practice theory, agency is thus strongly entwined with the situation in which practitioners find themselves (Behagel, 2012). This is somewhat

in line with the PAA's recognition of an interdependency between the role of actors and the dimensions of discourse, resources and rules (Liefferink, 2006; Leroy and Arts, 2006). In my study of governance practices, the notion of situated agency makes this explicit by positioning agency within practices.

In PAA-fieldwork, the dimension of actors often includes an examination of the coalitions that these actors form (Van Leeuwen, 2010). Such a coalition is seen as 'a group of cooperating actors which to a certain extent share resources, rules of the game and/or [...] discourses' (Van der Zouwen, 2006b: , p.28). Supporting coalitions support dominant discourses or rules of the game, while challenging coalitions challenge these (Arts and Van Tatenhove, 2004). Citizens form such coalitions in many local practices, including those regarding green space governance, sometimes also in cooperation with other actors: they collectively adopt a group name, formulate joint objectives and usually set up some sort of internal governing structures (Van Dam, 2016). As a result, the vast majority of local governance practices discussed in this thesis are closely associated with such actor coalitions.

2.5.3. Activities

As part of a shift in focus from the policy domain towards the governance practice in this thesis, I have added *activities* as a fifth dimension to the analytical framework offered by the PAA. This focus on activity is an important appeal of practice-based approaches (Nicolini, 2017) and, as discussed before, very much necessary to tailor the PAA towards a study of governance practices. In this, the activities that active citizens employ serve as the physical actions that work towards the telos of a practice.

With the dimension of activities, I focus on understanding the 'doings' through which these agents engage with the material world. Practices can be observed and analysed through people's performance of actions in the field (Schatzki, 1997; Bourdieu, 1977; Røpke, 2009). In green space governance, such activities can range from the planting of trees to protesting against a certain spatial development, from monitoring the presence of certain species to teaching others about the environment.

The dimension of activities enables the researcher to adequately study the 'doings', the human activity that has a central position in practice theory (Schatzki, 2012; Arts et al., 2014). My emphasis on activity is also of a central

relevance in order to understand how people maintain and modify their green environment (Torkar and McGregor, 2012), as these activities also incur material flows. It is through physically engaging in certain activities that people who are involved in practices of green space governance influence the material world and produce certain environmental, ecological, social, cultural or economic outcomes.

2.5.4. Discourse

With the dimension of discourse, I focus on the verbal and symbolic aspects of governance practices. A discourse can be described as 'a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities' (Hajer, 1995: p. 44). The dimension of discourse is thus concerned with the storylines and visions of those involved in practices. It is through 'the verbal' that people make sense of both the material and the social world, and this verbal component is an integral part of all practices (Arts et al., 2013a). For a more in-depth understanding of how and why practices develop, attention therefore needs to be paid to how these discourses are perceived and socially constructed, and to how they are embedded in social practices (Buizer, 2008).

In line with Hajer's definition (1995), it is important to note that my understanding of discourse is thus not limited to a strictly linguistic focus, but assesses the use of this language in the real world. As Buizer (2008) argues, discourse in the PAA is not about the understanding of language per se, but about understanding the use of this language within the material world and within specific practices. With this, discourse is intersubjective as it is formulated in the interaction between people. It is important to realize that materiality is also enacted through discourse (Barad, 2003): words and symbols are interpretations of the material world and also draw upon rules and resources, enacting them in the process. This is in line with my practice-based perspective and the link between doings, sayings and things in practice theory (Arts et al., 2013a).

In the PAA, the dimension of discourse refers to the substance or content of governance (Arts and Leroy, 2006; Van Tatenhove et al., 2000). My study of discourse focuses on ensembles of norms, values, beliefs, problem definitions, approaches, understandings, objectives and other verbal constructs in governance practices – as long as these provide meaning to physical and social realities (Hajer, 1995). In this, I recognize that discourses can (co-)exist on different levels: general ideas about the organization of society (for instance a vision on equality between

people) as well as specific ideas about concrete policy problems (for instance how to manage a specific park) can both be seen as a form of discourse (Liefferink, 2006).

While all dimensions of a governance practice work towards its telos, it is often through discourse that the teleoaffectivity of a practice becomes most clearly 'visible' in the field. The objectives of coalitions of active citizens, often intersubjectively formulated as important sensitizing discourses, are an indication of what motivates them to act (Schatzki, 1997) and through this can help in identifying the telos towards which the practice is oriented. This is closely related to the motivation of actors to adopt or promote a certain discourse (Arts and Van Tatenhove, 2004) and/or engage in a practice: the affectivity (Schatzki et al., 2001). This underlines how important it is to analyse discourses when trying to understand the nature and orientation of practices of self-governance.

2.5.5. Rules

With the dimension of rules, I study the opportunities and barriers for actors to act in governance practices (Van der Zouwen, 2006b). Rules can be seen as 'procedures of action' (Giddens, 1984) that potentially 'influence the course of activity' (Schatzki, 1997) or posit an 'implicit guidance' (Bourdieu, 1977) on the activities of practitioners. While there are some differences between these authors, they agree that these rules are not set in stone: while rules guide actors, they do not condition them, because people also have the agency to do things differently. When people ignore a red light (a materialization of a traffic rule) while driving, they use their situated agency as a driver to ignore the rules of the game.

Even so, an established and shared set of rules usually provides stability in a practice, and practices will generally establish a set of rules over time (Collinet et al., 2013). These rules help to organize activities and 'govern' practices towards the telos (Schatzki, 1997). Through these rules, actors agree on how certain activities should be performed within a practice, how resources can be used, who is allowed to do what, and for what purpose. Rules may be formal (think of laws, regulations, formal appointments) or informal (cultural aspects, informal rules, informal appointments) and can influence various aspects of the governance process (Arts et al., 2006a). In some cases, complying with formal rules can also be seen as a necessity for people to be able to legally engage in a certain practice in order to proceed towards its telos. If one ignores a red traffic light, the eventual result might be losing one's driver's licence.

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In the PAA, the rules define 'which norms are legitimate, how issues may be raised; agendas set; interests articulated; policies formulated; decisions made; and measures implemented, e.g. by which procedures, by which allocation of tasks, and by which division of competencies between actors and organisations' (Arts and Van Tatenhove, 2004: p. 342).

In practice theory, rules are not externally imposed upon practices but very much a part of them: rules are articulated and (re)produced in practices (Behagel et al., 2013). In the example above, most people driving their car will stop at an intersection if the traffic lights are red. They do not do so merely because it is the law – some laws are acted upon, while others are not – but because doing so has become an integral part of the practice of driving. While rules can be externally formulated through for example the implementation of a new law, they are interpreted and negotiated by practitioners in the material world (De Koning and Benneker, 2013).

In this thesis, my study of rules includes a focus on relevant formal laws, policies, rules and regulations as well as informal procedures and cultural traditions that are part of – or have become relevant for – local governance practices. Such rules can be found on the European, national, regional and local level. A notable example of such rules is the protected status of certain green spaces, which might manifest in the European Natura 2000 policy but can also relate to local policies by the municipality. My specific focus is on how these rules are embedded within practices and how they guide the activities of practitioners.

2.5.6. Resources

I use this dimension to study the wide variety of resources that can be mobilized by actors (Arts and Leroy, 2006). In the PAA, resources can be *put to use* by actors to achieve certain outcomes (Buizer, 2008). Such resources include money, property rights, tools and equipment, legitimacy, knowledge, information, charisma and land (Arts and Leroy, 2006; Van der Zouwen, 2006b). In practice theory, resources enable a certain task and work towards a certain outcome connected to the telos of a practice. Something being a resource is not a given: a resource becomes a resource through its use in practice (Nicolini, 2017). Gasoline has become an important resource because we use it as fuel in many transportation practices. Money is an important resource because we can use it to purchase materials, goods or services – its value being dependent on a set of established rules (Schatzki, 1997).

With my focus on green spaces, the material world is an important focal point in my studies. A green space can be seen as a resource for recreation, a tree as a resource for wood production, and a local garden as a resource for increasing the liveability of a street. Yet, while the material world is oftentimes used as a resource, I also consider the green spaces themselves as active agents that are entangled with the practices situated in these spaces (Orlikowski, 2000). Within this context, tools such as a lawnmower or a chainsaw are resources that physically enable the performance of a certain activity. However, the way in which these tools can be employed is dependent on the physical characteristics of this space – for instance the presence of certain tree species or the soil structure.

As regards resources, I would also like to focus some attention on the concept of power, which is an important concept in the PAA (Arts and Van Tatenhove, 2004). In the PAA, the use of resources in the policy arrangement relates to mechanisms of exercising influence (Liefferink, 2006), as the use of a resource can be seen as exercising power over people or things (Giddens, 1984). Power can thus be attributed to those who have resources available to them to employ in order to accomplish certain outcomes (Arts and Van Tatenhove, 2004). Since resources are generally not equally divided among people, this can lead to differences in power among agents.

2.5.7. Summary and overview

Figure 6 presents an overview of my analytical framework and shows how I have used the PAA and the points I discussed above to study practices in the field. The practices are situated in and entwined with the material world. These practices are carried out by practitioners, who interact with the material world by engaging in practices. Agents engage in these practices for the sake of an end, a telos, and the affectivity is what motivates them to do so. For my focus on governance, I use five analytical dimensions to study these practices: actors, activities, rules, resources and discourse. Through their embeddedness within a social practice, these elements all work towards the same telos.
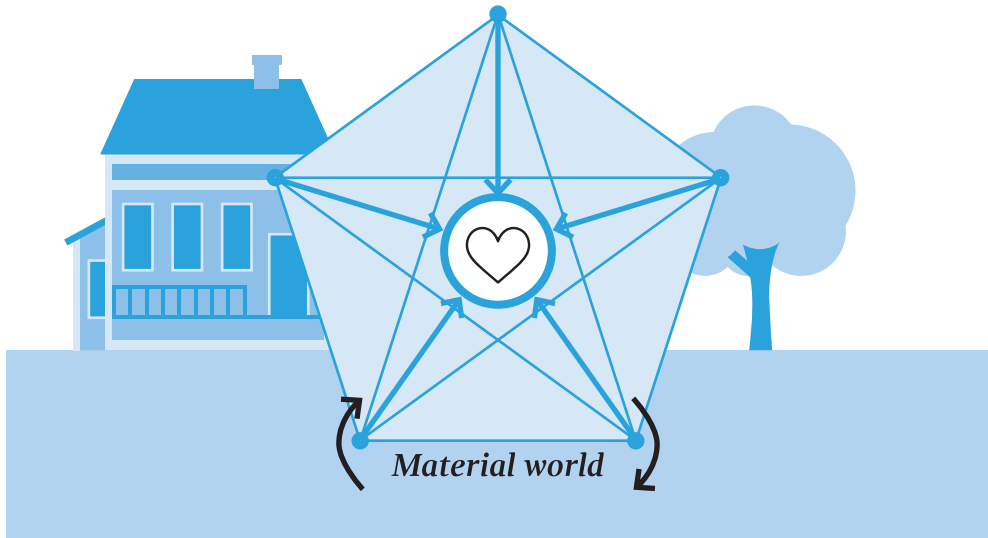
Figure 6: an overview of the analytical framework used for this thesis

This holistic approach does not mean that one cannot focus on a specific dimension or element to study it across practices. As Orlikowski (2007) and Shove et al. (2012) have shown, certain elements of practices can be studied in themselves and practices can also be compared on specific elements. This means that I can for example study across practices what resources active citizens employ in green space governance, or whether these citizens are active within or outside of protected nature reserves – without necessarily studying these practices as a whole. So, while this framework focuses on practices, these practices are not the only subject of study per se and this analytical framework can be used somewhat flexibly to study specific elements – depending on the focus and scope of the specific study. However, it is through the practices in which they are embedded that specific elements gain their meaning.

Throughout this thesis, I use practice theory to strengthen the PAA as an analytical lens to study practices of governance. Within the empirical chapters, as part of the praxeological learning process in this PhD-research and aligning with the methodological differences between these chapters, there is a slight shift in focus. This focus departs from a mostly critical neo-institutional view on practices in chapters 4 and 5, where my main addition to the PAA is an explicit focus on activities. I also employ a limited focus on aspects of teleoaffectivity through my study of objectives in chapters 4 and 5, and work on the relationship between practices and materiality in chapter 5. I make use of more in-depth practice theory

descriptions in chapters 6 and especially 7, where practice theory, materiality and the notion of teleoaffectivity play a central role in the analysis. Details about the specific theoretical and analytical focus of each study are included in the respective chapters.

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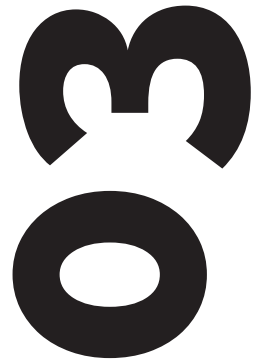
Chapter 3

Research methodology

3.1 Research design
- layered approach

The methodological approach of this thesis is based on a 3-layered multi-method design. In this research design, quantitative research methods play an important role in conducting general observations about active citizenship in green space governance, while qualitative research has an important role for an in-depth understanding of specific practices. The empirical work in this thesis starts with a broad and somewhat general empirical focus on a large number of practices and zooms in on specific practices in the second and especially the third layer (see Figure 7).
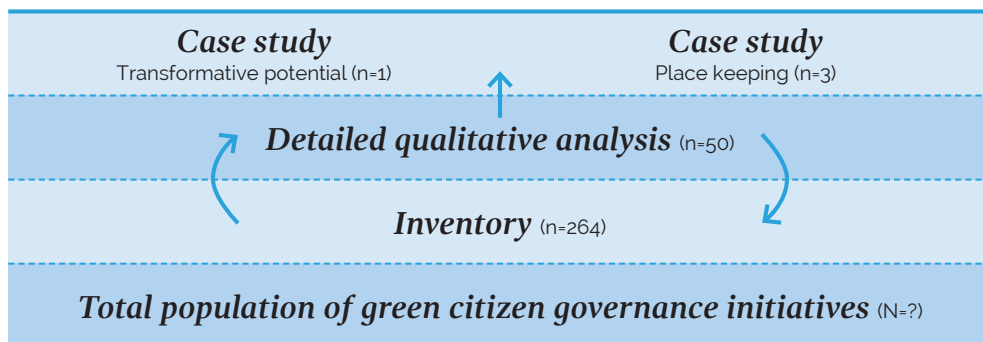
Figure 7: the layered design of this thesis

During the work for this thesis, each subsequent study was grounded in and inspired by results from previous layers. Through a different focus and methodology for each layer, a rich and varied picture of the phenomenon of study has been developed (Kara, 2015). With the use of multiple methods across the three layers, my research design provides a methodological pluralism or 'triangulation', which can increase the reliability of results obtained in the scientific research process and is advertised by a variety of scholars (Heesen et al., 2016; Littig and Leitner, 2017; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012). Such a multi-method design strengthens the empirical analysis of practices by combining different forms of evidence and presenting an analysis on different levels of the population (Browne et al., 2014). The layered design also allows for iterations within and to a lesser extent between the layers, where certain experiences and findings can be used to sharpen others.

The lack of baseline studies and a clear 'state-of-the-art' on active citizenship in green space governance is the point of departure for the first layer of this research design (Figure 7). An *inventory* and analysis of 264 different practices functions as an important first step in providing an overview on characteristics and diversity of green self-governance (chapter 4). The second layer progresses upon this study with a *detailed qualitative analysis* of a subsample of 50 practices in order to gain more reliable knowledge and a deeper understanding (chapter 5) of these practices. In the third layer, a total of four in-depth *case studies* has been conducted with the aim of gaining in-depth knowledge on a number of specific issues that came up in my study of literature and during the analysis in the prior two layers (chapters 6 and 7).

3.1.1. Inventory

The main aim of the large inventory is to provide insight into the scope, size and key characteristics of active citizenship in green space governance. It specifically addresses the lack of baseline data and generalized insight into the nature and diversity of active citizenship in green space governance.

The inventory encompasses a cross-sectional multi-method study which has been conducted in order to explore and characterize a large number of practices that involve active citizens in green space governance. While qualitative research designs are predominant in studies of practices, it has been shown that practices can also be studied in quantitative and mixed-method studies (Littig and Leitner, 2017; Browne et al., 2014). Data collection for the inventory included a study of existing scientific and non-scientific literature; a search for relevant practices through contacts with experts in the field; an extensive web search; and also a call on the internet and social media where people were asked to contact the researchers if they knew of specific practices. In this way, a total number of 264 practices has been collected, described and analysed within available time-limits.

As the total population of these practices is unknown, results from the inventory cannot statistically infer to a total population. As a consequence, the starting point for data collection in the inventory does not rest in a subsample of a known population. Rather, by providing evidence at the level of the broader population, my work contributes to a more reliable overview of such practices (Browne et al., 2014). The explicit aim in all of this work was to capture the full range and diversity of practices that involve active citizens in green space governance.

For the analysis, all inventoried practices were included in a large database. Qualitative data that was found on the practices was written down for each of the five dimensions of the analytical framework (discourse, actors, activities, rules and resources). Based on a first round of qualitative analysis, this data was then categorized in order to provide an overview of relevant elements. The comparative analysis of all 264 practices included qualitative methods, most notably coding and mind-mapping, and quantitative methods, most notably categorizing/scoring, cross tabulations and statistical cluster analyses. As a final step, the results of all analyses were integrated into a typology which identifies 9 different forms of green self-governance. This typology was created through several iterations with the detailed analysis. The details of the overall analysis are discussed in chapter 4, while more information on the typology can be found in chapter 5.

3.1.2. Detailed qualitative analysis

The detailed qualitative analysis progresses upon the inventory and has been specifically developed to expand on this first layer. It explicitly focuses on understanding the effects of different types of green self-governance.

Compared to the inventory, this analysis includes a more extensive study of a wider range of data sources. This way, it provides a more in-depth and more reliable analysis at the level of the individual practice for all five dimension of the analytical framework. For this purpose, a subsample of 50 practices has been analysed in more detail, including an additional collection of research data via interviews and an in-depth analysis of written material. Questionnaires for the interviews were tailor-made in order to fill knowledge gaps in available data.

The 50 practices included in this analysis were selected via a stratified sample on basis of our typology. Stratified sampling is a conscious strategy that strives to include a broader diversity of a population in order to be more inclusive of the diversity across these strata (Kumar, 2005). In a stratified sample, the study population is divided into a number of subsets or *strata*, and a specific sample size is then chosen for each of these strata (Tanikella and Smith, 2008). Using the 9 ideal types as strata, this sampling procedure provided the opportunity to focus on specific types of green self-governance that might be less represented in a random sample. As a result, each ideal type is represented at least four times in this sample of the 50 practices. With this, stratified sampling contributes to a larger diversity and inclusiveness.

Like in the inventory, data was included in a large database that was specifically created for this purpose. The explicit aim in this new database was to describe these practices with more detail and precision. The eventual analysis was mostly a comparative qualitative endeavour based on interpretation and understanding. This was first done for each ideal type separately, where a study of these descriptions was integrated into a narrative. As a second step, an overall analysis of the 50 practices was also conducted. In this overall analysis, the practices were compared on different elements. This step included some quantification to e.g. calculate the percentage of practices realizing certain effects. More information on this analysis can be found in chapter 5.

3.1.3. Case studies

The case studies are conducted with the explicit aim to study specific practices in detail. These cases function to learn more about the role of active citizenship in place-keeping (chapter 6) and about the transformative potential of active citizenship in green space governance (chapter 7). As examples of interesting practices, these case studies are not about proving certain hypotheses, but rather about 'learning' the important lessons that they offer in their specific context (see Flyvbjerg, 2006).

A case study is a methodological approach for the in-depth study of complex social and natural phenomena. A social-science case study refers to a practical real life situation in which, in contrast to experimental settings, not all conditions can be manipulated (Yin, 1994). In this, the case study approach offers an opportunity to the researcher for paying increased attention to social interactions and viewpoints of those involved (Derkzen, 2008). Knowledge in social science is always context-dependent (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Therefore, the case study approach advertises that researchers pay close attention to the social and material context in which their study takes place in order to gain in-depth understanding on the phenomenon of study. In contrast to the detailed analysis, the in-depth focus of the case studies includes an exercise to carefully map the context for each case, including e.g. relevant policies, demographics and physical characteristics of the involved green spaces. In order to achieve this level of detail, multiple sources of data have been used to find relevant information. For each case, this includes an extensive study of policy documents, scientific literature and of (local) media. In addition, each case study has been complemented with a series of interviews that include multiple respondents with different points of view.

All chosen cases have been purposively selected in order to focus on certain issues. Chapter 6 provides an international comparative analysis of three cases with a focus on place-keeping and the continuity of active citizenship in green space governance. These cases have been specifically selected because they showcase a long-term continuity of place-keeping by citizens. Chapter 7 focuses on a single case that was selected from the inventory and detailed analysis for an in-depth analysis of the transformative potential of active citizenship. This study was originally conducted as part of a three-case comparative analysis, but a final decision was made to focus efforts on this specific case because it showcased a transformative potential beyond that which was observed in the other cases. All of the four cases can be considered as exemplary cases (Yin, 2012), meaning that they reflect strong, positive examples of place-keeping in chapter 6 and of transformative potential in chapter 7.

The data collected for the articles in both chapters 6 and 7 was qualitatively analysed and jointly interpreted by the involved researchers from the two projects in which the case study was conducted. This led to the writing of narratives on these case studies through an iterative process, and these narratives were the basis for the analytical material in this thesis. I functioned as the leading researcher in the comparative analysis between cases (chapter 6), as well as in the writing of the publications included in this thesis (chapters 6 and 7).

3.2 Scope of research

3.2.1. The PAA as a starting point for entering the field

Scholars have diverging views on how to identify and study practices in the field. It is emphasized that practices are discernible across time and space and thus can be observed in the material world (Schatzki, 2002). However, as discussed in chapter 2, there are many different definitions of what constitutes a practice and also many different ways in which this is operationalized in different studies. Scientific literature does not provide a generally-agreed-upon starting point for collecting data and identifying practices in the field - certainly not when studying active citizenship in a local governance context. This lack of a generally accepted starting point for studying practices can make life rather difficult for researchers working with practice-oriented frameworks (Jonas et al., 2017).

In chapter 2, I do provide an analytical framework for studying *governance practices*. Yet, inspired by the principle of praxeology, my work does not strictly predefine how and where the practices in this research should be found. Rather, the dimensions provided by this analytical framework provide important *sensitizing concepts* to look at governance practices. With this, they are open dimensions that do not strictly define a governance practice, but instead suggest directions for where to look (see also Buizer, 2008). The PAA thus functioned as my conceptual starting point for data collection, but not as an instrument to strictly delineate the boundaries of a governance practice.

3.2.2. Scope of my layered design

Following the principle of praxeology, my understanding of practice is closely connected to the context, scope and subject of the specific studies discussed in the four empirical chapters of this thesis. I will be accounting for my conceptual focus on practices in these chapters. With all of this, my understanding of what a governance practice is connects to a praxeological perspective that integrates my understanding of scientific theory and research methodology (Jonas et al., 2017).

In the inventory and detailed qualitative analysis, the focus is on specific elements of practices that are relevant in the context of the specific research questions. Analytically, these practices do need to be comparable in scope for the purpose of a comparative analysis. This requires a sound justification of and comparability on the specific elements that have been selected, but only a limited focus on aspects not included in these elements. Hence, focus in chapters 4 and 5 is not so much on the principle of praxeology, but mostly on the use of a suitable and comparable analytical framework for the purposes of these studies.

In the more in-depth and holistic case study research that I've employed, the principle of praxeology is very important. In these chapters, where focus is on the practices as a whole and not just on specific elements, the issue of how to observe and understand practices, rather than just elements of these practices, becomes more important and receives critical attention. This understanding of practice follows from an integration of theory and methodology. With this, chapters 6 and 7 are the studies where I'm really employing a praxeological outlook to research.

3.2.3. Criteria for selection

Specific attention will be focused on the scope of study and understanding of practice in each of the four empirical chapters. However, there are some general principles that cover all practices which involve active citizens in green space governance within this thesis. These principles integrate my theoretical understanding of practice with the specific focus of the problem statement:

- The practices in this thesis are practices of governance, understood as 'the many ways in which public and private actors from the state, market and/ or civil society govern public issues at multiple scales, autonomously or in mutual interaction' (Arts and Visseren-Hamakers, 2012: p.242).
- These practices of study are physically connected with one or more green spaces. Following Dunnet et al. (2002: p.23), I see green space as 'land that consists predominantly of unsealed, permeable, 'soft' surfaces such as soil, grass, shrubs and trees'. This includes 'wild' nature and large-scale landscape, but also urban green, agricultural green, parks, gardens, trees and diverse landscape elements.
- My focus is explicitly on practices in which active citizens play a major role. To be included in this thesis, these citizens should be able to act somewhat independently, which means that they have an important role in deciding objectives and employing activities to reach these.
- The practices in this study contribute to or explicitly aim to contribute towards protecting, realizing and/or managing green space. This does not necessarily imply a strong focus on biodiversity or nature conservation, but can also include urban gardening or the conservation of manmade landscapes.
- All practices in this thesis are focused on public space, which means that the involved land is publicly and freely accessible.

3.3 A reflection on the practice of conducting research

3.3.1. Research and interpretation

As emphasized by Littig and Leitner, 'practice oriented research involves not only the study of the practices in the respective research object but also a reflection on the practices of doing research' (Littig and Leitner, 2017: p.170). Especially in

qualitative studies, the role of the researcher is substantial in interpreting and understanding data. This role should therefore receive critical attention (Fink, 2000). Science itself is also seen as a social practice, so there is a need for this reflection on the role of the researcher to ensure transparent and accountable research (Arts et al., 2013a).

'Living requires sense making, and sense making entails interpretations' (Yanow, 2000: p.5). Humans have their own frame of reference through which they look at the world and make sense of it, and I as a researcher am no different in this respect. Even in the (semi)-quantitative work which I have conducted, I had an important role in selecting categories and interpreting qualitative research data in the context of these categories. In recognition of this, an interpretive view to my research methodology is adopted in this thesis, especially in respect to the case study work. This interpretive view emphasizes that we as humans do not have access to the world in a purely objective way (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012; Yanow, 2000).

As some of the analytical material is rather descriptive and because I employ a multi-method framework, I do not position my work as a strictly and purely interpretive endeavour in congruence with research principles promoted in the work of e.g. Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012) or Bevir and Rhodes (2003). Rather, I want to emphasize that I am aware of my own position as a researcher in relation to my subject of study.

3.3.2. Iterations between theory, methodology and analysis

In line with the idea of praxeology, the theory, methodology and analysis in this thesis were jointly and reflexively employed and developed as part of an iterative process. This contrasts the linear model that is oftentimes used in methodological handbooks and which describes the scientific process as a meticulously planned and strictly executed endeavour (Kumar, 2005). This linear model often simplifies and rationalizes a much more complex, intuitive and somewhat chaotic (and indeed, interpretive) research process. Reasoning is thus very much an iterative process (Arts et al., 2013a).

In recognition of this, a more praxeological, iterative and reflexive orientation to research was facilitated by the 3-layered research design. Work in all three layers started with a 'pilot study', in which methods were tested on their methodological feasibility and the suitability of their analytical framework. Especially for the

inventory, this took multiple rounds of finetuning in terms of the scope of study and decisions about what practices to include, which sources and methods to use for data collection, and which criteria to include in the analytical framework. Over time, new theoretical understandings, practical research experiences or empirical findings could inspire me to redevelop other aspects of my work. For example, my desire to comprehend the outcomes of green self-governance in chapter 5 and the constitutive role of materiality in chapter 7 eventually resulted in a central position for materiality in my theoretical framework at a somewhat later point in the research process.

I conclude this chapter by emphasizing that my interpretive, iterative and praxeological approach to scientific research does not provide me with any excuse to derive from scientific standards in terms of the quality, accountability and transparency of my work. While my personal frame of reference has influenced the decisions which I have made in a praxeological research process, my work in this thesis is a result of four years of carefully executed, well-documented and meticulous research activity. By providing transparency about my methodology, my research in principle can be replicated in other studies. My progress during the past four years has been carefully documented and is published in a number of scientific reports that describe my proceedings and methodology with a high level of detail. This work has also been subjected to the scrutiny of my peers and three of the four empirical chapters have been published in academic journals at the time of writing. With this, work in this thesis follows established procedures in order to accord to scientific standards.

04

Chapter 4

The 'Green' and 'Self' in Green Self-governance - a Study of 264 Green Space Initiatives by Citizens

Some tables have been modified in order to align with the lay-out of this PhD-thesis. The research findings included in these tables remain unchanged.

Abstract
Scholars observe an increased involvement of citizens in green space governance. This paper focuses on *green self-governance*, in which citizens play a major role in realizing, protecting and/or managing green space. While existing research on green self-governance focuses mostly on specific cases, we aim to contribute towards a large overview via an inventory of 264 green self-governance practices across The Netherlands. With this, we discuss the relevance of green self-governance for nature conservation and its relationship with authorities.

In our analysis, we show that green self-governance practices are very diverse: they pursue a wide variety of physical and social objectives; employ a multitude of physical and political activities; involve different actors besides citizens; mobilize different internal and external funding sources; and are active within and outside of protected areas. While green self-governance can contribute towards protection and management of green space and towards social values, we highlight that this contribution is mostly of a local relevance. Most practices are small scale and objectives do not always match those of authorities. Although we speak of self-governance, authorities play an important role in many practices, e.g. as financial donor, landowner, or regulatory authority. In this, self-governance is often not completely 'self'.

4.1 Introduction

Across the EU, the involvement of citizens in governance and management of green space has significantly increased over the last decades. Scholars across Europe have observed the involvement of citizens in the governance of urban

green (e.g. Fors et al., 2015; Van der Jagt et al., 2016), rural landscapes (e.g. Mattijssen et al., 2015; Derkzen and Bock, 2009) and protected nature reserves (e.g. Beunen and De Vries, 2011; Apostolopoulou et al., 2014). This growing involvement of citizens in green space governance can be seen in the light of a broader shift from government to governance. In this shift, traditional centralized decision making has increasingly been complemented by governance processes involving a wide range of involved actors (Rhodes, 1996; Stoker, 1998; Goodwin, 1998), blurring the boundaries between public and private sectors (Stoker, 1998). Non-government actors involved in governance include businesses and NGOs, but also citizen groups and individual citizens (Moro, 2012; Goodwin, 1998). Through forms of coproduction or co-governance, these actors often work together for the realization of common benefits (Mitlin, 2008; Bovaird, 2007).

In recent years, scholars have observed more emphasis on self-governance (Arnouts et al., 2012; Sørensen and Triantafillou, 2009). This shift assumes that private actors (citizens, businesses, NGOs) become increasingly autonomous in governance issues, whereas state actors play a more facilitating role. In literature, the term self-governance[3] is used to describe a wide variety of governance arrangements where private actors take their own initiative to autonomously act and pursue public or collective objectives. In green space governance, this manifests in many bottom-up initiatives (see e.g. Apostolopoulou et al., 2014; Van der Jagt et al., 2016; Lawrence and Ambrose-Oji, 2015). We talk about *green self-governance* to discuss bottom-up green space initiatives from citizens, people who are involved in green self-governance in a non-professional role.

4.1.1. Problem Statement

Many authorities recognize a potential for citizens to positively contribute to the governance and management of public green (Perkins, 2010; Rosol, 2010). Regularly, authorities actively aim to involve citizens in the delivery or co-production of green space management through co-governance or through supporting self-governance (Smith et al., 2014; Van der Jagt et al., 2016; Van Melik and Van Der Krabben, 2016). However, the responsibility for safeguarding policy goals on e.g. the realisation of Natura 2000 still rests with authorities (Beunen and De Vries, 2011). It is also still up for debate how bottom-up citizen initiatives link up to centralized ecological networks that are emphasized in EU-policy. For

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[3] Other research describing forms of self-governance can also use the terms *self-organisation*, *DIY-governance*, *bottom-up governance* or *citizen governance*.

authorities, the relationship of green self-governance with green space policy and management is therefore a relevant point of discussion (Buijs et al., 2016b). On different levels of scale, the objectives of authorities and citizens regarding public green space might differ from one another. It is an important inquiry how the activities of citizens concerning public green might contribute (or not) to co-production in the realization of policy aims (Ten Cate et al., 2013).

Besides, current debates on the role of citizens in governance often imply a notion of 'active citizenship' (Van Dam et al., 2015; Moro, 2012). These citizens are not seen as passive subjects of policy, but as actively pursuing their interests. The wide range of citizen initiatives that can be found all over Europe (Teles, 2012) demonstrates that a shift or trend from 'citizenship' to 'active citizenship' (Hoskins and Mascherini, 2009) is not only visible in political discourse, but also in bottom-up practices. Yet, there are also critical views in this regard. First of all, several researchers highlight that the actual transfer of responsibilities and decision making power from governmental to non-governmental actors is rather limited compared to rhetoric on governance (Shore, 2011; Apostolopoulou et al., 2014). Secondly, critical scholars connotate the term active citizenship with a decline in public services offered by the state, arguing that this had led to an 'instrumentalisation' of citizens who are expected by authorities to take over tasks from the state (Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013; Raco and Imrie, 2000). Thirdly, the term active citizenship is associated with the exclusion of non-active citizens (Milana, 2008), leading to democratic questions about equal representation (Thuessen and Nielsen, 2014). Given the above views and debates, it is important to understand the role of public authorities in relation to green self-governance. While literature on self-governance assumes a somewhat autonomous and independent character of citizen initiatives (Arnouts et al., 2012; Van Dam et al., 2009), it is an important inquiry how independent citizens really are; if and how they have a relationship with authorities; and what role authorities play in relation to green self-governance.

Finally, although the involvement of citizens in green space governance has been described and analysed in several papers, a clear overview of the phenomenon of green self-governance and what it entails is lacking. Empirical evidence is rather scattered and often strongly focused on individual cases. An example of such a study describes how citizens have established a foundation to manage and restore cultural landscape elements in a rural area (Van Dam et al., 2014). While such case studies on green self-governance provide useful in-depth insights, the existing body of literature lacks a broader (quantitative) overview and assessment of the

phenomenon of green self-governance as a whole. There is a lack of a more general insight into e.g. what citizens aim to achieve with green self-governance; what activities they undertake to reach their objectives; how citizens organize and finance themselves; and which other actors are involved in green self-governance.

4.1.2. Research aims and scope

This paper addresses the knowledge gaps identified in the above: the contribution of green self-governance to nature conservation; the relationships of citizens with authorities in the context of green self-governance; and the lack of systematic empirical evidence on the phenomenon of green self-governance. It specifically focuses on forms of green space governance in which citizens play a major role: so-called *green self-governance*. We define this as 'a specific form of governance in which citizens play a major role in realizing, protecting and/or managing green public space.' This major role means that citizens have a capacity to act somewhat independently from external forces and have an important role in deciding objectives and employing activities to reach these.

By studying a wide range of *practices* of green self-governance, we aim to contribute to more generalized insights into the phenomenon of green self-governance and the above knowledge gaps. Although we discuss green self-governance in a wider setting, our fieldwork, for practical reasons, focuses on the Netherlands. Although the governance of green space has a long history of top-down steering (Buijs et al., 2014; Van Melik and Van Der Krabben, 2016), nature policy in the Netherlands has rapidly changed in recent years (Buijs et al., 2014). This includes a decentralization of responsibilities to regional authorities and large budget cuts on nature conservation, which have reduced funding for green space management (ibid.). Simultaneously, a bigger emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of citizens in green space management arose (ibid.). There is currently more focus on local ownership (Buijs et al., 2013) and active citizenship (Van Dam et al., 2015) in the green domain. This puts green self-governance in the spotlight of current policy debates about nature conservation in The Netherlands.

The following research questions have been formulated:

To what extent do green self-governance initiatives contribute to the governance of green space?

To what extent do examples of green self-governance match debates about the changing relationship between governments and citizens?

We delineate green self-governance as self-governance that is physically related to one or more specific public green spaces. This involves publicly accessible, non-built environments with a strong presence of plant species, including 'wild' nature and large scale landscapes as well as urban green, trees, allotment gardens, shrubs and grasslands. Not included in our study of green self-governance are practices without a spatial component (i.e. those not linked to one or more specific sites or areas); initiatives from farmers and traditional entrepreneurs; and practices in which strongly institutionalized, traditional nature conservation NGOs play a leading role.

4.2 Analytical Framework for Green Self-governance Practices

We treat individual initiatives of green self-governance as specific (local) *practices*. A group of citizens might organize themselves to create and manage green space in their neighbourhood in order to improve the amenity and social cohesion in the area; others might protest against the development of infrastructure in a protected reserve; and others might manage green cultural elements in the landscape and organize excursions for school children with the objective of preserving local cultural history. Such practices consist of an organized set of activities (Schatzki, 2002) and are linked to a certain vocabulary which provides a meaning to the practice (Røpke, 2009). A practice consists of multiple elements (such as a specific discourse, procedure or tool), but should be seen as a single entity (Reckwitz, 2002b; Shove et al., 2012).

In practices, there is room for agency and actors have an objective to act (Schatzki, 2010), but practices are also influenced by rules and resources (Giddens, 1984). In recognition of this, we employ an analytical framework influenced by the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA, Arts and Leroy, 2006) in order to scrutinize relevant elements of *green self-governance practices*. The PAA has recently been employed in a number of studies discussing green self-governance (e.g. Buizer et al., 2015; Lawrence et al., 2013; Van der Jagt et al., 2016). Building upon structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), this approach provides an analytical framework which is

applicable in this field (Ayana et al., 2017), while enabling the study of both agency and structure in governance processes (Arts and Leroy, 2006).

The PAA distinguishes four analytical dimensions that can be employed to study governance: *discourse*, *actors*, *rules,* and *resource*s (Van Tatenhove et al., 2000; Arts et al., 2006b). However, while social reality is often understood as being constituted by human activity within the structure-agency duality (Schatzki, 2012), the PAA - originally developed to study policy arrangements, rather than governance practices - lacks an explicit focus on what actors actually do *in the field* in order to achieve their aims (Ayana et al., 2017). This research requires a more explicit focus on human *activity* in order to understand specific *practices* of green self-governance and their functioning. To explicitly address this, we add a fifth dimension to our analytical framework: *activities*.

Activities, as part of practices (Schatzki, 2012), are the actions undertaken by involved actors in order to realize the intended aims of green self-governance. The dimension of *discourse* encompasses interpretative schemes which are used by actors to give meaning to physical and social realities (Hajer, 1995). This includes an orientation towards ends (Schatzki, 1997) - an objective that motivates people to act. The *actor*-dimension refers to the individuals and organizations involved in governance. *Rules* determine the opportunities and barriers for actors to act in a governance process (Arts and Leroy, 2006), while *resources* encompass attributes, skills, financial- and material resources that can be mobilized to achieve certain outcomes (ibid.).

4.3 Methodology

4.3.1. Data Collection and Analysis

In order to collect our data, we conducted a large inventory of green self-governance initiatives within the Netherlands. Multiple sources of data were used to collect and describe a large number of green self-governance initiatives: (i) existing scientific and non-scientific literature; (ii) contacts with experts in the field; (iii) an extensive web search with the use of several keywords; and (iv) a call on the internet and on social media, in which people were asked to inform the authors about green self-governance practices. In total, we collected 264 initiatives of green self-governance in this way.

The individual analysis of these initiatives consisted of two steps. First, all initiatives have been qualitatively described on their objectives, activities, involved actors, etc. In a second, quantitative step, categories were identified against which the initiatives were assessed (e.g. to 'score' which types of actors were actively involved in the initiatives). After completion of this individual analysis, an overall analysis was conducted in which the initiatives have been compared to each other, e.g. to look at the percentage of initiatives receiving subsidies. With the use of cross-tabulations in SPSS, we have also scrutinized the relationships between different characteristics. We used a confidence interval of p=0,05 to look for significant relationships and used Cramer's V as a measure of association.

As a final step, we performed a further qualitative scrutiny of a subset of 50 initiatives, which includes an interview with a person directly involved in the initiative. This qualitative study was conducted in order to validate our research findings and to put some more flesh on the bones of our analysis (the results of this study are described in Mattijssen et al., 2018a).

4.3.2. Criteria of Analysis

Table 1 summarizes the characteristics on the basis of which practices of green self-governance have been analysed. First of all, we describe the activities that citizens employ to reach their objectives. We see the objectives as an important form of discourse: they are strategically formulated, develop in social processes and are shared by citizens involved in an initiative. As part of our discourse analysis, we also look at what type of green space groups aim to realize or protect. In our analysis of actors, we look at the number of citizens involved, as well as the extent to which other actors are involved. For the dimension of rules, we identify whether the areas the groups were active in or focused on had a formal protected status under the Dutch National Nature Network (NNN) and/or under the European Natura 2000 network (N2000). For the dimension of resources, we study how groups are funded. A full list of the assessment categories (which we developed during the analysis of the inventory) can be found in attachment 1.

Table 1: criteria of analysis

Analytical dimensions	Criteria	Main categories
Activities	Actions taken to reach objectives	Physical
		Political
		Awareness and knowledge
Discourse	Objectives	Physical
		Social
		Economic
	Type of green space aimed at	Urban green
		Forest
		Landscape elements
		Grassland
		Specific species
		Edible green
Actors	Number of citizens involved	
	Type of actors involved	Citizens
		Authorities
		Business actors
		NGOs
		NCOs[4]
Rules	Within or outside of NNN[5]	
	Within or outside of Natura 2000	
Resources	Sources of funding	Internal income
		External income
		Revenues
Other	Population density[6]	
	Level of urbanization[7]	
	Year of establishment	
	# Hectares	

[4] Nature Conservation Organizations

[5] National Nature Network, the network of protected nature areas in The Netherlands.

[6] Derived from Statistics Netherlands

[7] Derived from Statistics Netherlands

4.3.3. Representativeness and Scope

The representativeness of this study is unclear. We cannot assess how our sample relates to the total population of green self-governance practices in the Netherlands as this population remains unknown. We consider it likely that our inventory is slightly biased towards well-documented and visible initiatives (see also Uitermark, 2015), as smaller and less visible initiatives are more difficult to find in our data sources. In this, our research is not unlike questionnaires with a non-response bias, where those who respond often do not fully match certain characteristics of the wider population (Søgaard et al., 2004).

Given the nature and size of our sample, we do believe that findings can be generalized in order to contribute to debates (see also Heesen, 2014). The data which we collected is higher in number and broader in scope than of existing research so far. Even without presenting a statistical inference to a total population, the analysis which we present still offers a valuable contribution to debates (see also Grayson et al., 1997). After all, our research greatly improves available data on green self-governance. Considering the large size of our sample, it is unlikely that our findings are way off (Heesen, 2014). Even so, there are implications due to the uncertainties which we have pointed out. The figures which we present in our analysis should therefore be seen as an indication and treated with some margin of uncertainty.

4.4 Analysis

Our analysis of 264 practices of green self-governance in the Netherlands shows that there is a very large diversity among these initiatives. Foundation 'neighbour creates nature' collects money to purchase agricultural lands and converts them into publicly accessible nature. Volunteers in 'butterfly garden Lewenborg' have developed a brownfield into a flower-garden that is attractive to insects and especially to butterflies. The inhabitants from the Houtdreef street in the town of Varsseveld are developing a green infrastructure in their neighbourhood. The association 'save De Kaloot' has successfully protested against industrial development of a seaport on a historical beach area. Volunteers of nature association 'The Meadow Thistle' work in the landscape to conserve nature, landscape elements and the historical view of the area.

The 264 self-governance practices in our study highlight that green self-governance can be found almost everywhere in The Netherlands, in both rural and urban contexts. Some groups involve green spaces smaller than 50 m2, while others are concerned with areas spanning more than 100 hectares. While most do not manage such large areas, green self-governance is by far not always 'street level' in its scope.

Green self-governance is not just a recent, short-lived phenomenon either: about half of the groups had existed for more than 7 years at the time of study and around 25% has been established before 2000. Even so, some groups have ended their activities or are only temporary in scope while others have developed and often broadened over time. Green self-governance is very much a dynamic phenomenon as self-governance practices develop over time. Although these dynamics are not extensively covered in this paper, this is an important point to keep in mind.

4.4.1. Activities

Many groups in our study were engaged in some form of physical activity to protect or enhance green areas (Table 2). Such activities focused on management and maintenance of existing green, such as cleaning of waste, pollarding of willows or cutting of hedges; and on developing new green by e.g. planting trees or creating new green infrastructure through digging ditches.

Table 2: Types of activities in green self-governance initiatives (N=259)[8]

Activities	% of initiatives
Physical	74%
Management and maintenance	59%[9]
Planting/realising new green	47%
Political	50%
Protesting	25%
Deliberation/cooperation	36%
Awareness and knowledge	35%
Education	29%
Monitoring and research	15%

[8] Out of the 264 groups studied, we were able to collect data on the activities of 259 of them. Only data of the latter number of groups are included in this table.

[9] This number represents 59% of the total population and not 59% of the above category.

Half of the groups actively tried to influence spatial policy or management. This was done through protest activities such as collecting signatures, going to court, or organizing protest events (25%). Such protest was often aimed at policy plans by authorities and sometimes towards management plans or practices by nature conservation organizations. Yet, political activities related to deliberation and cooperation were more common (31%). This can include deliberation with municipalities, participation in spatial development processes, or an interactive development of plans in cooperation with other actors.

Activities related to education involved the organisation of excursions or lectures, but also focused on facilitating people (often children) to discover nature and green space. Monitoring and research included inventories or censuses of the presence of certain species and mapping factors such as water levels. Such activities were rarely conducted in isolation. Only 4% of all groups was neither engaged in physical nor political activities, while 25% was engaged in both physical and political activities.

4.4.2. Discourse

In the narratives on the objectives of citizen groups, we find three broad categories: physical, social and economic objectives (Table 3), comprising several subcategories of objectives. Typical for most groups is the combination of multiple objectives, with 35% aiming to realize both social and physical objectives.

Almost all examples of green self-governance in our study pursued physical objectives aiming at tangible effects in the field. This often included the protection of nature in a broad sense, e.g. protecting specific species or biodiversity in general, or creating new green spaces. Especially in rural areas, focus also was on cultural landscapes and cultural history, e.g. maintaining hedges and pollard willows. Physical objectives also related to improvements in the field to facilitate (recreational) green for human use, including the improvement of scenery; creation of space for activities; provision of access to green or nature; and improvement of the direct living environment.

Table 3: Objectives of green self-governance initiatives (N=248)

Objectives	% of initiatives
Physical objectives	92%
Nature protection	65%[10]
Cultural landscape and history	40%
Use of green and recreation	38%
Food production	10%
Social objectives	42%
Awareness and education	31%
Active involvement	7%
Social cohesion	10%
Health	4%
Economical objectives	5%

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Next to physical objectives, many citizens groups also focused on social objectives. Most prominently this related to enhancing environmental awareness, a category of objectives which often corresponds with (educational) activities aimed at children. Social cohesion objectives were mostly mentioned in an urban context, aiming to bring people into contact with one another, or offering opportunities for underprivileged groups to enhance their social network. Economic objectives such as the provision of employment or of marketable services or products were rarely mentioned.

When looking at narratives and pictures concerning the type of green space on which initiatives focus, the largest category encompasses parks, public gardens and urban green, highlighting that green self-governance is not only focusing on 'wild' nature (Table 4). However, there are also many groups who focused on more 'natural' environments or on specific (families of) species, such as meadow birds or butterflies.

[10] This number represents 65% of the total population and not 65% of the above category.

Table 4: Types of green space involved in green self-governance (N=261)

Green space type	% of initiatives
Parks, public gardens, urban green	42%
Forest, heathland, other nature	23%
Landscape elements	26%
Grassland, agricultural green	21%
Specific species	17%
Edible green	17%

4.4.3. Actors

The total number of citizens which was regularly involved in the activities of the citizens groups ranged from 2 to around 200, although usually below 50. These active volunteers were often supported by a broader group of people who incidentally participated or financially supported their activities. Still, our interviews show that many initiatives of green self-governance worry about continuing to bind (younger) volunteers towards the future, or are quite dependant om a small core of volunteers.

Although we speak about green self-governance, most initiatives involved professional actors such as municipalities, NGOs and businesses in the organization and carrying out of activities (Table 5).

Table 5: Actors actively involved in green self-governance (N=218)

Actor	% of initiatives
Only citizens	21%
Involvement of other actors	79%
Authorities	55%[11]
NGOs	49%
Business actors	21%
Nature management associations	17%

Many initiatives of green self-governance, at some point in time, have come into contact with authorities – who often became actively involved. Municipalities were by far the most intensively involved authorities: they supported initiatives in kind

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[11] This number represents 55% of the total population and not 55% of the above category.

by aiding in management tasks, provided materials and advice, or provided land and/or accommodation. As municipalities are frequently also landowners, and because of formal rules or procedures, this involvement was often legally required to legitimize the activities of citizens.

The involvement of business actors often concern cooperation with farmers, for example in agricultural nature conservation, grazing of nature areas by cattle and hiking routes on farmland. There are also examples in which citizens, together with enterprises, such as desludging companies or construction companies, worked on the development of nature.

Our analysis also highlighted an involvement of a broad range of NGOs in many initiatives. This included environmental NGOs, but also NGOs not directly aimed at green space such as neighbourhood associations; sport clubs; health facilities; primary schools; historical societies; and many others. The involvement of large private and semi-public Nature Conservation Organizations (NCOs) was mostly visible in relatively large scale initiatives with a focus on nature protection. In these cases, cooperation was often rather intense. In urban areas or within city limits, involvement of NCOs in green self-governance was rare.

4.4.4. Rules

Although many groups in our study aimed to contribute towards the protection of nature, the majority (61%) was not active in formally protected nature reserves, either the Dutch Network of Protected Areas (NNN) or the overlapping but smaller European Network of Natura 2000 (Table 6).

Table 6: Percentage of self-governance initiatives active within protected areas (N=214)

Self-governance initiative	% NNN	% N2000
Exclusively active within	10%	4%
Active within and outside	29%	16%
Not active within	61%	80%

Although we did not categorize this at first, we observed several mechanisms of formalization during our analysis of the subset of 50 initiatives. Many initiatives had become a legal entity, usually a foundation or association, which respondents considered as necessary for the setting in which their groups operated (e.g. to be applicable for receiving subsidies). We also observed that, in order to formally

permit citizen activities by authorities, formal arrangements were agreed upon. These include contractual agreements with involved parties, such as on the management or the lease of areas, or the design of a specific policy to (re)define the function of an area. Even so, we observed no formalization whatsoever in other groups.

4.4.5. Resources

The citizen groups often mobilized multiple sources of funding to cover their costs (Table 7). Annual budgets ranged from almost zero to over €50.000, and were generally bigger for groups physically active in relatively large areas.

Subsidies formed the most prominent source of income, usually provided by local or regional authorities. Especially in smaller initiatives, an investment of own financial resources by participating citizens was often visible. Some initiatives derived part of their resources from revenues generated by delivering services or products. These revenues usually provided a (small) supplemental form of income and were rarely an exclusive source of funding.

Table 7: Percentage of self-governance initiatives that use certain sources of funding (N=165)

Source of funding	% of initiatives
External income	82%
Subsidies from authorities	52% [12]
Sponsoring by companies or foundations	42%
Donations by private persons	38%
Internal income	50%
Own resources	43%
Contributions by members	16%
Revenues	22%

Even though there were often multiple sources of income, many of the people we interviewed worried about the long-term financial viability of their groups or stated that their income had declined over the years. Frequently, authorities were seen as an 'unreliable' partner in this respect, as the future of subsidies is often uncertain.

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[12] This number represents 52% of the total population and not 52% of the above category.

4.4.6. Relationships and Cross-calculations

In order to gain more insight into the relevance of green self-governance for the governance of green space, we have looked at correlations between the objectives of green self-governance practices and the activities employed to reach these (Table 8). This table highlights several significant correlations. Interestingly, groups pursuing physical objectives are more likely to employ political activities – which are less likely to be employed for the realization of social objectives. Conversely, physical activities and education are more likely to be employed for the accomplishment of social objectives.

Table 8: Relation between objectives and activities

		Physical objectives	Social objectives
Management	Relationship	Mean	More likely***
	Cramer's V	n.s.	0.250
Planting	Relationship	Mean	More likely**
	Cramer's V	n.s.	0.194
Education	Relationship	Mean	More likely***
	Cramer's V	n.s.	0.206
Monitoring	Relationship	Mean	Mean
	Cramer's V	n.s.	n.s.
Protest	Relationship	More likely**	Less likely***
	Cramer's V	0.174	0.277
Deliberation	Relationship	More likely*	Less likely*
	Cramer's V	0.128	0.128

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

Relevant for green space policy around protected areas is the type of activities that citizens employ within such reserves (Table 9). As this table shows, the protected status of an area is strongly associated with the type of activities that are employed. Citizen groups that are active within protected areas are less likely to engage in planting and the realization of new green, possibly because of regulations concerning this protected status. They are much more likely to engage in monitoring and political activities (including protest) within protected areas.

Table 9: Relation between activities and protected status

		Partially or fully within NNN
Management	Relationship	Mean
	Cramer's V	n.s.
Planting	Relationship	Less likely***
	Cramer's V	0.329
Education	Relationship	Mean
	Cramer's V	n.s.
Monitoring	Relationship	More likely***
	Cramer's V	0.367
Protest	Relationship	More likely***
	Cramer's V	0.255
Deliberation	Relationship	More likely**
	Cramer's V	0.185

* p ≤0.05; ** p ≤0.01; *** p ≤0.001

The relationship between the involved actors in green self-governance and the resources that were mobilized is particularly relevant for discussions around the organization of governance and the changing relationships between involved actors - and what this means in a financial way (Table 10). This table shows that the type of income is highly associated with the involvement of specific actors. Perhaps not surprisingly, initiatives involving only citizens are much more dependent on internal income and less likely to have an external income. Initiatives with an active role for authorities and NGOs are more likely to receive external income. However, the involvement of both authorities and businesses decreases the likelihood of an internal income and thus seems to increase a reliance on external sources of funding.

Table 10: Relation between involved actors and resources

		Internal income	**External income**	**Revenues**
Only citizens	Relationship	More likely***	Less likely***	Mean
	Cramer's V	0.305	0.460	n.s.
Authorities	Relationship	Less likely**	More likely***	Mean
	Cramer's V	0.210	0.350	n.s.
Businesses	Relationship	Less likely***	Mean	More likely
	Cramer's V	0.257	n.s.	0.355
NGOs	Relationship	Mean	More likely***	Mean
	Cramer's V	n.s.	0.291	n.s.
NMAs	Relationship	Mean	Mean	More likely**
	Cramer's V	n.s.	n.s.	0.240

* $p \leqslant 0.05$; ** $p \leqslant 0.01$; *** $p \leqslant 0.001$

We observed a number of significant correlations between the involved actors and the activities that were employed (Table 11). A positive correlation exists between deliberation activities and the involvement of authorities or NGOs, showing that such activities often successfully engage other actors in cooperation. The involvement of authorities and business actors is less likely to go together with protest activities, which is not a surprise given that protest activities were often aimed at either authorities or businesses. Initiatives involving authorities and NCOs are more likely to engage in management activities.

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Table 11: Relation between involved actors and activities

		Authorities	Business actors	NGOs	NMAs
Management	Relationship	More likely***	Mean	Mean	More likely*
	Cramer's V	0.261	n.s.	n.s.	0.137
Planting	Relationship	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
	Cramer's V	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Education	Relationship	Mean	Mean	More likely*	Mean
	Cramer's V	n.s.	n.s.	0.151	n.s.
Monitoring	Relationship	Mean	More likely**	Mean	More likely*
	Cramer's V	n.s.	0.182	n.s.	0.153
Protest	Relationship	Less likely***	Less likely*	Mean	Mean
	Cramer's V	0.270	0.137	n.s.	n.s.
Deliberation	Relationship	More likely***	Mean	More likely*	Mean
	Cramer's V	0.363	n.s.	0.142	n.s.

* p ≤0.05; ** p ≤0.01; *** p ≤0.001

Also relevant in this context is the relationship between the type of activities in which groups are engaged and the sources of income which they collected (Table 12). In this, some correlations exists, especially when there is an external income. Initiatives engaged in management, planting, education and deliberation are more likely to have an external income. Initiatives engaged in protest are less likely to have an external income, but more likely to have an internal income.

Table 12: Relation between resources and activities

		Internal income	**External income**	**Revenues**
Management	Relationship	Mean	More likely***	Mean
	Cramer's V	n.s.	0.250	n.s.
Planting	Relationship	Mean	More likely*	Mean
	Cramer's V	n.s.	0.186	n.s.
Education	Relationship	Mean	More likely**	More likely***
	Cramer's V	n.s.	0.212	0.293
Monitoring	Relationship	Mean	Mean	Mean
	Cramer's V	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Protest	Relationship	More likely**	Less likely***	Mean
	Cramer's V	0.209	0.336	n.s.
Deliberation	Relationship	Mean	More likely**	Mean
	Cramer's V	n.s.	0.244	n.s.

* p ≤0.05; ** p ≤0.01; *** p ≤0.001

Tables 8-12 highlight important correlations between characteristics of green self-governance practices. This does not allow us to draw conclusions about causality, but it does show that, as the PAA suggests, it is likely that different dimensions of green self-governance have an influence on each other. This can have important implications for e.g. the governance of protected areas and the funding of green self-governance. In Figure 8, we graphically show some of these 'likely pathways', highlighting that green self-governance practices with certain characteristics are more likely to show certain other characteristics.

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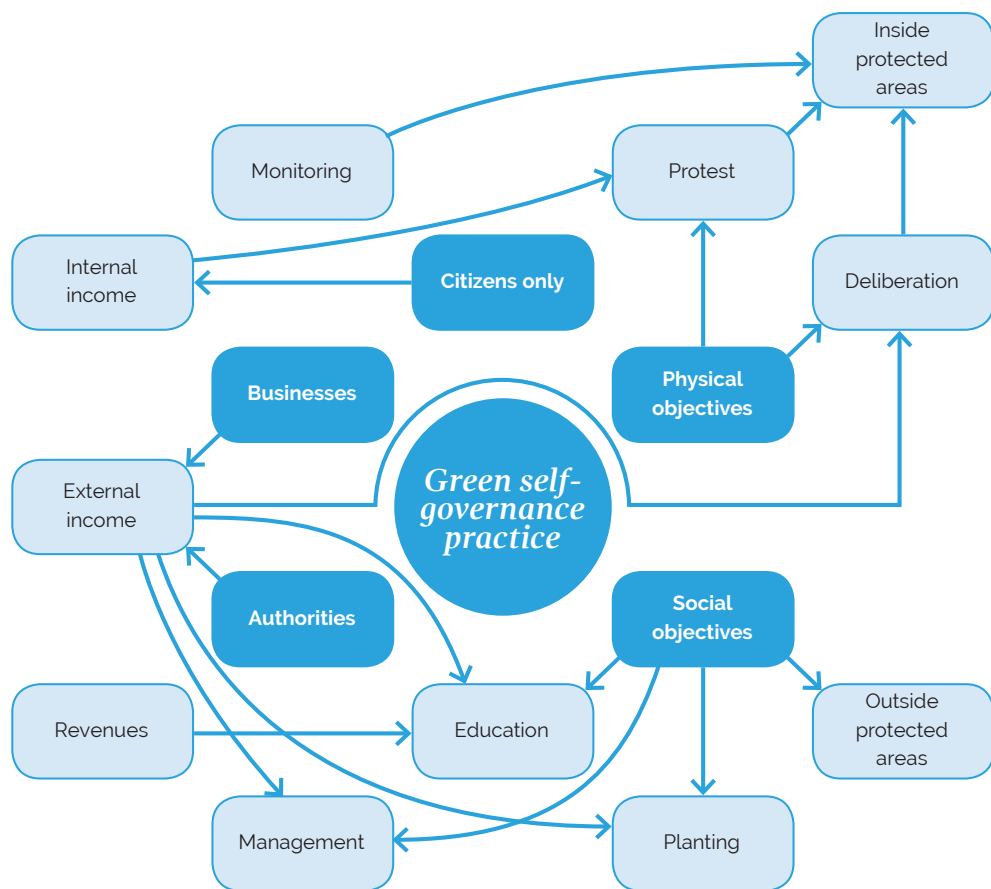
Figure 8: correlations between certain characteristics of green self-governance

4.5 Discussion

4.5.1. The Scope of Green Self-governance

While existing case study research on green self-governance highlights important lessons, the systematic overview which we present in this paper is the first of its kind in English literature. With this, we contribute to a better generalized insight into the phenomenon of green self-governance and what it looks like in practice. Although we cannot make solid claims about the representativeness of our study, our research greatly improves available data on green self-governance and provides a better generalizing view than existing research.

Our data highlights several important characteristics of green self-governance practices. We illustrate that green self-governance involves a wide range of activities beyond the physical management of green space. Groups engaged in green self-governance often pursue multiple objectives and employ multiple activities to reach these, regularly combining both physical and social objectives and physical and political activities. We also show that many green self-governance practices involve a wide range of actors beyond citizens, often with an important role for authorities. Furthermore, we highlight several important funding mechanisms. The diversity highlighted in this study is in line with more general observations in governance debates, where it is often highlighted that current-day governance can be found in many different forms (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Van Assche et al., 2014b).

4.5.2. The Green in Green Self-governance

Our analysis shows that citizens can contribute to realizing, managing and protecting green public space in many ways. In this light, it is important to discuss how citizens are involved in green self-governance and what implications this might have for authorities and their policies (Ten Cate et al., 2013). The objectives of green self-governance practices are an important indicator of their possible relevance for co-production of policy aims. These objectives highlight that almost all groups aim to realize physical effects, often related to nature protection and in rural areas also related to cultural landscapes. For authorities, this might offer opportunities regarding their policy. Our findings on the importance of social objectives link up with findings by Van der Jagt et al. (2016), who identify the integration of social objectives and green space management as an important trend. Via green self-governance, there might thus also be possibilities for co-production of social policy objectives.

However, as Van Dam et al. (2015) and Buijs et al. (2013) also show, we have to be aware that authorities and citizens might have conflicting objectives. Our findings underline that citizens might articulate different visions than authorities or even protest against certain policies, which regularly happened. For example, there can be tensions between objectives on realizing recreational facilities and protecting biodiversity or when citizens and authorities prefer different types of green space. Several scholars in Europe have highlighted disconnections between the goals of authorities and citizens in nature conservation (Apostolopoulou et al., 2014; Paloniemi et al., 2015; Buijs, 2009). Policy makers should therefore not assume that citizens and authorities will always have similar aims when discussing the potential of self-governance to contribute to the realization of nature conservation policy.

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Considering the small scale of many initiatives, we should also be somewhat critical about the total contribution of green self-governance to the protection of green space at this point in time. Although certainly substantive, all initiatives of green self-governance will currently not add up to anywhere near the 700.000 hectares of nature managed by large NCOs and authorities in the Netherlands. Whilst practices of green self-governance have shown to realize significant effects on the local scale (Lawrence and Ambrose-Oji, 2015; Mattijssen et al., 2018a), we should therefore not overestimate their contributions towards (inter)national policy goals and ecological networks. When we talk about co-production of policy objectives, we should also be aware that the large majority of the initiatives is not physically active within protected areas, which have a central place in nature conservation.

Following the above, we feel that policy makers should be careful about what they expect from citizens and their potential to contribute to the protection and management of green space. While policy discourses might place a strong emphasis on active citizenship in green space, authorities and large NCOs still retain an important position in nature conservation and green space protection. Citizens certainly play a relevant role and potentially realize important effects (Mattijssen et al., 2018a). However, they generally do so on a different level of scale and their objectives will not always match with policy. In the current context of budget cuts and the withdrawing state in the Netherlands and many EU-countries, we want to stress that the contribution of citizens should be seen as additive towards existing public policy and management (Bovaird and Löffler, 2013). Citizens can certainly provide a valuable contribution next to traditional management. However, their activities should not be seen as a replacement for this, as public authorities retain an important role.

In this, the added value of self-governance for green space protection should mostly be seen on the local scale. On a national scale, the majority of initiatives is of relatively small relevance, even though some of them do contribute to the NNN or N2000. Locally, however, a lot of initiatives have a potential to realize a significant impact, if only by conserving or creating small patches of green. Green self-governance can be seen as local customized governance, where citizens often take up those tasks not covered by traditional actors, aid in the co-production of policy objectives on the local scale, or provide a critical view on plans or developments. In this, green self-governance can provide a valuable contribution to nature and landscape and a valuable addition to other forms of green space

governance. However, we do not have any evidence that green self-governance is replacing existing management on a large scale.

4.5.3. The Self in Green Self-governance

While some scholars and policy makers put an emphasis on the independence and autonomy of citizens in self-governance, we also highlight an involvement of many other actors: authorities, businesses, NMAs and NGOs all play roles in many green self-governance practices by contributing to activities or facilitating those. Most green self-governance initiatives appear to be at least somewhat embedded in existing governmental, societal and financial networks. In this, we observe that the boundaries between self-governance and co-governance are somewhat blurred – a lot of practices in our inventory do not fully fit either of these descriptions.

We see significant relationships between the involved actors and sources of income and between the protected status of areas and the activities that citizens employ. Of particular interest in this respect is the role of authorities. The involvement of local authorities is often important to formally legitimize local initiatives (Halloran and Magid, 2013). As authorities have the means to issue permits for allowing certain activities and are often the landowner of local green space, they can play both enabling and constraining roles (for more in-depth discussion of such mechanisms, see studies by Klein et al., 2017; Mattijssen et al., 2017). Existing policy for protected areas is generally more strict, which might explain why there is much less physical activity by citizens in such areas.

Authorities also play an important role in the financing of green self-governance practices. Subsidies form a welcome and frequent source of income and can be seen as a strong indication that authorities support green self-governance initiatives. However, although the financial network of many groups is generally quite well-developed, this highlights that many green self-governance initiatives are financially dependent on authorities. Our cross-calculations highlight that there is less internal income when authorities and businesses are actively involved, further underlining this dependency. In this respect, it is not surprising that respondents in our interviews have identified a decline in subsidies as a major threat towards the continuity of their initiatives.

When discussing subsidies, we also have to be aware that these are often 'labelled' for a certain purpose and that initiatives often have to meet specific prerequisites in order to apply for subsidies, e.g. being a legal person. Authorities seem to have

a preference to deal with initiatives that have objectives corresponding to their own policy aims (Van Dam et al., 2015), described as 'cherry picking' by Edelenbos (2005). Initiatives that potentially contribute to these aims will be more likely to receive subsidies, while we see that initiatives engaged in protest are much less likely to do so. Yet, as has become clear in recent years, views of nature that live in society are sometimes broader than those embedded in policy. Following a previous crisis in nature policy in the Netherlands (Buijs et al., 2014), authorities would do well to also support alternative views and to listen to critical voices.

By supporting some initiatives and not supporting or even constraining others, authorities play an important role in green self-governance. This is not necessarily a bad thing. While some scholars are critical on the exclusion of non-active citizens in the debate on 'active citizenship' (Milana, 2008), authorities, in principle, should represent *all* citizens. Important to realize in this context is also that many initiatives voluntarily choose to cooperate with authorities or established NGOs. Uitermark (2015) argues that local initiatives are often initiated by people with strong professional and/or social networks. It is likely that citizens will use this social capital in their activities (Teles, 2012), and this might be beneficial for the accomplishment of their objectives. This is also a form of autonomy: when cooperation is not forced upon citizens, it might be an important strategy to actively seek cooperation – even if this means that citizens will have to broaden their scope or change their activities to do so. As other research shows, collaboration between citizens and authorities can lead to important mutual benefits (Kronenberg et al., 2015; Klein et al., 2017).

4.6 Conclusions

Our study highlights a large diversity in green self-governance practices, showing that green self-governance is a broad phenomenon. With this study, we provide insights in this diversity and into some important characteristics of green self-governance initiatives. We also highlight correlations between many of the characteristics which we studied, showing that for example the involvement of certain actors has a significant influence on the objectives, activities and financial sources of green self-governance practices.

Our results indicate that green self-governance has a potential to contribute to the protection and management of green space and also to environmental education and social cohesion, among others. However, even if some green self-governance initiatives are active within protected areas, the contribution of green self-governance towards the realization of (inter)national policy goals is of a small scale, and we should be aware that citizens and authorities sometimes have different objectives. We argue that the added value of green self-governance should mostly be seen on the local level and as an addition to traditional management, rather than as a replacement.

Although we conclude that self-governance is often not completely 'self' in a literal sense, citizens have a major role in setting the objectives of initiatives and employing activities to reach these. However, many initiatives are dependent upon authorities when it comes to funding and regulations. By supporting some initiatives and constraining others, authorities play an important role in relation to green self-governance. However, collaboration between citizens and authorities is often voluntary and has a potential to produce mutual benefits.

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Chapter 5

The benefits of self-governance for nature conservation: a study on active citizenship in the Netherlands

Abstract

An increased involvement of citizens in the management of European green spaces raises questions about its contributions to nature conservation. In this research, we study the effects of different types of active citizenship in green space. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods, we look at the *benefits* of 50 *green self-governance practices* in which citizens aim to realize, manage or protect green space in the Netherlands. While most of these practices contribute to nature conservation (80%) and/or the conservation of cultural landscapes (50%), our analysis shows that the benefits of green self-governance are much broader. This includes so called 'co-benefits', social, cultural and economic benefits such as the use function of green for human activity (78%), environmental education (88%) and social cohesion (50%).

The benefits and co-benefits of green self-governance strongly depend on the type of practice. Using a typology of green self-governance, we show that a majority of practices focuses on direct benefits to nature conservation through hands-on activities and/or political actions. However, we also show that this focus is regularly combined with efforts to realize co-benefits. Practices with an explicit focus on co-benefits often also produce benefits - and vice-versa. In this way, co-benefits can provide a first step towards the realization of more direct benefits to nature conservation. Even so, there are also tensions between benefits and co-benefits, for example when an increase of recreation negatively affects biodiversity values or when 'wild' nature is being replaced by a cultivated garden. Relating to co-benefits can be an effective strategy for governments or environmental NGOs, but we have to be aware that the benefits generated by green self-governance are generally of a much smaller scale than those realized by 'traditional' managers of green space such as authorities.

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1. Green self-governance and nature conservation

While in most EU-countries the management and protection of green space traditionally was a task of authorities, private landowners and large environmental NGOs, recent years show an increased involvement of citizens and local NGOs (Van der Jagt et al., 2016; Rosol, 2010). This trend towards *active citizenship* results in a more important and more autonomous role for citizens in the management and protection of nature and biodiversity values (Paloniemi et al., 2015). This is reflected in forms of co-governance where citizens and authorities work together as equal partners (Olsson et al., 2004) as well as in the manifestation of many bottom-up initiatives with varying degrees of autonomy for citizens (Van der Jagt et al., 2016).

Research also highlights the need for authorities to adapt their green space governance approach from delivering services towards facilitating and regulating delivery by others (Rosol, 2010). Authorities increasingly see the involvement of stakeholders as important for sustainable and legitimate governance of green spaces (Suškevičs et al., 2013). Declining management budgets and encroachment have put pressure on the quantity and quality of many green areas, which has spurred an interest in the potential role of citizens in managing green space (Perkins, 2010). This shift in governance might have important implications for the protection of nature, as the accomplishment of policy objectives is now also dependant on the commitment and capabilities of citizens involved in governance and management of green spaces.

In this context, it is relevant to discuss the effects of active citizenship in the governance and management of green space. This is particularly relevant for those forms of active citizenship that operate largely autonomously from governments. These bottom-up initiatives are not based on government aims or interventions, but inspired by the motivations of people and communities (Van Dam, 2016). We refer to this as *green self-governance*, forms of governance where active citizens play a major role in realizing, protecting and/or managing public green space and do so with some degree of autonomy. Based on fieldwork in the Netherlands, we discuss the effects and implications of green self-governance in the management and conservation of nature, biodiversity, landscape and urban green, which

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we collectively define as *green spaces*. This is a deliberately broad definition of 'green', which recognizes that there are many different interactions between nature and culture as well as many different views of what nature is (Elands and Van Koppen, 2012). With this, we focus on large-scale protected reserves as well as small patches of urban green, as long as these spaces are of interest for self-governing citizens. With our focus on self-governance, we explicitly do not focus on traditional forms of volunteering and participation where citizens do not set their own objectives.

5.1.2. The effects of green self-governance

Green spaces provide many environmental and social services (Lovell and Taylor, 2013). Even so, recent decades have seen a worldwide decline in biodiversity values and the ecosystem services provided by green (Torkar and McGregor, 2012). Following current shifts in green space governance, it is an important question what the effects of green self-governance are in this context. In other words: what do the activities of European active citizens in the management and conservation of green space mean for nature conservation and the ecosystem services associated with green space?

Existing research on the effects of self-governance is rather scattered. While it is highlighted that green self-governance can potentially contribute towards a diversity of ecological, social, and economic values (Mattijssen et al., 2018b), there is often a lack of evidence on the actual effects that can be attributed to the involvement of citizens in green space governance (Fors et al., 2015; Lawrence and Ambrose-Oji, 2015). The few studies that focus on effects are generally based on a limited number of cases. A notable exception to this is a recent study by Dennis and James (2016), who highlight a positive correlation between the involvement of citizens in urban green space management and urban biodiversity values on the basis of a study of 10 cases.

Effects can be understood as intended or unintended changes that result directly or indirectly from an intervention (OECD, 2002). In ecological literature, the term *benefits* is popular to discuss positive changes resulting from interventions (e.g. Garaita and Arizaga, 2015). This term is generally used to discuss physical effects realized in the natural environment: increase in biodiversity values, conservation of a landscape, etc. However, green self-governance can also have social, cultural and economic effects related to e.g. learning and education (Bendt et al., 2013); social cohesion and strengthening of social networks (Krasny et al., 2014); and

recreation and leisure activities (ibid.). These so-called *co-benefits* (Bain et al., 2016; Raymond et al., 2017) are often an important motivation for citizens to act for the benefit of the environment (Bain et al., 2016; Van der Jagt et al., 2016). Also considering that authorities increasingly need to balance conservation objectives with economic and social interests (Beunen and De Vries, 2011), we include the co-benefits of green self-governance in our analysis of effects.

In this paper, we focus on what is often called the *outcomes* of green self-governance. For OECD (2002), outcomes are seen as observable or measurable changes that occur over the short and medium-terms. These outcomes are consequences of the activities that are undertaken in green self-governance activities (Lawrence and Ambrose-Oji, 2015; Howe and Milner-Gulland, 2012). As we will explain in the methodology section, we consider the study of long-term impacts beyond the scope of this study.

5.1.3. Diversity in practices, diversity in effects

Individual initiatives of green self-governance can be considered as specific practices (Mattijssen et al., 2018b). Through engaging in such practices, people interact with the material world (Orlikowski, 2007). A practice consists of an organized set of activities (Schatzki, 2012) that gain meaning though associated discourses (Arts et al., 2013b). A practice is performed towards an end (Schatzki, 2010) - people want to realize certain effects through engaging in practices, as highlighted through the objectives which they formulate (Mattijssen et al., 2018b).

Green self-governance practices can be very diverse, varying from e.g. citizens maintaining a neighbourhood garden; citizens protesting against the development of infrastructure in green space; citizens creating nesting spaces for birds in the city; to the development of an ecological corridor by citizens (Mattijssen et al., 2018b). These effects of green self-governance are therefore very much context dependent and will differ for different types of green self-governance practices. Consequently, to understand actual effects, we need to distinguish between different types of green self-governance. To do so, we will develop a typology of green self-governance practices in this paper.

5.1.4. Research questions

We can conclude from the above that it is important to understand both the nature and the diversity of effects created by green self-governance practices, as these practices can influence the conservation of nature and landscape as well

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as produce or influence social, cultural and economic values. When we discuss the potential of green self-governance to contribute towards benefits and co-benefits, it is also relevant to study to what extent these practices are successful in accomplishing their objectives. For these purposes, we have formulated the following research questions:

What are the effects of green self-governance practices in terms of benefits and co-benefits?

How do the objectives of green self-governance practices relate to the actual effects?

What effects are produced by different ideal types of green self-governance?

5.2 Methods

5.2.1. Analytical framework for studying practices

As we aim at analysing both the effects and nature of diverse green self-governance practices, our analytical framework needs to specify these concepts. It has been stressed that one needs to understand practices through engaging with them in the field (Schmidt, 2017). We therefore do not ex-ante delineate the boundaries of green self-governance practices, but rather look at specific elements of these practices in order to collect relevant data. As practices can be compared on different elements (Shove et al., 2012), this makes it possible to comparatively analyse green self-governance practices on relevant aspects which allows us to create a typology.

Inspired by practice theory (Schatzki, 2012) and the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA; Arts and Leroy, 2006), we use the dimensions *activities*, *discourse*, *actors*, *rules* and *resources* to scrutinize relevant elements of *green self-governance practices*. The PAA allows us to study the contents and organization of practices, while practice theory lets us scrutinize human activity (Mattijssen et al., 2018b). With our study of *activities*, we scrutinize the actions that practitioners employ in order to realize their objectives. Our study of *discourse* focuses on the vocabulary that is part of a practice, including the objectives of practitioners (Buizer, 2008). With the *actor*-dimension, we study the role of individuals and organizations involved in green self-governance practices (Arts and Leroy, 2006). Our study of

rules focuses on the possibilities and barriers for actors to act (Arts and Leroy, 2006). Important rules are the Natura 2000 and NNN[13] networks. Finally, *resources* encompass attributes, skills, financial- and material means or tools that actors can mobilize (Arts and Leroy, 2006).

5.2.2. Data collection and analysis of effects

We have employed a layered approach to data collection and analysis, consisting of a broad inventory followed by an in-depth analysis of a stratified subsample. We started with a broad inventory across the Netherlands in order to collect a large number of green self-governance practices (n=264). These practices were collected via literature research, contacts with experts in the field, a web search and a call on social media. In a prior publication (Mattijssen et al., 2018b), we used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to describe and comparatively analyse these 264 practices with a focus on the above analytical dimensions. In this paper, we expand this analysis by presenting a typology of green self-governance practices. This typology includes 9 main forms of green self-governance and was developed in an iterative process in close cooperation with an advisory board of experts and practitioners in Dutch nature conservation and governance.

Next, for our research into effects, we deepened our study with a detailed qualitative analysis of a subsample of the inventory (n=50). These 50 practices were selected via a stratified sample on basis of our typology with the explicit aim to include a large diversity of practices. For each ideal type which we distinguish, at least 4 practices have been included in this study. These practices were selected half randomly (drawn without referring to the typology) and half non-randomly (purposively selected to fit specific ideal types) to make sure that sufficient practices of each type were included, but to prevent a selection fully biased by the typology. The selected practices were included in a large database. First, all data that could be collected through a web search and analysis of relevant documents was coded in this database according to our analytical framework. As a second step, we conducted a telephone interview with a person involved in the self-governance practice.

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[13] The Dutch network of protected nature reserves

Contact for these interviews was generally established via email or telephone, depending on available contact information. The telephone interviews generally lasted between 25 and 40 minutes and played an important role in collecting additional information. Questionnaires for these interviews were tailor-made for each specific practice in order to fill the knowledge gaps in priorly collected data. However, since all questionnaires were constructed on basis of our analytical framework, they were largely similar. An important part of each interview was also an extensive discussion of the effects of the specific practice. In order to gain a more critical insight into these effects, we have discussed with respondents how the situation was before the practice had been established and what has changed over time as a result of their work. In this way, we could get a better insight into the nature of effects and make an estimation of the relative magnitude of effects, based on a comparison between different practices. Comparing the objectives with these effects also allowed us to estimate the extent to which aims have been realized.

Like Lawrence and Ambrose-Oji (2015), we will primarily focus on an analysis of outcomes when discussing the effects of green self-governance. Considering that a large part of this analysis is based on interviewing, the effects which we discuss are physical and social outcomes as they are *experienced* by respondents – they have usually not been monitored over time for practical reasons, although citizens sometimes collected data on e.g. bird diversity or visitor numbers. As our discussion of effects is mostly based on perceptions of stakeholders, we understand these effects to be *perceived effects* (see also Carrus et al., 2015). Although our data could eventually provide a starting point for studying long-term impacts, we therefore do not consider it feasible to study trends and effects that manifest over the course of decades within our methodology.

5.3 Results

5.3.1. The effects of green self-governance

Respondents across the practices which we investigated have mentioned a large number of benefits and co-benefits. Below, we will elaborate on the main effects and provide illustrations from our analysis.

Nature protection and biodiversity values
A large majority of green self-governance practices (80%) contributes towards an increase in green space quality and quantity or towards protecting existing green against threats. While there are a few practices in which a negative impact on biodiversity values is suspected (e.g. by increasing recreation or cultivation of 'wild' nature), green self-governance practices are largely perceived as realizing positive effects for the conservation of nature, for biodiversity and for the protection of certain species. Even so, activities that are beneficial to a certain species will have a negative impact on others, and this does not mean that 80% of practices contribute towards 'green' policy objectives.

We distinguish between the following 3 types of effects:

- *The development of new green space:* examples of this include the creation of a 7 ha ecological wetland corridor on former agricultural grassland. A small example includes the creation of a vegetable garden on a formerly paved square.
- *Improvement of the ecological quality of existing green:* in one practice, citizens changed a 1.5 ha grassland into a diverse biotope with pools and small landscape-elements, attracting new species and increasing biodiversity.
- *Protection of green against external threats:* in one practice, citizens won a court case preventing the development of a sea-terminal on a beach bordering a Natura 2000 area. Other examples include successful protection against development of housing, infrastructure or industry.

Protection of cultural landscapes
Many practices in rural areas realize benefits for the conservation and restoration of cultural landscapes such as grasslands, heathlands and meadows, as well as for humanmade landscape elements such as hedges, pollarding willows and ditches. This produces positive environmental outcomes but can also incur co-benefits in terms of restoring or conserving (local) cultural history. These effects are seen in 50% of green self-governance practices, generally not in urban contexts. In rural areas, they are usually combined with biodiversity-related benefits, highlighting that a combined focus on biodiversity values and conservation of the cultural landscape can lead to mutual benefits in the rural landscape. Again, this is notwithstanding possible tensions and negative impacts that might become visible in some instances. We distinguish between the following 2 types of effects:

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- *Conservation of the cultural landscape:* in one practice, citizens bought and restored a historical meadow of 6.5 hectare with wet grasslands, reed, hedges and fruit trees. In another, citizens restored the historical, small-scale landscape of the middle ages in 2 areas totalling 13 hectares.
- *Conservation of humanmade landscape elements:* an example of this is the creation and restoration of hedges and wooded banks in one practice. In another practice, volunteers contributed to the conservation of dikes and local tree varieties.

Use of green

This category of effects encompasses co-benefits related to the use function of green for people. Such benefits are identified in 78% of green self-governance practices, highlighting that green self-governance can also realize additional values for recreation and amenity. These effects are usually combined with a realization of benefits, although the nature of 'use effects', as described below, makes it safe to assume that these are not always mutually reinforcing each other. We distinguish three sorts of effects:

- *Accessibility of green:* in one practice, a previously closed area of 6.5 ha was opened up for the public when citizens created a hiking path through the area, attracting many visitors.
- *Facilities for recreation and activities:* in one practice, 'natural' playground equipment was installed so that children could play in a 1 ha forest-area. In another practice, benches where placed for recreants to rest.
- *Improving amenity of the direct living environment:* in one practice, citizens took over the management of a 0,1 ha green space from the municipality. According to involved citizens, their living surroundings now look better.

Environmental awareness and mobilization

Co-benefits related to environmental awareness and mobilization are mentioned in 88% of green self-governance practices. Many practices actively involve people in green space-related activities and bring people into contact with their green environment. While the actual effects of e.g. educational courses on the environmental awareness of children are sometimes difficult to assess, this indicates that many respondents perceive green self-governance as an engine for developing environmental awareness and for spreading knowledge about the green environment. We distinguish three sorts of effects on this:

- *Interest and appreciation for the green environment:* a respondent in one practice where volunteers maintain a 8 ha wildlife garden tells that people who visited the area 20 years ago now visit it with their own children.
- *The development of knowledge and skills:* in one practice, environmental education was provided to almost 3000 children in a single year. With this, it is considered likely that there is a contribution to environmental knowledge in children.
- *Mobilization and activation:* in one practice, the initiator has motivated 7 other families in his neighbourhood to become active in the management of local green space.

Social cohesion
Positive effects related to social cohesion are mentioned in 50% of green self-governance practices, more often in an urban environment. One respondent explained that this was a very logical effect, as through his engagement in green self-governance he came into contact with different people. When social cohesion is mentioned as an effect, the view is generally quite positive. Even so, it is not unimaginable that there might also be exclusionary mechanisms between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' or a rise in conflict when active citizens come into conflict with other groups. While this is rarely mentioned, we found examples of both in 1 practice. We distinguish between the following 3 types of effects:

- *Social contacts and relations:* in one practice, an urban green space created by citizens has become a meeting place for people in the neighbourhood. In another practice, a respondent told that the involved citizens have become good friends over the years.
- *Social activation:* in one practice, a lot of volunteers are people who have disabilities or psychological problems. Through working in green space, these people become more socially active.
- *Integration between different social groups:* in one practice citizens created an urban green space where, through volunteering, native citizens and immigrants come into contact with one another.

Other co-benefits
While less frequently mentioned, there are also other co-benefits that are linked to green self-governance. While not of application to most green self-governance practices, these co-benefits can be important effects of specific practices.

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- *Food production:* the production of food, fruits, nuts, herbs and vegetables via practices of green self-governance is visible in a number of practices. For example, citizens have created a garden which produces fruits, nuts and vegetables in one practice.
- *Employment and income:* significant effects related to employment and income are rare in our analysis. An example of this is that in one practice, a part-time coordinator has been employed to supervise activities.
- *Health and wellbeing:* these effects are rarely mentioned. While they might exist, they are not recognized by most respondents. In one practice, a respondent notes the positive health-effects of green space and hypothesizes his own contribution to this.

5.3.2. Success and failure

In Table 13, we compare the objectives that were formulated in the different practices with the effects that have been identified. This table summarizes our analysis on the effects and objectives of green self-governance. This analysis shows that in most practices, at least some level of success has been achieved in realizing intended outcomes. To illustrate: 74% of all practices has formulated objectives related to nature protection and biodiversity values. In 66% of all practices, (some of) these intended effects have been realized, while 8% is unsuccessful in this. On top of the 66%, 14% of all practices did not explicitly aim for effects on nature protection and biodiversity values, but realized outcomes anyway. This adds up to a total of 80% of all practices realizing effects of this type.

A remarkable finding from this analysis is thus that many practices also realize *unintended effects*. We see such unintended effects for almost all the categories which we distinguish, most prominently for the co-benefits. While the objectives still provide an indication of possible effects, especially the co-benefits are realized more frequently than one would perhaps expect on basis of objectives. In this, there appears to be a large potential for green self-governance practices to realize broader effects than intended, with different categories of effects potentially reinforcing each other. Even so, we have to be aware that benefits and co-benefits do not always align with each other, as highlighted in our general analysis of effects above.

Table 13: effects versus objectives of the 50 practices[14]

	% objectives (N=50)	% failure (N=50)	% success (N=50)	% unintended effects (N=50)	% effects (N=50)
Nature protection and biodiversity values	74	8	66	14	80
Protection of cultural landscapes	48	8	40	10	50
Use of green	62	10	52	24	78
Environmental awareness and mobilization	56	2	54	34	88
Social cohesion	20	8	12	35	50

While Table 13 shows that many objectives formulated in green self-governance practices have been realized with some level of success, the above presentation deserves a nuanced view. In this table, 'success' means that a practice is perceived as having contributed towards an objective, but not necessarily that an objective has been fully realized. A detailed analysis of the causes for and the extent of success and failure would require in-depth case study research beyond the scope of this study. Even so, while the extent of success and failure is often multi-interpretable, table 13 shows that a significant difference between the 'original' and 'current' situation is identified for almost all practices. With this, our analysis does highlight a large potential for green self-governance to realize at least some of the intended outcomes.

5.3.3. The effects of different types of green self-governance

Based on the results of our inventory, we have developed a typology of green self-governance practices. The activities are important means through which effects are realized. We therefore first distinguish between practices mostly focusing on

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[14] The column 'objectives' highlights that the percentages of practices in which there was an explicit aim for this type of effect. The column 'success' highlights the percentage of all practices that aimed to realize an effect of this type and succeeded to do so, while the column of failure highlights the percentage of all practices that did not realize an intended effect. The category unintended effects highlights practices that did not explicitly aim for a type of effect but did realize it. The total percentage for effects is thus the sum of all practices successfully aiming for the effect + the percentages of practices unintendedly realizing it.

physical activities (management and maintenance, planting/realizing new green) and those mainly employing political activities (protest, deliberation/cooperation). Secondly, within practices focused on physical activities, we make a distinction between practices through which citizens mainly aim to realize benefits and those in which the focus is primarily on the realization of co-benefits. Inspired by Elands and Van Koppen (2012), we see three clusters of green self-governance practices:

1. *green politics:* practices in this cluster are primarily focused on benefits through political activities. Via these activities, they aim to influence policy and management in order to realize their objectives.
2. *nature management and development:* practices in this cluster are primarily focused on benefits through hands on physical activities in order to manage and protect green.
3. *use of green:* practices in this cluster are primarily focused on co-benefits through hands on physical activities. While there is management and improvement of green space, this is often with a lesser focus on biodiversity values and with more emphasis on the social.

Within each of these clusters, we distinguish a number of ideal types that show coherence on certain characteristics. They are empirically recognizable, but no two practices are exactly the same as each has some unique characteristics. We will deal with each cluster subsequently. Appendix A includes the most important quantitative data on these types while Appendix B includes a more elaborate discussion of ideal types with concrete examples of practices and their effects.

1. Green politics: Within this cluster, we distinguish two ideal types. *Political practices* are primarily focused on political activities in order to influence policy and management of green space. The effects which they realize depend heavily on the success or failure of political activities. *Expanded political practices* are also focused on policy-related objectives, but in these practices physical activities are strategically employed to support political activities. The potentially most important effects of these practices are usually outcomes of political activities, but physical activities might also realize small-scale effects.
2. Nature management and development: We distinguish four ideal types within this cluster. Practices of *nature management* are primarily focused on management and small scale reshaping of existing green. These practices often realize important benefits related to conservation of green space.

Practices of *nature development* are specifically focused on creating new green space ('green for grey'). Significant benefits can be expected whenever the groups involved in these practices are successful in accomplishing their objectives. *Species protection* concerns practices with a specific focus on management on the behalf of certain (families of) species of plants or animals. These practices often positively contribute to the populations of said species. Practices of *green with societal theme* border on the 'use of green' cluster and combine objectives on benefits and co-benefits. These practices often contribute to benefits as well as co-benefits such as education, wellbeing and recreation.

3. Use of green: We distinguish two ideal types within this cluster. *Neighbourhood green* concerns small-scale practices in the living surroundings of those involved, often combining objectives on greening this environment with an important focus on co-benefits. These practices often contribute to small scale local greening, recreation, education, social cohesion and food production. The objectives of practices of *experiencing green* mostly focus on recreation and improving environmental awareness. These practices often contribute to the accessibility of green space and to environmental education. The benefits of these practices are small, if at all positive.

Finally, we distinguish one ideal type that, to some extent, spans all three clusters: a *broad* type. These are large, often long-existing practices that combine many activities and objectives. The actors involved in these practices are often subdivided into several working groups that focus on specific tasks. The effects which these groups realize are often perceived as significant and can be very diverse.

In Table 14, we summarize our analysis of different types of green self-governance for an estimation of the relative scope and importance of effects of green self-governance practices. With this, we highlight the most important benefits and co-benefits for each type of green self-governance, but also highlight the relevance of different ideal types for these different effects. Our assessment of the magnitude of these effects is based on an interpretation of respondents' perceptions as well as on our own comparison between the 'starting' and actual situation across types. White indicates that effects of this nature are generally not realized or only to a small extent, while black highlights that effects are usually realized and relatively large.

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Confirming our earlier analysis, Table 14 very much highlights that the effects of different types of green self-governance can be very different. Types within the cluster 'nature management and development' and *broad* practices generally realize large effects on nature conservation and biodiversity values, while especially the types *nature management* and *broad* are important for cultural landscapes. Depending on their success, *Political* and *broadened political* practices can realize important benefits, especially in the protection of against external threats. Co-benefits related to the use of green are visible across all clusters, but most prominent for *neighbourhood green*, *experiencing green*, *green with societal theme* and *nature development*. Effects on environmental awareness and mobilization span almost all types, but especially relevant in *green with societal theme*, *experiencing green*, *political*, *broadened political* and *broad types*. Social cohesion effects are strongest for *neighbourhood green* and *green with societal theme*.

Table 14: effects of different types of green self-governance

Legend: · = no/little effects, ○ = effects, ● = strong effects

	Nature protection & biodiversity values			Cultural landscape		Use of green			Awareness & mobilization			Social cohesion		
	DEV	IMP	PRO	LSC	ELE	ACC	REC	AME	INT	KNO	MOB	CON	ACT	INT
NATURE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT														
Nature management	·	●	○	●	●	○	○	·	○	○	·	·	·	·
Nature development	●	○	·	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	·	·
Species protection	·	●	○	·	·	·	·	·	○	○	○	○	·	·
Green with societal theme	·	●	○	○	○	○	○	·	●	●	●	○	○	·
USE OF GREEN														
Neighbourhood green	○	·	·	·	·	○	●	○	●	·	·	●	○	·
Experiencing green	·	·	·	·	·	○	●	·	●	○	·	·	·	·
GREEN POLITICS														
Political[15]	○	·	●	○	·	·	○	·	·	○	●	○	·	·
Broadened political[16]	○	·	●	·	○	○	○	·	○	●	○	·	·	·
BROAD														
Broad	○	●	○	●	●	·	○	·	○	○	○	·	·	·

□ = no/little effects, ▨ = effects, ■ = strong effects

Nature protection and biodiversity values (80%): DEV = development of new green; BIO = biodiversity and species protection; IMP = Improvement of the ecological quality of existing green; PRO = Protection of green against external threats. Cultural landscape (50%): LSC = Conservation of the cultural landscape; ELE = Conservation of humanmade landscape elements. Use of green (78%): ACC = Accessibility of green; REC = Facilities for recreation and activities; AME = Improving amenity of the direct living environment. Environmental awareness and mobilization (88%): INT = Interest and appreciation for the green environment; KNO = The development of knowledge and skills; MOB = Mobilization and activation. Social cohesion (50%): CON = Social contacts and relations; ACT = Social activation; INT = Integration between different social groups.

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[15] Benefits vary strongly depending on realization of objectives through political activities

[16] Benefits vary strongly depending on realization of objectives through political activities

5.4 Discussion

5.4.1. The effects of green self-governance

This study shows that green self-governance practices realize a wide range of effects. Even so, as the examples in our analysis and Appendix B show, the size of most practices is rather limited they generally affect up to a couple of hectares of land or provide co-benefits to up to several hundreds of people (Mattijssen et al., 2018b). The large number of green self-governance practices which we have found indicates that green self-governance can provide additional value to traditional protection efforts by governments and NGOs. In some findings, our study confirms results from previous case studies, but now based on a more extensive sample. In other findings, we expand upon existing knowledge and provide much needed data for a more clear overview of the effects of self-governance in nature conservation.

Our study of effects highlights that green self-governance indeed contributes to the conservation, protection and management of green space in The Netherlands. While other research has also demonstrated that active citizens can positively contribute towards nature conservation and biodiversity values (Lawrence and Ambrose-Oji, 2015; Bendt et al., 2013; Dennis and James, 2016), we show this for a large majority of green self-governance practices. We also highlight that many rural practices realize benefits on the conservation and restoration of cultural landscapes. Compared to more 'generic' management, citizens might attribute more value to the specific cultural meaning of places, trees and landscape elements, contributing to a 'localisation' of green space management (Elands and Van Koppen, 2012). In addition, many green self-governance practices focus on urban green spaces, where existing policy often has limited attention for biodiversity. With this, green self-governance is also positive to diversify management, resulting in more heterogeneous green spaces. Through adding additional actors and management practices, such a diversification contributes to the long term resilience of socio-ecological systems (Mattijssen et al., 2018b).

Green self-governance also contributes to the accessibility of green, to recreation and to improving the amenity of people's living environment. While some studies highlight that active citizenship can lead to an increase in usage of green spaces (see Fors et al., 2015: p.10), these studies focus mostly on recreation and/or place attachment. We show that the 'use' effects of green self-governance are broader and that these effects can be seen in most practices. Important in this context is

also the production of food. As highlighted in other studies, there is an increasing amount of urban agriculture-practices involving citizens (Van der Jagt et al., 2017). We see a number of such practices in our study, but also food production by citizens outside of city limits – often via fruit trees.

In almost 90% of practices, respondents report effects on stimulating environmental awareness and involvement. The link between green self-governance and environmental learning has been made before (Bendt et al., 2013). As we highlight, this link is established in a lot of practices. In addition, our findings on social cohesion correspond with other research in urban studies that highlights a correlation between active citizenship and an increase in social cohesion (Veen, 2015). Our study confirms this outcome, but also expands this result to more rural contexts.

5.4.2. A cautious optimism

The effects of green self-governance will currently be of a different order of magnitude than those realized through management by large NGOs and authorities, who manage over 700.000 hectares of nature in the Netherlands. While the above paragraph might sound very positive, we should be careful not to be too optimistic. Not only are most practices of green self-governance small scale, the effects might also not be positive for everyone. An increase in recreational opportunities might be beneficial for citizens and entrepreneurs, but not necessarily contribute towards higher biodiversity values. People neighbouring a green space might also not be happy when more people visit it or when their view changes, even if biodiversity values would increase. Contradicting objectives between citizens and authorities might also lead to conflict (Eizaguirre et al., 2012). And even when the activities of citizens might be in the interest of biodiversity values, they might conflict with e.g. business opportunities or infrastructure development.

While citizens can realize important effects, the trend towards active citizenship is often linked to a decreasing role for authorities in management and funding (Perkins, 2010; Rosol, 2010). On basis of our research, we cannot assess how this increasing role of citizens and decreasing role of authorities play out vis-à-vis one another for the benefit of nature conservation. Whether the current shift towards active citizenship is actually beneficial for the management and protection of green space in Europe as compared to a situation in which authorities would retain their responsibilities is therefore still up for debate. After all, we should not

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forget that local, regional, national and international authorities retain a central role in the management of green space and protection of nature (Mattijssen et al., 2018b; Selin and Van Deveer, 2015). While the involvement of citizens in green space governance has been growing over years, authorities still hold formal responsibilities for safeguarding policy objectives, e.g. related to Natura 2000 (Beunen and De Vries, 2011). While almost all practices of green self-governance in our study realize positive effects, we emphasize that 'traditional' forms of management are still of vital importance in European nature conservation.

5.4.3. Co-benefits as a stepping stone towards benefits

Our analysis highlights that benefits and co-benefits of green self-governance are often realized together. As Bain et al. (2016) highlight, co-benefits can motivate people to act for the benefit of the environment. This is very clear in many practices which we studied: objectives related to nature protection and cultural landscapes are often combined with objectives related to environmental education, social cohesion and other co-benefits. For citizens not interested in benefits, these co-benefits can still provide an important motivation to engage in certain activities which benefit the environment (Bain et al., 2016). In this, co-benefits can act as a first step towards the realization of benefits. Co-benefits can also have a positive effect on nature conservation in an indirect way. By facilitating or stimulating human-nature interactions, green self-governance may contribute to support and willingness to pay for green space protection in the long term (see Soga and Gaston, 2016). Conversely, many co-benefits are realized as unintended effects in line with efforts to realize benefits. Thus, actions that citizens take for the environment can also produce important social, cultural and economic values.

A simultaneous focus on both co-benefits and benefits can be beneficial for better understanding the nature of effects as well as in highlighting trade-offs and tensions. After all, while benefits and co-benefits go together in most practices, this is not always the case. While our study lacks the in-depth focus of case study research, a number of tensions becomes visible in our analysis, e.g. between benefits related biodiversity values and co-benefits related to the use of green. All of this underpins a need to look beyond the direct environmental effects of green self-governance practices, but to rather assess these environmental effects in relation to broader social, cultural and economic systems (Raymond et al., 2017).

5.4.4. Managing the diversity of effects and practices

Our study highlights that practices of green self-governance are diverse. This makes it difficult to address all practices of green self-governance with generic policy. Even so, the typology which we present in this paper provides an important tool to gain a better insight into the possible effects of various types of green self-governance practices. This can help to assess practices of green self-governance on their possible benefits and co-benefits. Most practices in the 'nature management and development' cluster, as well as 'broad' practices, have a potential to realize significant benefits for protection of biodiversity and cultural landscapes. When authorities or environmental NGOs are looking for cooperation in the management or protection of green space, these groups are often obvious partners – although they will not necessarily have similar objectives. Meanwhile, initiatives in the 'use of green' cluster contribute relatively little to nature protection, but can potentially play an important role in realizing co-benefits.

The management implications of practices in the 'green politics cluster' are more tricky: while they have a potential to realize large benefits, this is not at all a given as the effects which they realize are often indirect effects deriving from the mobilization of other actors. Their objectives might contradict those of authorities and highlight tensions between nature conservation and other interests, like infrastructure, housing or industry. While authorities might prefer to deal with practices of green self-governance that align with their objectives and contribute to existing policy (Van Dam et al., 2015), those groups fulfil an important political and democratic role in nature management by critically reflecting on policy and management and highlighting important societal issues in nature conservation and spatial planning (Mattijssen et al., 2018b).

5.4.5. Reflection and directions for future research

So far, research into the effects of green self-governance has been dominated by case study research. In this context, our work provides an important step towards a more comprehensive overview of these effects, albeit on a somewhat more superficial level. Our study is lacking an explicit time dimension as a consequence of our scope and methodology. While a longitudinal analysis of effects is not yet feasible within our research methodology, the intention is to use our work as starting point for a monitoring over time by revisiting the studied practices. This can greatly contribute to a general insight in the long-term effects of green self-governance. In connection with this work, in-depth case study research still has a very important position for gaining a better understanding of certain effects and phenomena of interest.

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5.5 Conclusions

Our research shows that many green self-governance practices realize a wide variety of effects. We have identified five types of effects that are most important: a contribution to nature conservation and biodiversity; the conservation of cultural landscapes; amenity and recreation; environmental education; and social cohesion. As many of these practices contribute to the management, protection and realization of green space, authorities and nature conservationists would do well to pay attention to the potential benefits offered by active citizenship. Even so, the effects of green self-governance practices are usually much broader. While co-benefits might not directly improve biodiversity values or natural values, there is often a close link between the realization of benefits and co-benefits in green self-governance practices. In addition, increased environmental awareness and use of natural areas could increase public support for governmental protection schemes. For governments or NGOss, this offers opportunities: relating to co-benefits as a way of motivating citizens can provide a stepping stone towards the realization of ecological benefits.

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Chapter 6

The long-term prospects of citizens managing urban green space: From place making to place-keeping?

A previous version of this chapter has been published in Urban Forestry and Urban Greening:

Some small modifications were made to the introductory and concluding parts of this paper for its inclusion in this PhD-thesis. These changes were made in order to align the use of language with the other chapters of this thesis as well as to provide extra clarification on the research methodology. The research findings presented in this chapter remain unchanged.

Abstract

This paper discusses the long-term management or '*place-keeping*' of urban green space by citizens and highlights enabling and constraining factors that play a crucial role in this continuity. While authorities have historically been in charge of managing public green spaces, there is an increased involvement of citizens in green space management. It is therefore relevant to study how citizens can contribute towards place-keeping and realize a continuity in managing and conserving the qualities of urban green spaces.

We contribute to these debates by looking at three European cases characterized by long-term involvement of citizens in place-keeping. We conducted document analysis and interviewing of key informants to study green space management over time. Our analysis highlights what factors have contributed towards the continuity of this management, but also shows challenges and difficulties which citizens have experienced. Based on our fieldwork, we identify three factors of particular relevance for the continuity of place-keeping involving citizens.

We found that long-term continuity is supported by a degree of *formalization*: established rules and procedures within groups provide stability to citizens. We also highlight the importance of *adaptive capacity*: citizens need to be able to adapt to contextual changes in order to cope with political, socio-economic and cultural developments over time. The *supporting role of authorities* was also key in legitimizing and supporting place-keeping by citizens. Authorities can support place-keeping by citizens by providing security via stable policies, formally protecting the involved spaces, allowing long-term management contracts and contributing resources.

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1. Active citizenship in urban green space

Urban green spaces provide a range of important ecosystem services and can contribute to the improvement of the local climate (Lafortezza and Chen, 2016); biodiversity (ibid.), water retention (McDonald, 2015), health and wellbeing of citizens (Tzoulas et al., 2007), and recreation (Lovell and Taylor, 2013). Although these services are increasingly being recognized by scientists, conservationists and policy makers (McDonald, 2015), green space in many urban areas is under pressure. The quantity and quality of urban green space is negatively affected by encroachment of residential areas and infrastructure (McWilliam et al., 2015). Furthermore, many green spaces in urban areas are inadequately managed, resulting in a loss of green space quality (Burton et al., 2014; Perkins, 2010). With this, the benefits that many green spaces provide to the urban environment and population are under pressure (Dempsey et al., 2014b).

Citizens have become an increasingly important actor in the governance of urban green (Rosol, 2010). While local authorities are often the main managers of urban green space (Van der Jagt et al., 2016), a lack of funding for green space management has spurred an interest in potential contributions of citizens to this management (Perkins, 2010; Rosol, 2010). Policy makers also express a desire to empower citizens (Mattijssen et al., 2015; Bailey, 2010), and a trend towards active citizenship is visible through the emergence of an increasing number of bottom-up initiatives (Van Dam et al., 2015). There are nowadays many citizens involved in a wide variety of green space management practices (Mattijssen et al., 2018b). Independently or in cooperation with authorities and other actors, these citizens have the potential to realize a wide range of environmental and social benefits (Mattijssen et al., 2018a).

6.1.2. The long-term horizon of citizen engagement in urban green space management

In the long term, the increased engagement of citizens might have implications for the quantity and quality of urban green. While managing high quality green spaces typically requires an on-going commitment (Dempsey and Burton, 2012), the abovementioned trends are recent developments. There is still uncertainty about the long-term continuity of citizen engagement in green space management and what this means for the quality of these spaces (Dempsey et al., 2014b).

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Recognition of these challenges has led to an increased emphasis on responsive long-term management and the role of citizens in this (Smith et al., 2014).

In this paper, we explore factors influencing long-term engagement of citizens in the management of urban green space. For this, we use the concept of place-keeping. Place-keeping is understood as 'responsive long-term management which ensures that the social, environmental and economic quality and benefits a place brings can be enjoyed by present and future generations' (Dempsey et al., 2014a: p.9). The concept of place-keeping sheds light on the socio-spatial processes of conserving and maintaining the qualities of spaces (Dempsey and Smith, 2014). By employing the concept of place-keeping, we thus focus on how citizens play a role in maintaining the qualities of urban green over time.

There is a lack of research that assesses the effectiveness of long-term management approaches (Dempsey et al., 2014a). Literature and policy often focus on the planning and design of new green spaces, also called *place-making*. However, there is much less focus on processes of conserving the qualities of these spaces once they are created, the *place-keeping*. The involvement of citizens in place-keeping is seen as being 'still in its infancy' (Smith et al., 2014: p. 64), so even less is known about the role of active citizenship in place-keeping. There is thus a need to better understand what influences the long-term continuity of green space management by citizens in order to promote a long-term maintenance of the social, environmental and economic qualities of urban green spaces.

We contribute to international knowledge on this by studying the long-term management of urban green space by citizens in three European cases. Previous research has indicated that citizen groups managing local green spaces might encounter difficulties in ensuring a continuity of membership (Mathers et al., 2015) and in securing (long-term) funding (Lawrence et al., 2014). However, long-term place keeping by citizens has not been systematically analysed before. In the present study, we add to these findings with a more focused and systematic analysis of factors enabling and constraining long-term green space management by citizens. This paper aims to answer the following research question:

What factors contribute to and constrain continuity of urban green space management by citizens?

Lessons from our research can be used to support place-keeping by citizens. We will also provide recommendations to authorities who might be interested in the possible contribution of citizens towards place-keeping.

6.2 Analytical framework

Citizens always operate in a broader spatial (Lawrence et al., 2013) and socio-political context (Bailey, 2010). While place-keeping is given shape through daily management activities, it is influenced by processes beyond the space itself: policy plans from local authorities, extreme weather events or an economic crisis can directly or indirectly influence management. We study place-keeping by citizens as part of this wider *governance* context, with governance encompassing 'the many ways in which public and private actors from the state, market and/or civil society govern public issues at multiple scales' (Arts and Visseren-Hamakers, 2012: p. 242).

6.2.1. An integrated approach to study place-keeping

In our study, we focused on *activities* that citizens employ to conserve and increase the quality of the involved spaces. It is through these activities (for instance mowing grass, planting trees, creating and maintaining paths) that places are maintained and enhanced (Burton et al., 2014). However, in order to identify important factors contributing to place-keeping, we also needed to gain insight into how these activities are organized within practices of green space management. In order to do so, we employed the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA; Arts and Leroy, 2006), which is an established approach for analysing the governance of natural resources (Ayana, 2014).

The PAA provides a comprehensive analytical framework for studying the organization of activities with the use of four analytical dimensions: *discourses*, *actors*, *rules*, and *resources* (Arts et al., 2006b). We adopted the PAA because these analytical dimensions provide a holistic and comprehensive perspective on governance while also being open and practically applicable or collecting data and interpreting findings in the field (for more details, see Ayana, 2014). Also, the PAA can capture dynamic processes and changes over time (Liefferink, 2006), fitting the idea of place-keeping as an ongoing process. We have used insights from existing literature on place-keeping to aid in operationalizing the PAA as a framework for studying place-keeping by citizens.

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6.2.2. Dimensions of analysis

We know from the literature that design and management are important themes in place-keeping (Burton et al., 2014). These themes encompass the human *activities* through which places are created and maintained. Important activities also include the coordinating and organizing of management (Mattijssen et al., 2018b).

With the *actors* dimension, we study the individuals and organizations involved in place-keeping and their specific role (Arts and Van Tatenhove, 2006). Place-keeping often involves multiple actors who cooperate or form partnerships (Burton and Mathers, 2014). In this, we scrutinized the role of different actors but also processes of interaction and cooperation. Throughout this study, we focused explicitly on the role of volunteering citizens.

The *rules* include regulations and formal and informal procedures that determine the barriers and opportunities for actors to act (Arts and Leroy, 2006). Formal policies and regulations often have an influence on place-keeping (Lindholst et al., 2014) and are important to study. We also scrutinized how all kinds of formal and informal procedures guided activities and the organization of place-keeping (Burton and Mathers, 2014; Arts and Van Tatenhove, 2004).

The dimension of *discourse* refers to the content of governance and includes the views and narratives of those involved (Arts et al., 2006b). It is important to understand the objectives of actors as what motivates them to engage in place-keeping (Mathers et al., 2015). To do so, we have studied the ideas that actors use to give meaning to their activities and the involved places, including centrally formulated objectives as well as personal motivations of different actors.

The dimension of *resources* scrutinizes financial and material resources and skills that actors mobilize to achieve certain outcomes (Arts and Leroy, 2006). Funding is essential to place-keeping (Dempsey and Burton, 2012) and includes capital investment for one-off improvements as well as funding for ongoing management (Kreutz et al., 2014). Tools and equipment are also important resources for place-keeping (ibid.), as is natural capital – in our study, the place of place-keeping itself. We also look at social capital, including capabilities of actors, knowledge and skills (Dempsey and Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2014).

With the use of the above dimensions, we have operationalized the PAA into a framework that has been employed in our case studies. Table 15 highlights

relevant concepts from the place-keeping literature which we employed to do so. For each of the above five dimensions, we have identified a number of focus points based on our discussion of place-keeping and the PAA. We use these focus points to indicate major points of interest at which we looked during our fieldwork and analysis/coding. However, we wish to emphasize that these points did not strictly predefine what we studied, employing our analytical framework in a way which is 'allowing the world to speak through it' (Nicolini, 2017: p.25).

Table 15: Combining PAA and place-keeping concepts into our operational framework

Analytical dimension	Concepts place-keeping literature	Description	Focus points
Activities	Design, management and maintenance	Actions undertaken by the actors involved in governance to realize certain outcomes	• Design/place making • Management/maintenance • Supporting and coordinating activities
Actors	Partnerships	Individuals and organisations involved in governance and their specific role	• Key actors and roles • Volunteers • Cooperation and partnerships
Rules	Norms; procedures; decision making structures; policies	Rules and procedures that determine barriers and opportunities for actors to act	• Policy and regulations • Internal procedures
Discourse	Ideas; motivations; systems of meaning	Views, values and narratives of those involved in governance	• Ideas and narratives that give meaning to activities • Motivations, objectives and ideas of involved actors
Resources	Resources; finance; social capital	Material and immaterial resources that can be mobilized to achieve certain outcomes	• Funding • Tools and materials • Social capital • Natural capital

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6.3 Methodology

6.3.1. Case studies[17]

This paper studies three cases of place-keeping by citizens in Berlin, Amsterdam and Milan. In these cases, citizens have formally adopted the management of local

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[17] Detailed narratives on these cases can be found online at the website of Urban Forestry and Urban Greening.

green spaces. The cases have been extracted from a large survey of participatory green space governance cases across 21 European cities (Van der Jagt et al., 2016). In this survey, we found three cases with a long-term (> 10 years) involvement of citizens in place-keeping. This long-term involvement of citizens allowed for a retrospective study of developments and processes over time. In order to understand the specific cases, we have carefully mapped the context of each case (e.g. relevant policies and socio-economic structure of the areas). The three cases are briefly introduced in Table 16 below.

Table 16: Case studies

Case study	City	Country	Start	Size	Regular volunteers	Landowner
Volkspark Lichtenrade	Berlin	Germany	1981	4.6 ha	10	Municipality of Berlin
Natuurvereniging De Ruige Hof	Amsterdam	The Netherlands	1986	13 ha	50	Municipality of Amsterdam
Boscoincittà	Milan	Italy	1974	120 ha	400	Municipality of Milan

6.3.2. Document analysis

As a first step to collect and analyse data, a content analysis of documents has been conducted. In this analysis, local researchers conducted a search for documents containing relevant information about the cases. Such documents included websites, reports, newspaper articles, movies, books, policy documents and other media discussing the specific case or its context. If sources contained information related to the focus points described in Table 16, these documents were then coded for the purpose of our comparative analysis. In each case, 5-10 documents were analysed in this way. For this, a large database has been created. Coding was organized by data source (presented in columns) and the analytical framework (presented in rows). Whenever a document contained information of relevance to a specific focus point, this information was then translated to English and summarized in the relevant cell of the database. This coding was an iterative process: during the analysis of case material, the involved researchers had several discussions in order to fine-tune the analytical framework and the database in which data was organized.

6.3.3. Interviews

Based on findings from the document analysis and local researchers' knowledge of the cases, a number of key stakeholders were approached for an interview. These interviews were semi-structured: for each case, specific factors (e.g. particular local policies, the role of certain stakeholders) were relevant. There was therefore no fixed questionnaire for these interviews so that local researchers could adapt questionnaires to the specific case and respondents. The case study table used for the document analysis also acted as the basis for the interviews to guarantee that relevant aspects were covered in the questionnaires.

In each case study, 5-12 respondents were interviewed in personal interviews that generally took about 60-90 minutes. Respondents, to whom confidentiality was guaranteed, included in each study at least 2 citizen volunteers and a municipality official, as well as one or more non-state 'experts' that were involved in the case professionally, e.g. a person working at a nature conservation NGO or a professional gardener. Interviews were conducted until sufficient data was collected and additional interviewing would unlikely provide new insights. The interview data was transcribed in a verbatim. This verbatim was coded in a similar fashion as the document analysis and included in the same database.

6.3.4. Integration

After coding all sources, the most relevant findings were summarized for each element in the analytical framework. The three case-specific databases were then integrated, resulting in an overview table for the benefit of comparative analysis. Local researchers also prepared a 5-10 page narrative describing the main research findings. Both the narratives and the case tables acted as the basis of the comparative, qualitative analysis presented in this paper. While our databases were used as the main source for data analysis, the narratives provided anecdotal evidence and served to draw attention to particularly relevant governance aspects in the specific cases.

6.3.5. Case descriptions

Volkspark Lichtenrade, Berlin (DE)

Volkspark Lichtenrade (People's Park Lichtenrade) is a community-managed park in Berlin, Germany. Before the German Reunification, the Lichtenrade quarter represented the southern tip of West-Berlin and had limited access to green space. In 1979, as an act of peaceful protest, citizens "occupied" the area by planting trees to prevent housing development. Since then, the area has been converted into a park and

is managed by volunteers of the non-profit park association *Trägerverein Lichtenrade* (founded in 1981), who meet twice a week to work in the park. Their main goal is to provide and preserve the park, which attracts many visitors (Rosol, 2006).

Today, Volkspark Lichtenrade provides a recreational area of 4.6 ha, including a playground and a garden with plant beds for association members (Lichtenrade Berlin, 2008). The park is an integral part of the municipality's land use plan as a green space and as such is officially protected, meaning its land use cannot easily be changed. The park is mostly financed by donations, sponsorships and park association membership fees (Trägerverein Lichtenrade member, personal communication). The federal state of Berlin bought the park land in the late 1980s and the district administration supports the initiative with irregular funding (Lichtenrade Berlin, 2008). By providing opportunities for recreation, the Trägerverein contributes to the social values of the park, as well as to its environmental values e.g., by planting a high diversity of tree species and allowing spontaneous vegetation growth (Rosol, 2006).

Since the German reunification, the social structure of the Lichtenrade neighbourhood has changed towards a low-income milieu (anonymous respondent, personal communication). Since then, the amount of members of the Trägerverein has decreased from 200 to 100, and the number of active volunteers has also fallen to 8-10 regular volunteers. This lack of volunteers, especially of younger age, provides an important challenge for the Trägerverein (Rosol, 2006), as the area might be closed for the public if proper management and safety cannot be secured: 'the municipality told me, when the time is there, they put a fence around it and that's it' (Trägerverein Lichtenrade member, personal communication).

De Ruige Hof, Amsterdam (NL)
Nature association De Ruige Hof (The Wild Court) manages 13 hectares of nature. The association was established in 1986, when a group of citizens wanted to protect spontaneously emerging nature on abandoned construction sites. These sites were owned by the municipality and indicated for potential urban development (Van Dam et al., 2016). After meeting with the municipality, De Ruige Hof adopted the management of the site De Riethoek and a few years later also a second area called *Klarenbeek* (Theunissen and Bongers, 2004). Both areas contain various habitats including water, grassland, tree communities and shrubs. Klarenbeek is situated on peat and relatively wet, while De Riethoek is more dry and sandy, even hosting some dune species (De Ruige Hof, 2017).

De Ruige Hof aims to bring nature closer to citizens and citizens closer to nature. To this end, they organize various activities, mostly related to the management of both areas (De Ruige Hof, 2017). Through this, they have contributed to conservation and development of green space, with monitored biodiversity still increasing in both areas. De Ruige Hof also maintains recreational facilities such as paths and benches. They organize excursions, publish a magazine and run a Kids Club (De Ruige Hof, 2017).

De Ruige Hof has around 450 members and over 50 active volunteers. Most of the annual budget of around €20.000 comes from membership contributions and donations (Van Dam et al., 2016). The association has a management committee as the highest decision making body and employs a part-time coordinator to supervise activities. Recently, some activities have been under pressure. Resulting from government budget cuts and a decrease in income from sponsorships, their budget has decreased (De Ruige Hof member, personal communication). There have also been provincial plans to construct a road through Klarenbeek, which had also been designated as an area for housing by the municipality – both plans leading to protest from citizens. According to an involved NGO-employee: 'they regularly had to fight for their existence...'. Although these plans were eventually abolished, urban development is seen as a remaining threat by some respondents.

Boscoincittà, Milan (IT)
Boscoincittà (Forest in the City) was established in 1974 on 35 ha of abandoned farmland through a multi-actor, bottom-up process involving citizens, schools, NGOs and public bodies (Italia Nostra, 2014). Boscoincittà is a public park in the suburbs of Milan, originating from the idea of creating a 'natural forest' to counter the effects of urbanization, provide recreational green areas, promote social cohesion and improve connectivity with peri-urban areas. As a park volunteer puts it: 'It's a container park of natural wonders built on the commitment of citizens... it demonstrates the methods and skills needed for building a state of the art public park with the help of citizens.' Over time, Boscoincittà has grown to 120 ha, including woodlands, meadows, streams, wetlands and allotment gardens. With this, Boscoincittà has contributed to a large increase in accessible green space with many associated environmental and social values (Centro Forestazione Urbana, 2014).

Boscoincittà is owned by the local municipality, but its management has been conceded to the NGO *Italia Nostra* (Our Italy) under a nine-year lease – the

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first signed in 1974. Italia Nostra is responsible for the park's development and management, while its Centre for Urban Forestry (CFU) is the executive unit that launches and coordinates activities (Italia Nostra, 2014). In contrast to the other two cases, Boscoincittà includes many different types of members in the park's management, as well as scouts and schools that participate in recreational and educational activities (e.g., nature hikes, games and programs organized by the CFU). Although these activities are to a large extent organized and carried out by citizens, there is more central steering and a stronger involvement of authorities and NGOs compared to the other two cases (Italia Nostra, 2014; Centro Forestazione Urbana, 2014).

Boscoincittà is mostly funded and managed by volunteer organizations, Italia Nostra and citizens. In addition, the Municipality of Milan provides 85% of the park's budget through an annual basic grant. The park is seen as being very successful and innovative by many involved, and is considered as a model for other cases (anonymous respondent, personal communication).

6.4 Results

6.4.1. Activities

In all three cases, green space management was the day-to-day manifestation of place-keeping. As highlighted across cases, it is the daily work of volunteers that maintained and enhanced the qualities of the involved places: 'we couldn't properly manage our areas if we didn't have the aid of a large number of volunteers' (Dutch NGO employee involved with De Ruige Hof, personal communication). This management in our three cases included mowing of grass, cleaning ditches, planting trees, maintaining paths and clearing waste. In these activities, we observed a clear shift from place-making to place-keeping over time. For example, in Volkspark Lichtenrade, citizens started with planting trees and creating recreational facilities, while their current focus is mostly on maintaining the existing qualities (Rosol, 2006). Even so, we still observed some new elements, such as a bird watching cabin in De Ruige Hof and new sports facilities in Boscoincittà.

Our studies also highlight the importance of other 'supporting' activities that citizens employed in the different place-keeping arrangements. Activities aimed

at reaching the public and/or policy makers can contribute to (long-term) support and stability for place-keeping: '… you need support as a group. And support, you only get when you have contacts with all kinds of organisations, offer activities and invite people' (Dutch NGO employee involved with De Ruige Hof, personal communication). Other activities are important to enable and support management, including bookkeeping and coordinating site activities (Theunissen and Bongers, 2004). Although perhaps not the day-to-day manifestation of place-keeping, these activities are crucial in securing a long-term perspective and in making sure that daily management can be continued.

6.4.2. Actors

The current amount of regular volunteers varied from around 10 in Volkspark Lichtenrade to 50 in De Ruige Hof and 400 in Boscoincittà. The shared view in our cases was that volunteers are mostly 'older' and 'white' people. In Volkspark Lichtenrade, it was noted that: 'younger members prefer to pay a membership fee rather than work on a voluntary basis' (Trägerverein Lichtenrade member, personal communication). In this, it remains an important challenge to achieve continuity in the engagement of citizens. Volkspark Lichtenrade highlights the importance of attracting new volunteers over time to maintain a critical mass. In contrast to this, the case of Boscoincittà shows that a large and stable group of volunteers and ditto supporting network of NGOs and local authorities can contribute to continuity in place-keeping over the years (anonymous respondent, personal communication).

When we look at the role of authorities and their relationship with citizens, the findings were somewhat contradictory. While citizens in all three cases generally experienced autonomy in their daily activities, authorities held considerable power as landowners and policy makers (see e.g. Van Dam et al., 2016). As a result, citizens were quite dependent on their cooperation to enable activities. Authorities can also terminate a place-keeping arrangement – which would have happened in De Ruige Hof if Klarenbeek would have been developed for housing. Even so, authorities in all cases had an important supportive role, as emphasized by a member from Trägerverein Lichtenrade: 'The district supported us from the beginning… We maintained this good relationship till today, and this makes us proud. If we hear from others that they struggle with politicians, that's something we are not familiar with.'

For citizens, changing administrations sometimes made it difficult to actually establish long-term relationships with authorities. One De Ruige Hof member

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said about a regional authority: 'we used to have close contacts, there were people that were well-disposed to us [...] Now, there are people that don't know us.' A volunteer from Boscoincittà stated: 'in the 40 years of Boscoincittà, different administrations have been there... and not with all were relations positive.' Ambiguous communication structures and bureaucratic procedures can also have a hindering or discouraging impact on the activities of citizens, as reported by respondents in the above case studies.

6.4.3. Rules

The groups in our cases all had formal regulations, a group constitution and a formalized legal structure. Volkspark Lichtenrade and De Ruige Hof are both associations, while Boscoincittà is formally supervised by an NGO. In all cases, a management plan was reported to help in planning activities in line with long-term goals (see e.g. Italia Nostra, 2014). Several sources across our cases highlighted the importance of central steering within the groups for safeguarding the quality and continuity of management (see e.g. Theunissen and Bongers, 2004).

Through lease agreements, formal procedures and e.g. an official water management plan in De Ruige Hof, the groups in our cases were also embedded in rules and regulations embedded in official 'general' laws and policies. This enabled them to formally take over management while also conferring certain official responsibilities to e.g. remove waste (Lichtenrade Berlin, 2008) or clean ditches (Van Dam et al., 2016). The formal arrangements for the long-term management activities by citizens can make a large difference in place-keeping. In Volkspark Lichtenrade, the management contract for the park is being renewed on an annual basis, which does not formally secure a long-term perspective for the citizens involved in place-keeping. For De Ruige Hof, both areas are not officially designated as a protected area, making them relatively easy targets for urban development. One Ruige Hof member expressed that their work 'deserves a better match' with policy.

6.4.4. Discourse

In all three cases, a shift from place-making to place-keeping also involved a shift in discourse: from *creating* to *maintaining* green values (see e.g. Italia Nostra, 2014). Especially in De Ruige Hof and Volkspark Lichtenrade, citizens have put a strong emphasis on the conservation and enhancement of existing values. With this, they also highlighted the importance of their work. The chairman from

Trägerverein Lichtenrade stated in a local newspaper: 'we don't maintain the park, we are the park.' In this light, the importance of long-term commitment and of continuous management to maintain a place were highlighted by respondents across cases: 'work is a duty... I cannot only show up when I feel like (Trägerverein Lichtenrade member, personal communication).

We have at times observed discrepancies between the objectives for the involved green spaces among citizens and authorities. The clearest example of this can be found in De Ruige Hof, where there have been government plans to develop Klarenbeek for housing or infrastructure. In all cases, we observed that citizens consider it important to profile and promote themselves and their discourses/ objectives in order to remain visible, gain support and protect their green spaces, which is also visible through the websites which they maintain (De Ruige Hof, 2017; Lichtenrade Berlin, 2008; Boscoincittà, 2017). Citizens accentuated the continuity in their activities to show that they could responsibly manage green spaces over time: 'we manage 12-13 hectares... We have been doing so successfully... for almost 30 years while also having a social function...' (Ruige Hof member, personal communication).

6.4.5. Resources

Urban green space management typically requires an ongoing stream of income. Membership fees and contributions by volunteers comprised an important and relatively stable part of this income, which allowed the groups in our cases to cover part of their management costs. Additional funding, mostly through grants and sponsoring, was also seen as necessary for long-term continuity: 'we can't finance this from the contributions, we also have to fall back on external funds' (Volkspark Lichtenrade member, personal communication). However, the recent economic crisis and austerity had reduced this external funding in our cases.

Income from grants mostly contributed to capital investments or one-off projects. For example, De Ruige Hof has been unsuccessful in securing a stable source of government grant income in recent years, while having some success in winning project-specific bids (Ruige Hof member, personal communication). Securing long-term fixed subsidies for place-keeping thus appears to be difficult, although Boscoincittà receives an annual grant (Centro Forestazione Urbana, 2014).

Social capital is another important resource. A large and stable base of volunteers provides the manpower and skills required for activities in our cases, with

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individual members often contributing specific expertise related to e.g. gardening or bookkeeping (Rosol, 2006; Van Dam et al., 2016). A shortage in social capital can pose a serious threat to the continuity of activities, as has become visible in Volkspark Lichtenrade where the current number of volunteers is perceived as being too low.

6.5 Discussion

Citizens have become an increasingly important actor in the governance and management of urban green, with debates arising about the long-term implications of this involvement. We contribute evidence on important enabling and constraining factors around the long-term engagement of citizens in place-keeping. Below, we highlight three key factors influencing long-term continuity.

6.5.1. Formalization and institutionalisation

Being unique long-term examples out of a much larger survey, it is remarkable that our cases all show a degree of formalization which is not seen in many other citizen-driven examples collected in this study (Van der Jagt et al., 2016). Our cases have established rules, power structures and a centralized coordination of management activities and largely maintained these over time. This has helped to provide a degree of stability to the involved groups and has greatly contributed to the continuity of management. If there were changes, these were mostly gradual and in line with existing rules and activities.

Citizens in our cases thus 'craft their own institutions' (Colding et al., 2013: p. 1042) to match with broader legal frameworks in society. By becoming a formal legal entity and adopting formal management plans, citizen groups increased their legitimacy and qualified for subsidies (see also Van Dam et al., 2014), but also became more embedded in existing rules and regulations by adopting elements embedded in official policies and laws. Here, we see a paradox which has been described before: in order to be successful in self-governing, citizens often need to match existing legal frameworks and connect with authorities (Van Dam et al., 2015). In this, there might be a tension between stronger institutionalization to safeguard continuity and the independence of citizens to plan the green space as they see fit.

6.5.2. Adaptive capacity

In line with findings by Burton et al. (2014), who noted that different processes can influence the management of a space, we see that place-keeping is at times influenced by developments that have little relation with the space itself. In our cases, these included policy changes, change-over of personnel at local administrations, local socio-demographic changes, and global trends such as the economic crisis. In the governance context of our case studies, such developments that are external to the space have often shown to be more of a threat to place-keeping than developments within citizen groups.

In order to maintain functioning despite such institutional changes, an adaptive capacity by citizens is key. As literature on governance also emphasizes, society is constantly evolving (Van Assche et al., 2014a). For place-keeping to succeed, citizens thus need to cope with a dynamic institutional and socio-demographic context in which their activities take place and their organization is embedded. As the case of Volkspark Lichtenrade shows, insufficient adaptation to contextual changes can eventually threaten place-keeping.

The resources available to citizens contribute to their adaptive capacity. This was especially apparent in Boscoincittà, where social and financial capital and a strong supporting network were key to its ongoing success. This is in line with previous research, which has shown that citizen groups with more social capital are more resilient to societal developments (Norris et al., 2008), while this also applies to groups with more funding (Kreutz et al., 2014). A strong network can also help if partners bring in additional resources (Burton and Mathers, 2014).

6.5.3. The role of authorities and their policies

Local authorities played an important role in all three case studies. All three citizen groups in our case studies were dependent on cooperation with local authorities, which had a strong position as landowners and policy makers. Our observations regarding this are in line with conclusions from other research, which highlighted that authorities often retain a central role in current-day green space governance (e.g. Mattijssen et al., 2015; Driessen et al., 2012). Despite their key role, the local authorities in our studies were not on the forefront of decision-making about e.g. management plans; their role was mainly to enable, protect and support.

While the local authorities involved in our case studies generally supported the citizen groups, these citizens sometimes struggled with bureaucratic procedures

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or local regulations. Discontinuity in municipal policies poses a potentially high risk for the continuity of place-keeping by citizens, most clearly illustrated by the municipality of Amsterdam's previous plans to develop Klarenbeek for housing. The success of place-keeping is thus closely associated with a long-term commitment of relevant actors (Burton and Mathers, 2014), and even in our cases where citizens played a prominent role, this also included authorities.

Following from this, authorities can contribute to place-keeping by citizens by providing stability and security in (green space) policies, mutual agreements and communications. In line with findings by Kreutz et al. (2014), two of our case studies showed that it is often easier to collect public resources for place-making than for place-keeping activities. Authorities and other funding bodies could improve on this point by contributing more resources towards place-keeping vis-à-vis place-making, as visible in the Boscoincittà case. They can also provide security by formally protecting the involved spaces or considering to offer long-term management contracts to citizen groups.

6.6 Conclusion and reflection

With citizens becoming an increasingly important actor in the management of urban green space, debates about their role in place-keeping have become more relevant. We contribute evidence on important enabling and constraining factors regarding the long-term engagement of citizens in place-keeping. Due to the context-dependency of case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2006), we advise taking care in extrapolating lessons from individual cases to other examples. Nonetheless, the conclusions we drew applied across multiple cases, providing a useful starting point for further research on successful place-keeping arrangements.

While our cases highlight a success in terms of the long-term continuity of management by citizens, they also highlight challenges in this. We identified three factors that are of particular relevance for long-term continuity of place-keeping by citizens. First of all, a degree of *formalization* appears to be important in providing stability: the activities of citizens in our cases were embedded within broader legal structures. Internal developments and changes mostly built upon existing activities and structures. In our analysis, institutional developments

were perceived to be more of a threat to place-keeping than internal changes. This brings us to the importance of *adaptive capacity* to place-keeping. As our cases show, citizens need to continuously adapt to contextual changes in order to achieve place-keeping. Available resources including social capital, funding and a strong network all contributed to this.

The role of authorities is also key in the long-term perspective for place-keeping by citizens. Authorities have an important role in enabling and legitimizing place-keeping by citizens. However, discontinuity in their support and policies have also been a major threat to continuity in some instances. Authorities can contribute to place-keeping by citizens by providing security via stable policies and supporting activities. They can also aid by formally protecting the involved spaces and offering long-term management contracts, thereby increasing long-term security for citizens. Finally, and more generally, if authorities want to conserve the values of existing spaces, they need to consider contributing more resources to place-keeping vis-à-vis place making.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 7

The transformative potential of active citizenship: understanding changes in local governance practices

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Abstract

Literature highlights that active citizens across the West have become increasingly involved in governance of urban green space. However, it has also been shown that citizens are often hindered by institutions and that active citizenship often cannot scale up beyond the local level. This paper focuses on understanding the transformative potential of active citizenship in the urban green domain, defined as its potential for reshaping the relationship among state, market and civil society in the delivery of products and services. With this paper, we focus on the role of citizens in the transformation of practices in the governance of urban green.

We have conducted an in-depth case study in the Dutch city of Amersfoort. In this study, we employ a practice-based perspective to discuss the exchange of elements between different practices and the role of active citizenship in transformation that has taken place. We show how discourses and activities promoted by citizens have become embedded in practices of spatial planning and green space management, instigating institutional changes and showcasing a transformative potential in both substance (redevelopment of a green space) and governance (co-creation).

Yet, our study also highlights the persisting influence of institutionalized rules and procedures. Institutional change in local governance is often a slow and complex process. Aligning with these institutions provided active citizens with more power, but this has a conditioning influence on their activities, reducing their independency and autonomy. These and other findings indicate that critical social science perspectives on such transformations remain important.

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1. An evolving role for citizens in the public domain

In late-modern society, the term *active citizenship* has risen to prominence to describe the role of citizens in the public domain (Moro, 2012). Active citizens are

portrayed as capable, self-organising agents who actively pursue their own public and private interests, with or without involvement of authorities (Van Dam et al., 2015; Hajer et al., 2015). Across policy domains, research provides many examples in which citizens successfully contribute to important public benefits (Moro, 2012). Also in the urban green domain, active citizenship has contributed to a multitude of societal and environmental values (Buijs et al., 2016a; Colding et al., 2013).

Across cities, citizens engage in a wide range of *governance practices* for greening spaces or for protesting against urban developments (Buijs et al., 2016a; Krasny and Tidball, 2012). While there is currently much attention for active citizenship in governance, practices with a dominant role for governmental authorities continue to exist as well (Mattijssen et al., 2015; Swyngedouw, 2005). With this, contemporary society is characterized by the co-existence of many governance practices in which different actors, including authorities, citizens, NGOs, communities and businesses, engage to accomplish their objectives. Governance systems are therefore characterized as polycentric and increasingly complex (Teisman et al., 2009; Ostrom, 2010). When citizens become active, they enter a complex and heterogeneous institutional context (Frantzeskaki et al., 2016).

7.1.2. The transformative potential of active citizenship

In their review of literature, Wolfram and Frantzeskaki (2016) highlight that many studies link urban sustainability challenges with social innovation, grassroots movements and new forms of governance. Many citizens become active to realize direct environmental or societal values and benefits, as well as to transform existing governance practices, for example by demanding more democracy, public participation, urban greening, or a deeper transition towards sustainability (Moro, 2012; Wagenaar et al., 2015). In both cases an important question is whether active citizenship can contribute not only to direct environmental or societal values and benefits, but also to a transformation of institutions in governance and of societal domains as a whole.

Some studies are rather sceptical about this. Critical scholars highlight how active citizenship often remains small-scale (Aiken, 2017) or claim that the involvement of active citizens in governance merely reproduces existing power relations (Swyngedouw, 2005). Indeed, many practices that involve active citizenship have not shown an ability to significantly affect existing governance practices, and through those, societal domains as a whole (Raco and Imrie, 2000; García, 2006), like the expansion of urban green infrastructures.

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Critical perspectives show how governments also fail to find proper mechanisms to connect to active citizens (De Wilde et al., 2014). Citizens often experience a lack of support from authorities or are even constrained by existing policies, hindering them in realizing substantive outcomes (Hajer et al., 2015; García, 2006). Research has shown that citizens often need to engage with government practices and legal frameworks in order to be successful in the public domain (Van Dam et al., 2015; Colding et al., 2013; Mattijssen et al., 2017). In this respect, 'growing' for citizens often means 'adapting' (Frantzeskaki et al., 2016). Weak connection with formal governance institutions will likely prevent upscaling of citizens' practices and their outcomes (Franklin and Marsden, 2015).

These critical studies might paint a somewhat bleak perspective for active citizens that aim for a change in governance or for societal transitions. However, perspectives on social innovation (Lévesque, 2013), new-communitarianism (Oosterlynck and Debruyne, 2013), new social movements (Leontidou, 2010) and transition studies (Kenis et al., 2016) do suggest that active citizenship can be considered as a seed for more systemic changes in society. These perspectives consider citizens as knowledgeable agents capable of influencing politics and building environmental and social resilience (Buijs et al., 2016a).

In this paper, we discuss the *transformative potential* of active citizenship in green space governance. This incurs its potential for realizing 'transformation in the relationship between state, market and civil society in the design and delivery of locally valued products and services' (Wagenaar et al., 2015: p.559). We aim to contribute towards an understanding of the role of active citizenship in the development and transformation of *governance practices*. We focus on transformations in (1) the relationship between citizens and authorities[18] and (2) the delivery of green space as a local service. In the urban green domain, this insight is important to understand if and how citizens can transform existing governance practices, realize substantive outcomes and instigate democratic renewal.

We address the above debates with an exemplary case study in the Dutch city of Amersfoort. The main research question which we address in this paper is the following:

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[18] We do not explicitly focus on the role of market actors in this papers

What is the transformative potential of active citizenship in green space governance?

This question is accompanied by two sub-questions:
1. *What are the interactions among governance practices of active citizens and authorities?*
2. *How do active citizens influence the transformation of practices in the governance of green space?*

7.2 Theory

7.2.1. A practice based approach
Literature increasingly emphasises the relevance of local practices in governance – including practices initiated by citizens (García, 2006; Mattijssen et al., 2018b). In this paper, we employ a practice based approach (Arts et al., 2013b) in order to study the *transformative potential* of active citizenship. Practice theory understands social reality as being constituted by human activity (Schatzki, 2012). However, practice theory is neither focused on the actions of individual human beings, the key unit of analysis in most economics, nor on the influence of external structures or institutions on human behaviour, as is the case for neo-institutionalism (Reckwitz, 2002b). Rather, it takes an ontological 'middle-position' and argues that social reality should be understood through the empirical analysis of 'social practices', of which both agents and structures are part.

A practice has been defined as 'an ensemble of doings, sayings and things in a specific field of activity' (Arts et al., 2013b: p.9). These doings, sayings and things comprise elements a practice consists of (although various practice scholars distinguish different elements in their writings; see below). Irrespective of these distinguishable elements, practice scholars argue that social practices should be seen and assessed as a whole (Reckwitz, 2002b; Shove et al., 2012). The elements a practice consists of gain their meaning through the very same practices they are part of. So, while a gardening tool is a material resource in itself, it only gains its social meaning as part of a gardening practice. Similarly, language and discourse gain their social meaning through their embeddedness in daily practices. Practices that share similar elements (e.g. teaching practices, nature conservation practices) are seen as *bundles* (Schatzki, 2012).

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Practices are teleoaffective: they have an orientation towards an end, a telos (Schatzki, 2010). This telos can be seen as a future dimension which makes people engage in a social practice (Shove and Spurling, 2013). Affectivity is what motivates practitioners to engage for the sake of its telos. Affects are 'states of physical arousal, of pleasure or displeasure, directed at some definite person, object or idea' (Reckwitz, 2016: p. 118-119). As highlighted in the idea of teleoaffectivity, active citizens thus engage in governance practices because they want to realize both a certain end-goal and an emotional fulfilment.

The material world is considered a crucial and integral component of social practices: nonhuman elements such as natural objects and technological artefacts play a constitutive role in producing social life (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). For example, the above gardening tool co-shapes the gardening practice as it implies certain doings and sayings. Once the tool is substituted by a new, let's assume more innovative one, the gardening practice will also change. Thus, the material world is not merely the substrate of social practices, but it actively shapes how these are performed (Barad, 2003). Similarly, the activities of citizens in a specific green space are co-produced by the material characteristics of this space. The agency of humans is thus entwined with the material and social situation in which they find themselves. This notion is called situated agency (Bevir, 2005).

7.2.2. Dynamics in social practices

Social practices are inherently dynamic because they need to be continuously performed in order to exist (Shove et al., 2012). Practices may change over time, potentially implying agencies 'doing things otherwise' (Giddens, 1984). Again, think of the example of the gardening tool in the above. And the same applies to the subjects of this paper: active citizens in green space governance. A seed for change might stem from the social situation (new actors entering the governance scene), the material situation (accelerated deterioration of the green space), or from a change in teleoaffectivity (new end-goals or demise of old affects). We speak of change when there is a shift in one or more elements of any number of practices (Liefferink, 2006). This change is understood as a transformation when there are changes on the institutional level (see below).

Although being dynamic in principle, social practices often tend to stabilize and reproduce themselves (Shove et al., 2012). A certain element which is commonly reproduced in practices is seen as being *institutionalized* (Reckwitz, 2002b). An example can be a law, a cultural tradition or a standardized way of working. Such

'institutionalized elements' often span various social practices, like a law on pesticide use being relevant for both private gardening and public green space management. Hence, these institutionalized elements work like 'a glue' among practices, reinforcing their stability or instigating renewal once they are changing. A change in institutions can thus be understood as a change of institutionalized elements *across* practices (Hargreaves et al., 2013) and it is only through their embedding in concrete practices that institutions maintain to exist. In order to study the transformative potential of active citizenship, we therefore need to understand how citizens, as situated agents, bring about institutional change across governance practices.

7.2.3. Elements of governance practices

As said, a social practice consists of various elements. Several practice scholars have distinguished different elements, for example (Schatzki, 2010) distinguishes understandings, telos/affects and rules, while (Shove et al., 2012) refers to meanings, competencies and materiality. For this paper, since it focuses on governance practices, we found inspiration in an established framework for studying governance: the policy arrangement approach (PAA, Van Tatenhove et al., 2000). The PAA helps to understand dynamics in governance processes over time (Liefferink, 2006) and may aid in identifying and investigating relevant elements of governance practices. The PAA, when tailored to study local governance practices (Mattijssen et al., 2017), employs five analytical dimensions (see Table 17): discourses, actors, rules, resources and activities (Mattijssen et al., 2018b). Here, we understand these dimensions as constitutive elements of a governance practice that is inherently connected with the material and social world.

Table 17: Overview of elements of governance practices

Elements	Descriptions
Actors	Practitioners involved in governance, agencies situated in their social and material worlds
Discourse	The sayings/narratives of practitioners (indicating their telos/affects)
Activities	Practitioners' doings in the material world (inspired by their telos/affects)
Resources	Material tools and immaterial attributes/competencies of practitioners
Rules	Formal and informal guiding principles for 'doing/saying the right thing'

The first element highlights the *actor constellation* in a certain governance practice. Often, actors form coalitions to strive for the realization of common end-goals (Van Tatenhove et al., 2000). With the element of *discourse*, the verbal

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expressions and narratives in governance practices are highlighted (Liefferink, 2006). These generally not only refer to *what* should be done (for example re-greening an area), but also *how* (e.g. through participatory democracy). The *activities* scrutinize what actors do in the field towards the realization of their telos and affects (Mattijssen et al., 2018b). Such might range from planting trees to discussing with municipality officials. The *resources* refer to the material and immaterial attributes and competencies practitioners have at hand in order to be able and know 'how to go on in practice' (Giddens, 1984). Generally, resources are not equally divided among people, so some are more successful in doing so than others. Finally, rules refer to 'guiding principles' in social practices – like cultural values and norms, or technical standards – that inform practitioners to do or say 'the right thing' in a given situation (Bourdieu, 1990). As the terminology already shows, these principles *guide* actors, but do *not* condition them, because people have agency to do things otherwise.

7.3 Methods

7.3.1. Praxeology

Practices are discernible across time and space and can be analysed by a wide range of methods (Jonas et al., 2017; Arts et al., 2013b). However, practices and the elements they consist of are often difficult to identify *ex-ante* (Nicolini, 2017). In this light, it is important to understand that a researcher should strive to understand practices through engaging with them in the field, rather than defining what exactly constitutes a practice beforehand (Schmidt, 2017): 'one has to engage with practice itself and allow the phenomenon to bite back' (Nicolini, 2017: p.25). This is called *praxeology*. Its core principle emphasises that an appropriate framework for studying social practices should be open and thus be based on *sensitizing concepts*, so that theoretical and empirical understandings of practice(s) are integrated in an iterative research process (Schmidt, 2017).

In our case, the five PAA elements (see Table 17) act as sensitizing concepts. However, in the analysis of governance practices in our case study below, we do not intend to systematically analyse *all* five elements for *each* practice. What we nonetheless do intend is identifying those elements in the relevant local governance practices that have instigated or blocked change. By doing so, we aim

to trace how the transformational potential of active citizenship has come about and produced institutional change.

7.3.2. Case study approach and case selection
In this paper, we use a case study approach for the collection and analysis of data. A case study is a holistic approach for the in-depth study of complex social phenomena with a focus on social interactions and multiple viewpoints. A social-science case study refers to a practical real life situation in which conditions cannot be manipulated (Yin, 1994). Since knowledge in social science is always context-dependent, the case study approach advertises that researchers pay close attention to the social and material context in which their study takes place (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Below, we will analyse a single case in Amersfoort (Van Dam et al., 2016). This Dutch city is located centrally in the Netherlands and has about 150.000 inhabitants. In Amersfoort, we studied the ongoing spatial redevelopment of an old hospital site (the 'Elisabethlocation') into a green park. This transformation was realized through an interactive governance process, involving both citizens and policy makers. This case was selected as an unique exemplary one out of a large sample of 264 citizens' initiatives on green space governance (Mattijssen et al., 2018b). It was specifically selected for the suspected central role of citizens in transforming local governance practices.

7.3.3. Data collection and analysis
In our fieldwork, we focused on meticulously mapping the process that led to the creation and formalization of the spatial plan for redeveloping the Elisabeth-area. We started our fieldwork with an extensive study of relevant documents and websites discussing the Elisabeth-location and active citizenship in Amersfoort. These documents were collected via a search on the internet and in local media, producing 35 sources (policy documents, websites, reports) discussing one or more of the practices highlighted in chapter 4. An online platform that was used by citizens and policy makers to communicate was also regularly monitored and analysed.

We also conducted a total of 11 interviews with 9 key respondents in personal interviews (two respondents were interviewed twice at different times). These interviews were semi-structured: questionnaires for each interview were reflectively constructed on the basis of previously collected data and tailored for

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the specific respondent. Respondents were also asked for additional information such as policy letters and internal notes. Respondents include 5 citizens and a public official that were directly involved in the co-creation practice around the Elisabeth-area; the municipality councillor of spatial development; a local member of the municipality council; and a local citizen who is professionally involved with active citizenship and knows the ins-and-outs in Amersfoort.

The collected data were qualitatively analysed and jointly interpreted by four different researchers. During this process, considerable attention was focused on identifying different practices, highlighting key elements, studying interactions between practices and scrutinizing transformations over time. Closely connected to the empirical findings, the use and understanding of theory was also regularly discussed. As a final step in the analysis, the main findings were reported back to respondents in a draft report. These respondents were asked to comment on potential inaccuracies and provide additional relevant information to strengthen our analysis. The majority of respondents replied, and their comments were used to improve our analysis in a second round.

7.4 The Elisabeth-area and changing practices over time

7.4.1. The redevelopment of an old hospital site

In Amersfoort, plans for the demolition of the Elisabeth-hospital emerged in 1999. In these plans, two old hospitals would be replaced by a modern one in a new location. As Figure 9 shows, the Elisabeth-hospital was located in the centre of a mostly green area. This area is known as the 'Heiligenbergerbeekdal', named after a stream which flows through the valley. The Heiligenbergerbeekdal is located in the southeast of Amersfoort and leads from the city borders up to its centre.
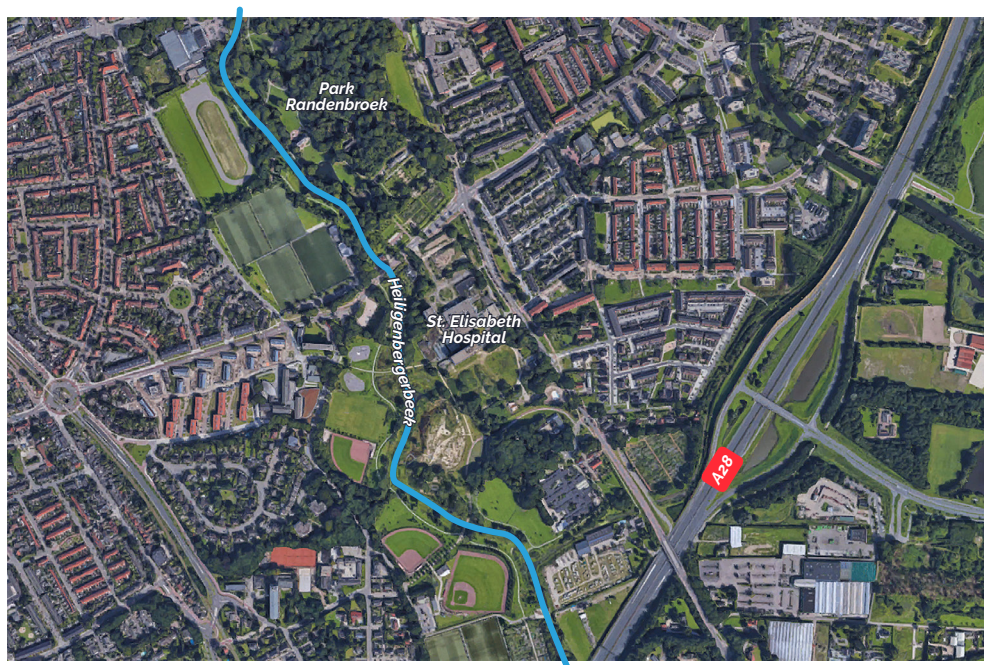
Figure 9: The Heiligenbergerbeekdal. Source: Google Earth. Image edited by authors.

In the Elisabeth-area, discussions quickly arose about what to do with the involved 8 hectares of land. The relocation plans led to the rise of a new 'green' discourse: that of an ecological corridor leading from the outskirts of Amersfoort up to the city centre. A growing number of citizens saw the demolition of the Elisabeth-hospital as an important opportunity for creating a green Heiligenbergerbeekdal. A coalition of citizens FH ('Foundation Heiligenbergerbeekdal') was therefore founded in 2003. This group employed activities towards a telos of improving the ecological and recreational opportunities in the Heiligenbergerbeekdal. Being confronted with views from many political parties to develop the Elisabeth-area for housing, FH developed a green vision for the entire area. They started mobilizing support for their vision and lobbying with local politicians to promote it.

Starting with FH's establishment, Figure 10 highlights the most important practices regarding the redevelopment of the Elisabeth-area over time. The arrows indicate how certain practices have inspired new ones, with practices initiated by authorities in the top, citizen-initiated practices on the bottom, and collaborative practices in the centre of the y-axis. We will subsequently discuss these practices below, identifying important elements of change.

Figure 10: practices relevant in the development of the Elisabeth-area over time
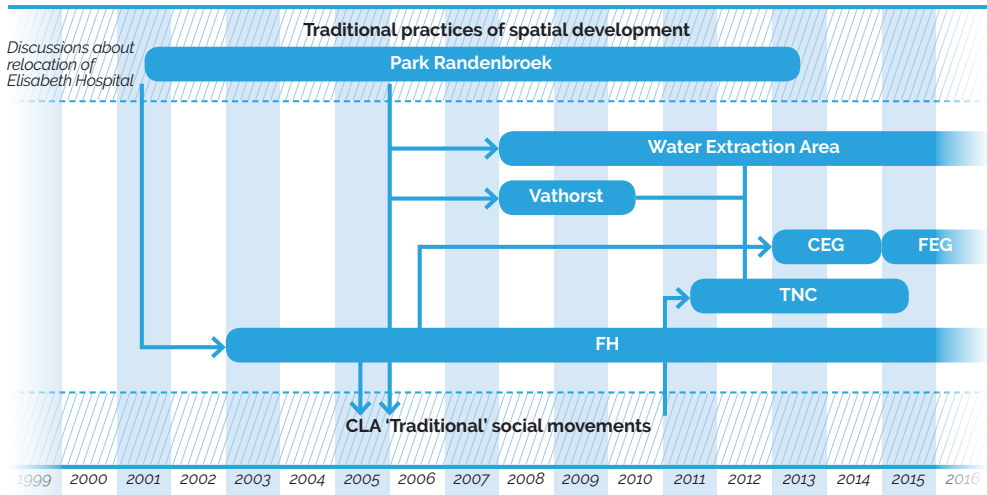
7.4.2. Spatial development and participatory planning practices

Historically, municipal actors in Amersfoort have had a leading role in decision making (municipal council) and implementation (public officials) of spatial policies. This gradually changed from the early 2000s onwards, when new democratic ideals on participatory governance became part of the discourse in municipal planning practices. An early participatory planning practice (2002-2012) focused on redeveloping Park Randenbroek, a park situated close to the Elisabeth hospital (fig. 1). Here, citizens criticized the municipality for being slow and non-transparent, for the limited space for providing input and because mistakes were made in implementation: at least 36 trees had been erroneously and illegally cut due to miscommunication with the subcontractor.

The commotion during this process is identified as an important turning point around 2008: it made municipal actors aware that there needed to be space for deliberation. This resulted in an affective shift in a number of planning practices from 2008 onwards. In these practices, citizens were prominently involved in shaping activities and developing spatial plans. In 'Water extraction area', a 25 hectare green area, citizens and public officials co-created a development plan, signing a collective agreement on its management. The municipality also initiated a large participatory trajectory for developing a new residential area in the neighbourhood Vathorst. Here, involved citizens and the municipality council were very positive about the process. Even so, there were many other spatial

development practices, such as planning the trajectory for a new road, where municipality actors had a leading role with a limited involvement of citizens.

7.4.3. Active citizenship: CLA as a bundle of practices

Next to the municipality, active citizens also initiated practices related to the spatial development of the city and the wellbeing of its population. Already in the 1990's, there were many groups of active citizens that pursued a wide variety of objectives throughout Amersfoort. A number of these groups focused on objectives related to green space or the environment, while others were aimed at social cohesion, housing or infrastructure. In 1995, many of these groups had bundled under the moniker of CLA ('cooperation of groups for a liveable Amersfoort'), a local coalition of NGOs which nowadays consists of 14 NGOs, including FH who joined after their establishment. While these NGOs had varying objectives, they found each other in a common theme: liveability. CLA was originally often perceived as a protest movement.

7.4.4. 'The new collaborating'

Over time, some of the people involved in CLA became frustrated as they rarely accomplished their objectives through lobby and protest. In 2011, a number of CLA members set up The New Collaborating, TNC, to develop better forms of collaboration between citizens and the municipality of Amersfoort. Towards this end, TNC initiated brainstorm sessions with citizens, public officials and politicians, organized a conference to discuss cooperation between citizens and public officials and also set up a 'city-café' to facilitate a dialogue between citizens and municipal actors.

In developing a new practice to constructively improve the relationship between local citizens and the municipality administration, TNC has consciously built on the experiences from earlier practices. Highlighting successes in 'Water extraction area', 'Vathorst' and other participatory governance practices, TNC actively promoted a discourse of co-creation between the administration and inhabitants of Amersfoort. With this, the citizens in TNC combined elements from earlier practices involving the municipality and/or active citizens, linking formal procedures and government resources with collaboration activities and a contribution of immaterial resources by citizens. TNC also searched for new elements by inviting external experts and by working on a vision with both citizens and public officials. In all their activities, TNC explicitly aimed for a change in the roles of actors and the rules of the game: more collaboration between citizens and municipal actors and a sharing of responsibility and power.

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7.4.5. 'Green co-creation'

With the relocation of the hospital still being many years away, no political decisions about the Elisabeth-area were made in the years 2004 – 2010. Over these years, FH's vision gathered some support among citizens. However, despite FH's lobby efforts, local political parties still aimed to develop the Elisabeth-area for housing in their official stances. This changed in 2010, when political party 'D66' Amersfoort (liberal democrats) included a green vision for the Elisabeth-area in their election programme. By then, plans for construction of the new hospital were in an almost final draft, and discussions about the Elisabeth-location re-emerged. The election programme of D66 Amersfoort was the first occasion where the 'green' discourse promoted by FH found public political support. However, in 2010, the local governing coalition did not take any official decisions about the Elisabeth-area.

In 2012, this governing coalition collapsed and a new coalition was formed. D66 Amersfoort (again) became part of the new governing coalition. This time, the green vision for the Elisabeth-area was included in the formal coalition agreement in which policy priorities were identified. Supported by a majority of votes in the municipal council, the D66-councillor of spatial development started to work on developing a plan for spatial development. At this point in time, TNC had just organized a well-attended conference and was actively promoting their discourse on collaboration between public officials and citizens. Inspired by TNC, the councillor proposed to set up an interactive process to develop the Elisabeth-area 'together with the city', in agreement with the municipality council. With this, TNC's 'co-creation' discourse was taken up and linked to a specific area: the redevelopment of the Elisabeth-location.

7.4.6. Kerngroep Elisabeth Groen: co-creation of a new green space

When the decision was made to redevelop the Elisabeth-area 'together with the city', the responsible D66-councillor of spatial development contacted the chairman of TNC in order to set up an interactive process. Aligning with the ideas of TNC, Core group Elisabeth Green (CEG) was established in cooperation between the municipality and local citizens to be in charge of this process. CEG consisted of 2 public officials and 8 citizens, including representatives from TNC, CLA and FH.

Formed in March 2013, CEG was formally in charge of the process of creating a development plan and management plan for the Elisabeth-area. Because new municipal elections were to occur in March 2014, these plans had to be developed

quickly, so that a new political constellation would not throw a spanner in the works. The municipality council set a number of directives for CEG. Content-wise, the area had to remain 'largely green', three areas where dogs could run free had to be included, and the old boiler house had to be conserved as a monument for the city. Process-wise, a budget of €1.5 million was allocated for the development and management of the park, whereas a number of legal procedures had to be followed. Besides these directives, there was no clear vision for how the Elisabeth-area had to be developed and for what the exact contents of plans needed to be: this was up to CEG.

Based on the vision of TNC, CEG immediately aimed to involve both citizens and municipality officials in their work. In April 2013, they organized an unofficial 'kick-off meeting' with citizens. In June 2013, CEG organized an official meeting where citizens brought in a total of 200 ideas for the Elisabeth-area. Meanwhile, a number of working groups to support CEG was set-up involving about 30 citizens and representatives of NGOs. In the following months, CEG organized several evenings where citizens could provide input. In the meanwhile, the different working groups worked on a development plan and an accompanying management plan. The process also included a regular feedback loop with involved municipality departments and was discussed in the municipality council on several occasions. Citizens were kept up-to-date via an online platform.

During this time, we distinguish two distinct discourses in CEG: one on content and one on governance. The governance discourse focused on co-creation and collaboration between citizens and municipal authorities, as advocated by TNC. Due to its composition, CEG has many connections with both citizens and public officials. With the focus on co-creation, resources provided by both citizens and municipality were important in creating the spatial plan and organizing the process through which this happened. The people involved with TNC played an important role in 'keeping the city involved'. In policy procedures and technical details, such as when a financial paragraph needed to be written, there was support from public officials.

Representatives from FH and other local NGOs contributed ecological knowledge and/or knowledge about the local cultural history. Because most people in CEG were closely associated with the 'co-creation' discourse, the representative of FH could promote FH's vision. Content-wise, the vision that CEG formulated can be traced back *'for about 90%'* (respondent CEG) to FH's vision from 2003, in which

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a strong focus on ecology is combined with extensive forms of recreation, and in which nature is developed in both 'dry' and 'wet' parts, attuning to the structure of the landscape. In December 2013, the municipality council almost unanimously accepted the final development- and management plan developed by CEG. With this, FH's green discourse became translated into official policy through a collaboration as advocated by TNC. With this, both discourses in CEG affectively aligned towards the same telos of developing a green Elisabeth-park together with the city.

7.4.7. Stichting Elisabeth Groen: from co-creation to co-management

In January 2014, CEG evaluated the process so far. While CEG's work in the creation of the development- and management plans was finished, many citizens had expressed a desire to be involved in the management of the park. CEG decided that they would disband to allow a new group to take over responsibilities for realizing and managing the park. This happened in October 2014: Foundation Elisabeth Green (FEG) was established for these purposes. This foundation immediately signed an agreement for cooperation with the municipality. With this, there was a formal continuation of the cooperation in the Elisabeth-area, albeit with a shift from co-creation towards co-management.

In early 2018, FEG is still in contact with the working groups that supported CEG and meets annually with the municipality council. Incidental meetings also happen whenever issues come up. The eventual demolition of the hospital was significantly delayed, mostly due to discovery of asbestos. Because of these delays, FEG started organizing monthly working days in the Heiligenbergerbeekdal. On the south-side of the Elisabeth-area, where buildings have already been demolished, work for developing the Elisabeth-park will start around April 2018. Remaining park-development will likely start at the end of 2019.

Some citizens of Amersfoort are currently organizing themselves to purchase the boiler house, the remaining building which will become a 'monument' for the city. These citizens want to redevelop the building into a 'Park House' which associations, citizens and entrepreneurs can use together. Current plans include a café, childcare, music studio, yoga-studio, artist's workshop and a city-meeting room, as well as an office for FEG.

7.4.8. Aftermath: elsewhere in Amersfoort

TNC and CEG were perceived as successful in transforming governance practices and in redeveloping the Elisabeth area into an ecological corridor. Several people from TNC and CEG continued their efforts to increase active citizenship and co-governance practices in Amersfoort. After publishing a final report *'for the municipality council and the city'*, TNC went into 'slumber mode' at the end of 2014, considering their objectives to be accomplished.

To promote citizen initiatives and offer services to active citizens, a new organization was founded: 'citizens 033'. Citizens033 offers an online platform for groups of active citizens to promote themselves and learn from each other. Also at governmental level, steps were taken through the appointment of an official municipality aldermen for 'administrative innovation' in 2014, a rather unique position aiming to officially promote co-creation and collaboration. A green spatial vision for the city was interactively developed through a process of co-creation in 2014-2015. Also in other practices, citizens increasingly were involved in the redevelopment of a road and took over a public building from the municipality. One of the citizens originally involved in CEG has said: 'the legacy of CEG shows that you can achieve a lot with citizens [...] Both from citizens and from the municipality, it is recognised that we can really do it together.'

7.5 Elements of change

As we have shown throughout our analysis, many elements (discourses, actors, activities, resources, rules) in the practice around CEG are related to other practices in Amersfoort where active citizens played an important role (Figure 11 highlights the most important elements of change for the arrows between practices). When we look at our five sensitizing concepts, we see a transformation over time for each of these elements. We will deal with these subsequently.
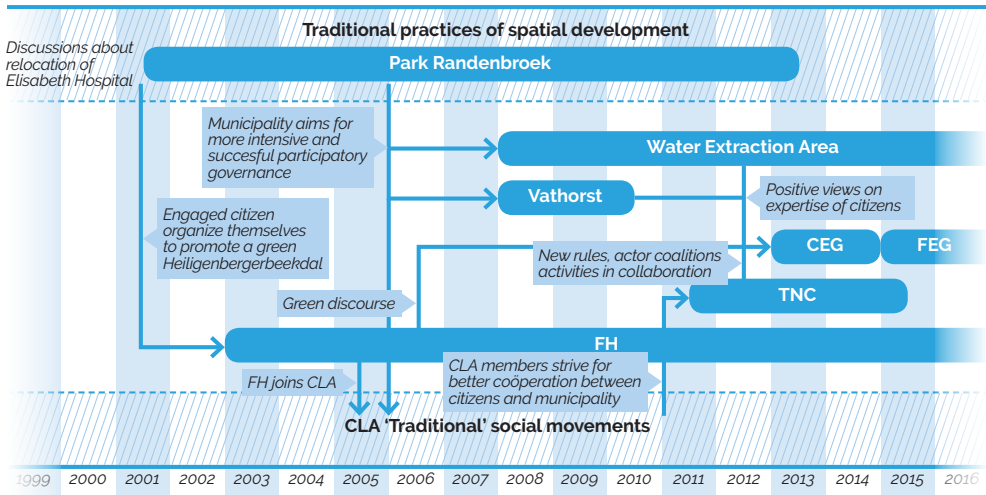
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Figure 11: an overview of practices in Amersfoort throughout the years

7.5.1. **Discourse**

We first consider the dimension of *discourses*. As we have shown, the substantive 'green' discourse formulated in the vision of FH would eventually become dominant in discussions about the redevelopment of the Elisabeth-area. With this, the 'green' discourse excluded alternative visions to develop the area for sports or housing, although some respondents suggest that the economic crisis might have also played a role by changing the perceived relevance of housing development.

When we look at the green discourse, it is important to recognize the constitutive role of materiality. With its location in the Heiligenbergerbeekdal, the Elisabeth-area is connected to a green infrastructure that leads from the outskirts of Amersfoort into the city center. Because of this connection to other green infrastructure, a green development of the Elisabeth-location was central to FH's teleoaffectivity. This discourse is thus strongly connected with the material world and now lives on through FEG.

The 'collaboration' discourse promoted by TNC would become dominant in discussions about the process of redeveloping this area. This discourse was advocated by TNC and inspired by positive and negative experiences with participatory governance in several practices. This discourse is thus not rooted in materiality, but related to knowledge, experiences and competencies of actors across a number of different practices. Through its uptake in CEG and its persistence in other practices after it, the co-creation discourse has nowadays become embedded in a number of

other practices (including FEG), although it is too early to speak about a mainstream transformation of local governance.

7.5.2. Actors

Through TNC, CEG and FEG, new *actors* became involved in a variety of local governance practices. Across our study, new constellations of actors can be seen in many practices (Water extraction area, Vathorst, TNC, CEG, FEG, green spatial vision). This incurs new roles for citizens (active involvement in creation and implementation of policy), but also for public officials, who have taken on a more facilitating role. The transformation in these new actor constellations can be linked to the influence of the 'collaboration' discourse as well as to municipal aims for more intensive and successful participation.

Our case study highlights the importance of situated agency, with the role of certain individuals being of key relevance in shaping the practice around CEG. Influenced by the 'collaboration' discourse of TNC, the councillor of spatial development has chosen to shape the process via TNC's ideas. His position of power and the council's support for a green development of the Elisabeth-location provided a political 'window of opportunity' for this. The role of the chairman of CLA, also one of the initiators of TNC and member of D66, is also very important. The councillor personally contacted him to set up CEG via the ideas developed in TNC. The CEG-representative of FH strongly promoted the vision of FH, within the directives set by the municipality. Because others in CEG attributed more value to the governance process rather than its substance, she could affectively align FH's vision with the co-creation discourse.

7.5.3. Activities

The *activities* introduced by TNC had an important role in bringing citizens and public officials together, which is visible in how citizens and municipality officials are perceived to have operated in CEG: together around the same table, with an equal say for everybody. Activities included open dialogues between CEG and the citizens and officials outside of CEG, in working groups and during information evenings. These activities are inspired by the dialogues set up by TNC and also by earlier experiences with participatory governance. Over time and across practices, we see a shift in these activities with collaboration becoming more intense.

However, when we look at the activities, we also see the conditioning role of institutions. Next to the 'new' activities in collaboration, procedural activities

strongly persisted as well: CEG's progress was discussed during official meetings of the municipality council and subjected to official financial and legal scrutinies, where public officials had to account for certain proceedings and/or engage in the writing of certain paragraphs. In the activities of CEG, we thus see a mix of those activities inspired by active citizens and of institutionalized activities embedded in traditional policy practices. While we do see a shift towards collaborating activities across practices and over time, a number of these procedural activities thus persists as well.

7.5.4. Resources

Looking at the *resources*, we also see a shift from prior practices. Financially, resources still mostly come from municipal sources: the municipality council has assigned €1,5 million for the redevelopment of the Elisabeth-area and also purchased the 8 ha of land. Even so, the citizen initiative to purchase the boiler house shows that citizens do aim to contribute financial resources as well. When we look at the role of materiality as a resource, the biotic and abiotic conditions of the Elisabeth-area were important in the creation of the development and management plans, where 'wet' and 'dry' parts were planned to fit these conditions. Some of the existing infrastructure (paths and roads) was incorporated for use in these plans as well.

When we look at attributes and competences, an ongoing shift is already visible, with citizens providing a more important contribution over time – strengthened by earlier experiences with co-governance. The people in TNC contributed expertise concerning the organization of activities, while public officials were important in linking up with official rules, but also regarding the substance of the plans. In the latter case, representatives from FH and other local NGOs contributed important ecological and environmental knowledge. Substance-wise, citizens of Amersfoort also provided input for the development and management plans, contributing over 200 ideas.

7.5.5. Rules

When we look at the *rules*, our study shows how regulatory elements such as formal development plans or an approval of these plans by the council are deeply institutionalized in practices of the municipality. In these instances, CEG followed established rules. Regulatory elements thus continued to exercise a strong guidance on the activities of CEG. The whole timeframe of CEG's activities was mostly guided by official procedures, including the upcoming elections. It is

important to note that citizens also attributed value towards formalizing their activities and following official procedures. Nonetheless, some citizens did express frustrations about the large number of procedures, such as financial paragraphs or municipality meetings.

While formal rules persist, co-creation can informally be seen as a new rule of the game. Because of this, formals procedures and directives set by the municipality have been broken in some instances. Content-wise, the original directive for the Elisabeth-location prescribed three small areas where dogs could roam freely. During discussions, CEG discovered that citizens preferred one large area instead. This change from the official directives was accepted by the municipality. Process-wise, due to time pressure, an official policy meeting with a formal round of consultation was skipped, backed by the argument that consultation had already taken place at other moments.

7.6 Discussion

7.6.1. Drivers for change

In Amersfoort, authorities and active citizens have moved towards each other over the years by exchanging elements such as actors, activities, resources, discourses and rules among practices . This is clear for FH, who originally focused on protesting and now cooperate with the municipality. Similarly, the municipality has gradually moved from top-down creation and implementation of policy towards interactive and flexible ways of working. These transformations have taken place through daily practices of collaboration, where the municipality supports the upscaling and institutionalization of active citizenship (the importance of such support is also highlighted by Franklin and Marsden, 2015; De Wilde et al., 2014; Aalbers and Sehested, 2018).

This was a gradual and path-dependent process, where actors consciously promoted certain elements and also adapted to institutional changes such as elections and the economic crisis. Over time, positive experiences, such as with participatory planning in Vathorst, can instigate change in other practices. Here, the view on the expertise of citizens created more room for citizen involvement in other practices. Negative experiences, such as in Park Randenbroek, can also

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influence other practices: certain procedures used in this practice were abandoned in others. Citizens in CLA were frustrated that they often did not accomplish their objectives through protesting, which motivated some of them to set up TNC and search for collaboration with the municipality.

Interestingly, we see that many developments aligned with the original telos of FH: their new focus on cooperation with the municipality still works towards the same end of a green Heiligenbergerbeekdal. On the side of the municipality, we see a bigger shift in teleoaffectivity. Here, citizens' critiques on the process for redeveloping Park Randenbroek had put pressure on existing ways of working. Yet, the involvement of citizens in governance was not merely a way to implement green space policies more efficiently: it became more of an objective in itself. In this, the activities and discourse from TNC have influenced a shifting teleoaffectivity in municipal practices. Core to the success of CEG may have been that TNC's co-governance and FH's green discourse affectively worked towards the same telos in CEG.

7.6.2. The transformative potential of active citizenship

This paper investigates the role of active citizenship in the transformation of governance practices. As we have shown, the discourses promoted, activities employed and resources contributed by citizens have played an important role in redesigning the Elisabeth-area, as well as on the process of doing so. We therefore see a transformation in both *substance* (redevelopment of built area into a green space) as well as in *process* (co-creation and intense collaboration between citizens and authorities). While redevelopment of built-up area into green space is nothing new in western cities, the 8 ha size of the area and the significant influence of FH's vision are rather unique within urban boundaries in the Netherlands. The level of direct citizen influence on the public expenditure of €1.500.000 is also a significant development, as is the intensity of collaboration with this many people involved.

In this respect, despite the many critical perspectives in literature, our analysis does highlight the role of citizens as situated agents capable of transforming many elements (discourses, activities, actors, resources, rules) of government practices. We show a change across practices in terms of the involved actors, the discourses promoted and the activities in which these actors engage, but also a slight shift in resources (forms of capital contributed by citizens) and rules (skipping of formal procedures, involvement of CEG in official meetings of authorities). For these transformations in both substance and process, the exchange of elements between

practices plays a key role. Social connectivity between practices is thus important for the transformative potential of active citizenship (Buijs et al., 2018b; Franklin and Marsden, 2015).

Looking at how governance is locally transformed, it is also important to look at what happened after the successes of CEG. From a substantive perspective, the redevelopment of the Elisabeth-area is still ongoing, and respondents highlight how elements from TNC and CEG still inspire the development of new practices, such as Citizens033. Whether other spatial development in the city will become more sustainable and inclusive remains to be seen. The appointment of an a alderman for 'administrative innovation' can be seen as an significant step towards further institutional change.

7.6.3. The conditioning influence of institutions

Our analysis highlights that this transformation is a slow and ongoing process. We show changes for almost all elements, but also highlight that the process to redevelop the Elisabeth-area is largely organized to align with existing institutions (rules, activities, resources, actors). Across practices, authorities retain an important role in setting frameworks and objectives, formalizing spatial plans, issuing permits and maintaining regulations. A cynical observant might thus argue that our story indeed shows a reproduction of power relations (see Swyngedouw, 2005).

Informally, however, not one of our respondents would agree with this cynical observant: while the municipality formally accorded decisions, citizens had a substantial influence on how green space is being developed and on how the process to do so was organized. Also after CEG, changes instigated by citizens persist in other practices, with TNC's vision still inspiring new practices as discussed in the previous paragraph and with FH/CEG's green vision persisting in FEG.

Even so, our findings do confirm the trade-off between the autonomy and independency of active citizens and their influence in the public domain (Franklin and Marsden, 2015; Frantzeskaki et al., 2016). While intense collaboration eventually resulted in a more influential position for citizens in CEG, our analysis shows that their situatedness as CEG-members also meant that they were to some extent conditioned by institutionalized rules, discourses, resources and activities.

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This brings us towards the concept of power, which is an important concept in the PAA to study how actors can achieve desired outcomes in governance processes (Van der Zouwen, 2006b). In CEG, cooperation with authorities and the incorporation of specific procedures in their activities provided citizens with the situated agency to influence the outcome of the process and the way in which the process was given shape. We thus observe that it may be beneficial for active citizens to align with existing legal frameworks in order to be influential (Colding et al., 2013).

7.6.4. Theoretical recommendations and methodological reflections

In this paper we have employed a practice-based approach, a novel perspective to study active citizenship in local governance. Rather than merely focusing on agency or institutions, we have studied the transformative potential of active citizenship by looking at the specific practices in which citizens engage to redefine the relationship between state and civil society.

Our findings highlight the importance of such a focus on practices. Since the municipality still has a formal say on a lot of issues, when looking from a purely institutional perspective, one could argue that there has not been that much change. However, our positioning of institutions within practices shows that there *has* been a change on the institutional level, both formally and informally. We also show how situated agents were able to interpret institutions with some flexibility through our focus on agency being embedded in practices.

Practice theory provided us with a lens to understand the close interrelations of practices and the exchange of important elements between these practices. It also directed the focus of the analysis to the teleoaffectivity of practices, which proved to be crucial in understanding the efforts of actors. The role of materiality proved to be of key relevance in understanding why this specific practice came about at this specific location and in the substance of the plans that were developed for the Elisabeth-area.

However, what practice theory was lacking for our work was a more direct link to the governance-content of our work. To understand the transformations described in this paper, we have therefore enriched practice theory with the elements of the policy arrangement approach as sensitizing concepts in order to tailor this theory towards the subject of our research. Throughout our fieldwork and analysis, the

PAA has helped us to identify and describe important governance issues (roles of discourses, rules, activities, resources and actors). In this, the dimensions provided by the PAA proved to be a valuable addition to the framework offered by practice theory.

7.7 Conclusions

Our analysis illustrates that elements from certain practices can become incorporated in other practices if they align with (shifting) teleoaffectivities. In this sense, the success of practices that involve active citizens in governance can make way for an inclusion of citizens in other practices. This change across practices can eventually transform local governance systems and produce substantial changes in the public domain (Hargreaves et al., 2013). When we talk about transformations, it is thus important to not only focus on specific practices, but to also consider the interactions and exchange of elements between various practices.

An important conclusion about the transformations in Amersfoort is therefore that these transformations have taken place through collaboration between citizens and the municipality. While conflicts can have a constitutive role in societal transformations (Kenis et al., 2016), our study shows that a shift in citizens' activities from protest towards collaboration was a key turning point towards transformation. Yet, while collaboration with authorities can be beneficial to the success of active citizens in reaching their objectives (Franklin and Marsden, 2015; De Wilde et al., 2014; Aalbers and Sehested, 2018), one needs to be aware that this also requires citizens to align with institutions.

We therefore wish to reiterate that active citizenship in new forms of governance requires legitimization and/or formalization by the representative democratic system that citizens aim to transform (Mattijssen et al., 2015). With this, strongly institutionalized elements and materiality often retain an important role in 'new' practices, steering the activities that these citizens employ. By aligning with existing rules and resources, citizens can become powerful situated agents that transform governance institutions. Yet, our research suggests a trade-off between the autonomy and power of citizens involved in governance practices. While such

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findings indicate that critical social science perspectives on such transformations remain important, our story does show that, in certain circumstances, citizens can realize transformations in governance.

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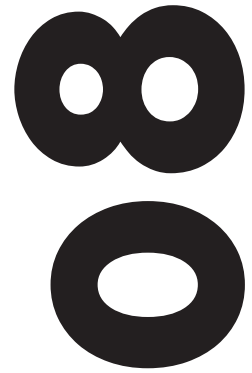
Chapter 8

Synthesis

8.1 Introduction

At the start of this PhD-research, I set out to contribute to debates on the role of active citizenship in green space governance. My main research aim in this thesis was to understand the implications of active citizenship in the governance, management and protection of green space.

My work for this thesis addresses four main research questions:

1. *What are the overall scope and key characteristics of active citizenship in green space governance?*

2. *What are the benefits and co-benefits of different types of active citizenship in green space governance?*

3. *What factors contribute to or constrain the long-term continuity of active citizenship in green space governance?*

4. *How can the transformative potential of active citizenship in green space governance be understood?*

In paragraph 8.2, I will address each research question separately, and subsequently discuss general findings. Section 8.3 discusses the research findings and reflects on these findings in the context of current scientific debates. I will reflect on my theory and methodology in section 8.4 and end this chapter with overall recommendations in paragraph 8.5.

8.2 Findings

8.2.1. Scope and key characteristics of active citizenship in green space governance

Citizens involved in the governance of green spaces are motivated by a broad range of objectives. In the large majority of practices, participants strive for nature protection and/or the conservation of cultural landscapes. In addition, social,

cultural and economic values are also crucial to many citizens engaging in these practices (cf. Bain et al., 2016; Raymond et al., 2017; Bendt et al., 2013), including environmental awareness and education. With this, active citizenship in the green often crosses borders between nature, culture and social domains.

While previous studies have put much focus on the physical activities of citizens in developing or managing green spaces, political activities such as protesting are also important. This is reflected in the typology of green self-governance (Table 18), which shows three main clusters of practices: (1) practices that primarily employ political activities; (2) practices that engage in physical activities primarily for the sake of nature conservation; and (3) practices that engage in physical activities primarily for the sake of the co-benefits of green spaces, such as the use of a community garden, social cohesion and education. There are also broad practices, which span all three clusters.

Table 18: Typology of green self-governance in the Netherlands

Nature management and development	
Nature management	Management of nature and landscape elements through physical activities.
Nature development	Realization of new large-scale green areas, often through formal procedures.
Species protection	Protection of specific species through management, education and monitoring.
Green with societal theme	Combination of green space management with societal aims on education or well-being.
Use of green	
Neighbourhood green	Small-scale green space management with focus on co-benefits, often within town limits.
Experiencing green	Promoting the experiencing of and awareness about nature.
Green politics	
Political	Influencing green space policy, often through protest.
Broadened political	Combines management of green spaces with efforts to influence green space policy, often through collaboration.
Broad	
Broad	Broad range of objectives and activities. Large network, diverse funding.

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In the Netherlands, most green self-governance practices are situated outside of protected nature reserves. Citizens often cooperate with other actors: authorities and NGOs are regularly involved, and businesses also occasionally play a role in green self-governance. Sources of funding are diverse. These usually involve external income (sponsoring, subsidies, donations), and in half of the practices I studied, there is also internal funding (own resources or contributions). While revenues from products and services are occasionally generated, these are rarely an exclusive source of income.

8.2.2. Benefits and co-benefits of active citizenship in green space governance

Active citizenship in green space governance does not only produce ecological benefits, but also many social, cultural and economic co-benefits (Table 19). A comparison of the objectives of green self-governance practices with their perceived outcomes shows that citizens are not always successful in accomplishing all of their aims. Even so, the analysis in chapter 5 does show that there is a large potential for green self-governance to realize at least some of the intended outcomes.

Table 19: most frequently perceived outcomes of 50 green self-governance practices

Outcomes	Percentage*
Nature protection and biodiversity	80%
Protection of cultural landscapes	50%[9]
Use of green	78%
Environmental awareness	88%
Social cohesion	50%

Percentage of respondents that indicates positive outcomes for certain (co)-benefits

In one way or another, a large majority of practices in chapter 5 are seen as contributing towards biodiversity, urban greening, landscape restoration, species protection, or other ecological benefits. In terms of co-benefits, the vast majority of these practices are also perceived to contribute towards environmental awareness and the use functions of green space (accessibility, recreation, amenity). About half of all practices also contribute towards social cohesion. Active citizenship in green space governance thus does not only change the environment, but also has social implications.

There is a clear relationship between different types of green self-governance and the various benefits and co-benefits. While some types are mostly relevant in relation to ecological benefits, there are other types that predominantly produce co-benefits. Practices in the cluster *nature management and development* and *broad* practices generally realize significant ecological benefits. Practices in the cluster *green politics* can potentially realize large benefits, but their effects depend on successful mobilization of other actors. Initiatives in the *use of green* cluster offer a small contribution to nature protection, but play an important role in realizing co-benefits.

8.2.3. Long-term continuity of active citizenship in green space governance

Many citizens interviewed for the studies in chapters 4 and 5 expressed concerns about the long-term continuity of active citizenship in green space governance. Three points in particular stood out: (1) concerns about money, including decreasing subsidies and/or a lack of long-term sources of income; (2) worries about a stable base of volunteers, related to dependency on a few key persons and the relatively old age of volunteers; and (3) volatilities in policy, often linked to citizens' dependency on authorities.

Chapter 6 shows how three factors are of particular relevance for the long-term continuity of active citizenship in green space governance. Firstly, the dependency of citizens on authorities means that these authorities have a key role in safeguarding continuity. Authorities can support continuity through stable policies, including the allowance of long-term management contracts and formal green space protection schemes. Reversely, discontinuity in government support and changing policies pose a major threat to continuity.

Secondly, a certain degree of formalization and institutionalization is important. The citizen groups in chapter 6 have established rules, power structures and a centralized coordination of management activities. This provides a degree of stability, which greatly contributes to the continuity of management. By becoming a formal legal entity and formalizing management plans, citizen groups also increase their legitimacy and qualify for subsidies (see also Van Dam et al., 2014).

Thirdly, it is of vital importance that these groups are able to adapt to institutional developments. In this adaptive capacity, the role of resources, including social capital, funding and a strong network, is important: it has been shown that

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citizen groups with more resources are more resilient to institutional and/or environmental developments (Norris et al., 2008; Kreutz et al., 2014; Burton and Mathers, 2014). The first two threats identified in chapters 4 and 5, a lack of stability regarding money and/or volunteers, are an indication that the adaptive capacity of many citizen groups engaging in green space governance does not safeguard a continuity of activities.

8.2.4. Transformative potential of active citizenship in green space governance

Contrary to critical perspectives on the transformative potential of active citizenship in literature (Aiken, 2017; Raco and Imrie, 2000; Swyngedouw, 2005), the study in chapter 7 shows how citizens are able to locally transform many elements of government practices. The institutional change observed in this case can be seen in the spread of specific citizen-promoted elements across various practices (discourses, actors, activities, rules, resources).

This study shows that, when there is a shared end-goal and a shared sense of urgency, citizens and authorities can instigate transformations together. This importance of collaboration between citizens and authorities in (local) governance transformations is in line with findings by Aalbers and Sehested (2018), who emphasize that citizens have to become partners with authorities in order to successfully scale up their initiatives. It also relates to findings by De Wilde et al. (2014) who show that citizen groups cooperating with authorities are often more successful in accomplishing their aims.

The transformation in Amersfoort is thus not abrupt and disruptive, but a gradual and path-dependent process where active citizens (as well as municipal actors) determinedly introduced new elements over a span of several years. This was not an entirely harmonious process, but while conflicts can have a constitutive role in societal transformations (Kenis et al., 2016), a deliberate shift in citizens' activities from protest to collaboration was a key turning point in this case study. This shows that transformation is not necessarily a matter of citizens striving to realize their objectives versus authorities trying to realize theirs. It also shows how the success of practices that involve active citizens in governance can clear the way for the inclusion of citizens in other practices.

Yet, this PhD-research reiterates that transformation through active citizenship can be a slow, gradual process that may need some alignment with existing

institutions (Cvejić et al., 2015). Certain institutionalized elements, such as laws and formal procedures, can prove to be slow to change, and guide what citizens can and cannot do. Legal roles of actors and formal procedures thus often persist within transformations, even in new practices where many elements have changed and where citizens have a large influence on the objectives set, activities employed and on how these activities are organized. When citizens collaborate with authorities in governance, they also link up with these institutionalized elements.

8.2.5. General research findings

The diversity of active citizenship in green space governance
In line with other research that highlights a variety of governance arrangements or practices across diverse domains (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010; García, 2006; Van der Jagt et al., 2016; Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Van Assche et al., 2014b), this thesis shows that active citizenship in green space governance is found in many forms. Between practices, the objectives that citizens aim to accomplish and the activities they employ for this purpose are highly diverse. Various actors are involved, mobilizing a wide variety of resources, and there are many formal and informal rules through which activities are governed. The size (spatial scale as well as the number of people involved), location and types of green space also greatly differ among practices.

Because of this diversity, (semi-)quantitative studies such as those in chapters 4 and 5 are important to gain a better understanding of the scope of active citizenship. Such work helps to overcome the bias of case study research, which is often focused on large and successful forms of active citizenship (Uitermark, 2015). In comparison to many other case studies (e.g. Van Dam, 2016; Mathers et al., 2015), this thesis describes many more 'small' practices. A follow-up study to my work, conducting an inventory of green active citizenship in four municipalities, revealed even more small to medium sized examples (Vullings et al., 2017). Such findings underline that the discourse about active citizenship tends to focus too much on the large and successful examples and insufficiently recognizes its diversity.

Each practice is unique
The unique nature of many practices makes it difficult to speak about active citizenship in green space governance as if it were a single phenomenon. While there are similarities among practices, each practice also has its own distinct

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characteristics in terms of the objectives which citizens aim to achieve, the activities they employ for this purpose, the actors involved, the resources mobilized, the rules that are enacted, and the location of the practice. This means that each practice has different implications for the environment and for the population. Because of this, the consequences of active citizenship for green space governance can strongly vary, depending on the nature and scope of a specific practice.

This has implications for how policymakers, NGOs and others dealing with active citizenship in green space governance can best address these practices. The uniqueness of practices asks for tailor-made engagements, rather than a generic treatment of active citizenship. As also discussed in chapters 5 and 6, it is important to take the context of the specific practices into account when discussing the success and failure and the most appropriate governing approaches in relation to these practices. After all, what works in one practice does not necessarily have to work in another.

Active citizenship as a part of complex governance systems
The analysis throughout this thesis shows how active citizenship is intertwined with other forms of governance in shaping public life. Practices through which active citizens engage in green space governance are thus part of a much broader spectrum of practices in which a broad range of actors pursue their objectives (Buijs et al., 2016a; Van der Jagt et al., 2016; Spijker and Parra, 2017). With this, my research on active citizenship in green space governance reflects the general complexity of governance systems (Teisman et al., 2009; Ostrom, 2010), where decision-making is often spread across multiple sites (García, 2006; Shore, 2011) and power is often shared between multiple actors (Shore, 2011).

This is the arena that citizens enter when they become active. These citizens do not operate outside of governance systems, but actively engage with other actors in the public domain. Active citizens thus operate within a complex institutional environment where different actors aim to accomplish their objectives through different governance practices. As already discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, active citizenship is thus not an opposite or alternative to governance: it is just as much a form of governance as steering processes in which authorities have the lead (cf. Simmons et al., 2007; Warren, 2012).

The relationship between citizens and authorities

Throughout the empirical chapters in this thesis, it is discussed how active citizenship in the green domain is intertwined with the role of authorities. Since the practices in this thesis are concerned with public space, authorities often play an important role: they have to permit citizens to employ their activities. Chapter 7 describes how authorities are also actively involved in transformations in governance. As in other domains (Klein et al., 2017; Driessen et al., 2012; De Haan et al., 2017), authorities thus play a major enabling and/or constraining role in relation to active citizenship in green space governance.

While institutions do not determine active citizenship, findings in this thesis thus illustrate that official policies, laws and rules have a guiding influence on what people do and cannot do. For example, it is discussed in chapter 4 how active citizens engage in fewer physical activities within protected areas. The case studies highlight that citizens often need permission from authorities in order to engage in management activities on public land and furthermore show how citizens can sometimes struggle with bureaucracy. Chapter 5 and 6 also discuss how changes in public policy can require citizens to adapt their activities and the organization thereof.

The relationship between active citizens and authorities is also seen in many forms of collaboration, where citizens and governments work together towards certain aims. In line with the work of other researchers (Kronenberg et al., 2015; Klein et al., 2017), case study findings in chapters 6 and 7 show how collaboration between citizens and authorities can lead to mutual benefits through the realization of common objectives. Another key relationship between citizens and authorities can be seen through subsidies, which are shown to be an important means of income for many practices in this thesis.

From self-governance to active citizenship

While I started my work in chapters 4 and 5 with an analysis of 'green self-governance' practices, I switched to using the term 'active citizenship' in chapters 6 and 7. An important reason for this lies in the empirical findings of this thesis. In chapter 4, only 21 per cent of the 264 practices did not involve other actors besides citizens. While citizens in the practices studied in this thesis have a leading role in setting their objectives and engaging in activities to pursue these, fieldwork showed that this was often done in cooperation with other actors and that citizens also mobilized resources contributed by other actors.

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My definition of green self-governance as 'governance in which citizens play a major role in realizing, protecting and/or managing green public space' did not exclude the involvement of other actors besides citizens. Nonetheless, during the work for this thesis, a conceptual focus on self-governance became a too narrow representation of the research findings in the field. Because many of the practices found can be interpreted as forms of co-governance (Arnouts et al., 2012), I adopted the term active citizenship halfway through this thesis to more explicitly include these different forms of governance that also involve active citizens in a (shared) leading role (also see Buijs et al., 2016a). A sole focus on forms of self-governance that merely include citizens – which was never the intention to begin with – is too narrow to understand the full implications of active citizenship in green space governance.

8.3 Discussion

8.3.1. The significance of active citizenship for nature and landscape protection

The shift from government to governance assumes a transfer of responsibilities from authorities towards citizens. In this context, there is much debate about the role of citizens in addressing contemporary challenges for nature conservation, landscape restoration and urban greening (Colding et al., 2013; De Haan et al., 2017; Barthel et al., 2015; Nagendra and Ostrom, 2012). It is therefore important to discuss the consequences that an increased involvement of active citizens in green space governance might have for nature.

The contribution of active citizenship to nature conservation
This thesis shows that active citizenship in green space governance brings a broad range of ecological benefits. While different types of active citizenship in green space governance usually produce different effects (see chapter 5), the ecological outcomes of most practices are perceived as positive. In line with the work of others (Lawrence and Ambrose-Oji, 2015; Dennis and James, 2016; Bendt et al., 2013), this leads to the conclusion that active citizens often make a positive contribution to nature conservation and biodiversity. As active citizenship diversifies management and localizes/tailors green space management to local contexts, it creates more diverse green spaces as well (Elands et al., 2015; Vierikko et al., 2016).

However, I do emphasize that most of these positive effects are of a relatively small scale. A recent follow-up study to chapters 4 and 5, aiming to assess the impact of citizens' initiatives on biodiversity, estimates that the surface area of nature managed by citizens in the Netherlands will at best add up to about 1 per cent of the land managed by authorities and large environmental NGOs (Arts et al., 2017). This area does not include political practices and management of urban green, but these findings do paint a clear picture of the difference in scale. While many practices that involve active citizens have shown to have significant effects on the local scale, one should not overestimate their contributions towards (inter) national policy goals and ecological networks.

From co-benefits to ecological benefits
By focusing on both benefits and co-benefits, the work in chapter 5 identifies a potential synergy between the realization of 'green' objectives and other aims that motivate citizens to engage in green space governance. In the long term, co-benefits like education, environmental awareness and recreation might increase people's connection and involvement with nature, potentially leading to increased support and/or more willingness to pay for measures taken to protect the natural environment (Soga and Gaston, 2016). A sole focus on the direct ecological outcomes of active citizenship in green space governance is therefore too narrow to address its potential ecological value (Raymond et al., 2017). This value is intertwined with the social dimension of how people engage with nature (Folke et al., 2005; Liu et al., 2007).

However, it is important to be aware of the fact that active citizenship in green space governance can also have negative outcomes for biodiversity. My findings illustrate that active citizenship in green space governance does not always result in positive outcomes for the environment: in some instances, there are trade-offs between benefits and co-benefits (as also emphasized by Raymond et al., 2017). There might also be tensions between different benefits (for example the protection of one species versus the protection of another).

The spatial focus of active citizenship in green space governance
When we discuss the relevance of active citizenship for nature conservation, it is important to realize that this active citizenship, for a large part, is spatially situated outside of protected nature reserves. In formally protected areas, stricter regulations and stronger policy objectives limit the possibilities for citizens to engage in nature management. The findings in chapter 4 show that when active

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citizenship does concern such protected areas, citizens are less often involved in the physical management of nature and focus much more on political activities. Due to the strict regulations pertaining to protected nature areas, it is likely that many of citizens' management activities take place through more traditional forms of volunteering, where the objectives of authorities and large environmental NGOs are leading and citizens help with the implementation.

A large percentage of the practices are located in urbanized areas. Characteristic of many of these practices is that they have a relatively strong focus on co-benefits. Nonetheless, active citizenship in the urban green can also enhance biodiversity. While these practices are usually small in terms of their spatial scale, such practices can make an important contribution to urban greening and biodiversity in the city (Buijs et al., 2016a). Colding et al. (2013) highlight how management of urban green spaces by citizens contributes towards better social and ecological environments in the city. In line with these findings, this PhD-thesis shows a wide range of social and ecological values attributed to a diversity of practices in the city.

Active citizenship in the green is also found in rural areas. On farmland and in more extensively managed cultural landscapes, citizens are active in the protection of meadow birds, the restoration and management of cultural landscapes and specific elements in these landscapes, such as hedges, willows and ditches. In this way, they realize important benefits. Citizens also help with the conservation of (semi-)natural areas that are not formally designated as protected areas, but which can still have a high biodiversity value. Some of the rural areas where active citizens employ their activities do border on protected reserves. In this way, they contribute to an ecological buffer for these areas and to the connectivity of green spaces.

The importance of political activities
Political groups are not always included in studies on active citizenship in the green domain. This is an omission, as citizens can also have an important impact through political activities. Active citizens can have a controlling, mobilizing and generally critical role towards authorities and environmental NGOs, which may or may not act in the interest of nature. Somewhat paradoxically, I quite often see active citizenship within protected nature reserves when people protest against plans for infrastructural, residential or commercial developments supported by authorities.

While the success of political activities often depends on the mobilization of other actors, groups that focus on political activities do have the potential to realize important benefits. Such benefits are seen in the protection of green spaces against external threats such as commercial development, but also in the mobilization of authorities for the development of green areas. Predicting the impact of practices that focus primarily on politics is rather tricky as the effects of their work are often indirect. Their objectives might also oppose those of authorities and highlight tensions between nature conservation and other interests, such as infrastructure, housing or industry. Finally, it is important to recognize that citizens can also protest against plans for nature development (Buijs, 2009) – which is visible in at least a handful of practices in chapter 4.

8.3.2. A reflection on active citizenship and democratic debates

A shift in power?
In governance literature, there is an ongoing debate about the extent to which the government has maintained or lost its power relative to non-state actors (Rhodes, 1996; Mitlin, 2008; Jouve, 2005). Several researchers have been critical about the actual transfer of responsibilities and decision-making power from governmental to non-governmental actors when comparing this with rhetoric on governance (Shore, 2011; Taylor, 2007; Behagel, 2012). As Van Dam et al. (2015) and Turnhout et al. (2010) argue, authorities often prefer to deal with citizens whose objectives correspond with their own policy aims, implicitly or explicitly making a distinction between 'wanted' and 'unwanted' forms of active citizenship. Other researchers discuss how authorities exclude certain forms of active citizenship and frame these as Nimbyism (Vierikko and Niemelä, 2016; McClymont and O'Hare, 2008).

When authorities only support desired forms of active citizenship and exclude other forms, the question is whether there is a real shift in power towards citizens or whether authorities are conditioning or even manipulating citizens, thereby rearticulating existing power relations under the moniker of governance or democratization (Lister, 2015; Swyngedouw, 2005). After all, by supporting some citizens and not supporting or even constraining others, authorities play an important role in relation to active citizenship (De Wilde et al., 2014; García, 2006; Van Dam et al., 2015).

Prior research has also shown how formal mechanisms often require citizens to engage with authorities in order to accomplish their objectives (Halloran and

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Magid, 2013; Van Dam et al., 2015). In this thesis, chapter 7 shows how citizens become powerful situated agents by aligning with existing rules and resources. Yet, aligning with such institutions has a conditioning influence on the activities of citizens. This confirms the trade-off between the autonomy and independency of active citizens and their influence in the public domain (Franklin and Marsden, 2015; Frantzeskaki et al., 2016): when citizens align with institutions in order to exercise more influence, they end up being more under the influence of these institutions as a result (Van Dam et al., 2015; Swyngedouw, 2005).

Governmentality
Critical scholars use the term governmentality to highlight how authorities aim to steer the behaviour of citizens through responsibilizing and/or disciplining them (Shore, 2011; Swyngedouw, 2005). From this point of view, it is important to be conscious of the role of authorities (Behagel, 2012). If responsibilities are simply outsourced to citizens and used as an instrumental approach to accomplish government policy objectives (see Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013), there is ground to be critical about the democratic character of such governance. If authorities only focus on practices that align with their policies and block other visions, this should also be seen as an instrumental approach raising democratic questions (Buijs et al., 2016b; Van Dam et al., 2015).

In this sense, the emphasis on the responsibilization of citizens (Klein et al., 2017), as described in chapter 1, can lead to an instrumentalization of active citizenship when authorities primarily direct their focus towards well-willing, cooperative citizens working within the frameworks of existing policies. A recent discourse analysis showed that such instrumental visions are dominant in Dutch policy discourses in nature conservation (Buijs et al., 2017). If authorities aim to promote active citizenship in their discourse, but do not support or even hamper many active citizens in their practices, their democratic intentions are indeed questionable (Turnhout et al., 2010; Crossan et al., 2016; Buser, 2013; Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013). Even so, governmentality is not only seen as a bad thing: important public values can be realized through such steering techniques, which also benefits citizens themselves (Agrawal, 2005; Arts, 2014).

While the governmentality literature promotes a critical attitude towards authorities, I want to emphasize that authorities also do many 'good' things that benefit active citizenship. The research for this thesis has shown that authorities support many local citizen groups across a variety of practices. Other research also

shows how policy-makers and authorities do not work together with citizen groups merely for instrumental reasons, but also because they have genuine intensions to contribute towards democratic renewal, deliberation, inclusiveness, popular control and transparency (Smith, 2009; Stirling, 2006).

Tensions between representative democracy and direct democracy
There are many merits in more direct, open and participatory approaches to democracy, which help 'to maximise the efficiency of public policy, to develop social capital and community cohesion, to improve service provision, to meet local needs, to improve information flows and accountability, to give voice to those most directly affected by public policy, and to address concerns about the democratic deficit' (Yetano et al., 2010: p. 784). Various scholars emphasize how the involvement of citizens in democratic processes contributes towards the realization of important democratic values (Smith, 2009; Michels, 2011; Warren, 2012; Fung, 2015).

In spite of this, tensions between direct and representative forms of democracy that have been described before (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009; Warren, 2012; García, 2006; Behagel and Arts, 2014) did also show up in my work when there were conflicting objectives between citizens and authorities. While active citizenship can be seen as a form of direct democracy, authorities have a formal responsibility to safeguard the realization of public policy goals and will sometimes feel the need to step in to do so. This strategic view on for example ecological networks might put them at odds with the objectives of local active citizens.

Some scholars have also been rather critical of the exclusion of non-active citizens in debates on active citizenship. Not all citizens are interested in becoming active in the public domain (Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013; Milana, 2008), and not all citizens have the time and socio-cultural capital to be successful when they do (Putnam, 2000; Van Dam, 2016). In a representative democracy, authorities should represent everyone – 'active' and 'non-active' citizens alike.

Environmental justice
Based on the above, it should be clear that 'simply having opportunities for participation does not equate to participatory democracy' (Monaghan, 2012): there are important tensions associated with direct forms of democracy. The concept of *environmental justice* comes up in debates around the fair sharing of environmental benefits and burdens across the population (Kabisch and Haase, 2014; Haase et

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al., 2017; Paloniemi et al., 2015; Rutt and Gulsrud, 2016). This concept has two dimensions: a procedural dimension that underlines equality in involvement, representation and contribution; and a distributive dimension that looks at the equal distribution of costs and benefits (Paloniemi et al., 2015).

When we look at the relationship between procedural justice and active citizenship, it has been shown how certain societal groups are less represented than others. This can concern groups with a lower socio-economic status (Conway et al., 2011; Foster and Dunham, 2015) or certain ethnic groups (Foster and Dunham, 2015). This thesis' findings on the underrepresentation of younger people in the green domain have also been found in other studies (Van Dam, 2016; Ganzevoort et al., 2017). The same goes for the overrepresentation of people with a higher level of education (Ganzevoort and Van den Born, 2018).

Looking at distributive justice, it is important to consider spatial differences related to the costs and benefits of active citizenship in the green domain. In urban areas, studies show that more green is realized by active citizens in relatively well-off neighbourhoods (Conway et al., 2011; Varuzzo and Harvey, 2017) – areas that are usually already greener to begin with (Haase et al., 2017). In this way, active citizenship may result in a reproduction or reinforcement of social inequalities when people in areas that are already well off in terms of green space quantity and quality end up being comparatively even better off.

Correspondingly, using a focus on active citizenship in order to justify a retreating role for authorities might lead to an unequal distribution of green space, benefitting citizens and communities with more social capital (Paloniemi et al., 2015) while excluding non-active citizens (Milana, 2008). This is an important democratic argument in favour of authorities remaining involved in the management of green space. In fact, an additional effort might be required from authorities in order to be more inclusive in this respect: De Wilde et al. (2014) show how it is mostly highly-educated groups of citizens that succeed in building constructive relationships with authorities – despite efforts from other groups.

8.3.3. A reflection on the governance of green space

The shift from government to governance and the rise of active citizenship have led to important debates on how green spaces can best be governed and on the roles that different actors should have in this governance. Such tensions include the democratic debates described above, but also tensions between strategic

planning and bottom-up forms of governance (Buijs et al., 2018b; Aalbers and Sehested, 2018), differences between the goals of authorities and citizens in nature conservation (Apostolopoulou et al., 2014; Paloniemi et al., 2015; Buijs, 2009), tensions between the autonomy of citizens and the steering role of authorities (Rosol, 2010; Frantzeskaki et al., 2016), and tensions and conflicts between different groups of citizens and/or between citizens and authorities (Apostolopoulou et al., 2014; Buijs et al., 2014; Eizaguirre et al., 2012; Warren, 2012; McClymont and O'Hare, 2008). Below, research findings in this thesis are discussed in the context of these debates.

An important role for authorities
The shift towards governance implies a shift of responsibilities from authorities to citizens (Stoker, 1998; Goodwin, 1998; Jordan, 2008). Even so, authorities still play an important role in green space matters, and in the design and management of green spaces (cf. Mathers et al., 2015; Driessen et al., 2012). While there might be a shift of responsibilities towards citizens and non-state actors, this does not imply an absent role of authorities. Also in this thesis, findings highlight the persistence presence of government institutions in new forms of governance, which confirms the continuance of a central role for authorities within the shift to governance, even as this role itself is changing (Rhodes, 2007; Arts, 2014).

The leading role of authorities in many forms of governance means that citizens are generally not equal partners in terms of power. Considering the formal responsibilities for authorities in safeguarding policy goals on, for example, the realization of Natura 2000, the continued central role of authorities makes sense. While this thesis shows that citizens are often involved in local governance and management of green spaces, strategic planning and policy formulation are still important tasks for authorities across different policy domains (Glasbergen and Driessen, 2005; Hansen et al., in press.). The small scale and local focus of active citizenship, its fragmented nature, the differences between objectives of citizens and authorities, the unequal distribution of capital among citizens, and the observations that active citizens are usually not representative of the wider population all point to the need for a continued central role of authorities in the governance and management of green spaces.

In this, active citizenship can provide a valuable local addition to what governments do, providing important benefits and co-benefits for the environment and the population. However, my work is not in line with policy discourses on

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for example *big society* or the *participation society*, where the expectation is that citizens will take over policy responsibilities formerly held by authorities (Bailey and Pill, 2011; Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013). Therefore, active citizenship in green space governance should generally be considered as being additional to government action, and while citizens can contribute to public policy goals, their work usually does not substitute the activities of authorities.

A plural role for governments
In line with other research (Van der Jagt et al., 2016; Rosol, 2010; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010; Molin and Konijnendijk, 2014), this thesis describes how the role of authorities in the green domain has diversified. Van der Steen et al. (2016) talk about the 'sedimentation' of governance in order to describe how new and innovative forms of governance are not so much replacing more traditional approaches to governing, but rather coexisting with these. In the green domain, this thesis also shows that there is a range of practices: there are government-led practices; practices in which authorities collaborate with citizens; and practices where authorities employ more laissez-faire approaches to green space governance, playing merely a supportive or even inactive role.

The more prominent role for citizens in green space governance offers opportunities for authorities, as this thesis has shown that these citizens can make an important contribution to several benefits and co-benefits. By strategically enabling and supporting self-governance and active citizenship, authorities have the opportunity to realize part of their policy objectives while simultaneously stimulating participatory or direct forms of democracy (Aalbers and Sehested, 2018; Hajer et al., 2015; Michels, 2011; Sørensen and Torfing, 2009). There are also important opportunities for co-production: in line with the work of others, this thesis describes how citizens and authorities can work together for common benefits in the green domain (Smith et al., 2014; Van Melik and Van Der Krabben, 2016; Ostrom, 1996). In this sense, cooperation with active citizens can also contribute towards policy aims (Mitlin, 2008; Sørensen and Torfing, 2009). Moreover, such cooperation could form an important link between participatory and representative democracy (Innes and Booher, 2004)

Modern day's complex governance context demands a lot from citizens, but also places demands on authorities. To preserve their legitimacy as authorities, governments need to act upon the actions of citizens (Smith, 2009). In this context, the adoption of a more polycentric and context-sensitive approach to

green space governance can help authorities in achieving their policy objectives while also stimulating active citizenship (Buijs et al., 2016a; Klein et al., 2017; Nagendra and Ostrom, 2012). As my typology also highlights, different types of self-governance have different implications. Local governance should be sensitive to the diversity and dynamics of these different forms of active citizenship.

All of this calls for a flexible role of authorities in governance: in some instances a leading role, an enabling or facilitating role in others, and sometimes a collaborative approach to governance is in order. The diversity of active citizenship does not match with generic 'one-size-fits-all' policy and governing approaches of authorities. Rather, it points to a need for tailor-made, context-sensitive approaches to governance, where governments facilitate active citizenship when possible, but also take on a strong leading role when the situation calls for it. In line with empirical observations on the coexistence or 'sedimentation' of governance styles (Van der Steen et al., 2016; Arnouts et al., 2012), this pleads for a coexistence of different approaches to governing and a flexible and stimulating attitude towards active citizenship (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009; Olsson et al., 2004; Buijs et al., 2016a).

8.4 A reflection on theory and methodology

8.4.1. The Policy Arrangement Approach and the understanding of practices

This thesis departed from the Policy Arrangement Approach (Arts and Leroy, 2006; Van Tatenhove et al., 2000) in order to study (local) practices of governance. This approach functioned as the main framework for the collection of research data and also played a central role in the analysis of these practices. While it is argued in chapter 2 that the PAA had a number of issues with regard to the research for this thesis (the role of activity, materiality and teleoaffectivity), the four dimensions *discourse*, *actors*, *rules* and *resources* offered important sensitizing concepts for studying active citizenship in green space governance throughout the four empirical chapters.

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Others have already described how the PAA provides a suitable analytical framework for conducting fieldwork on policy and governance (Ayana, 2014; Buizer, 2008; Van Leeuwen, 2010). I very much agree with these observations on basis of my own research experiences. Throughout the fieldwork and analysis for this thesis, the PAA has helped to identify and describe important governance issues (roles of discourses, rules, resources and actors). This use of the PAA was helpful for identifying relevant elements of practices in all empirical chapters, but it also provided a more holistic framework in chapters 6 and 7, where the PAA helped in showing how changes in certain elements also influenced the other governance dimensions of a practice.

The dimensions provided by the PAA proved to be a valuable addition to the framework offered by practice theory. These dimensions have been employed in somewhat different ways across the four empirical chapters, but their main purpose was always to identify relevant elements of governance practices. Before starting fieldwork, abstract theoretical concepts (like teleoaffectivity or institutionalization) need to be tailored to the actual subject of study for the purpose of collecting suitable research data (Jagosh et al., 2014; Schmidt, 2017). After all, both practice theory and structuration theory have often been criticized for a lack of applicability in empirical research (Arts and Leroy, 2006; Krott and Giessen, 2014; Archer, 2010; Røpke, 2009). In this research, the PAA provided this content-tailored framework to study governance.

The link between the PAA, practice theory and this thesis
As explained in chapter 2, this thesis has a practice-oriented outlook on society where the social world is seen as 'a contingent and ever-changing texture of human practices' (Nicolini, 2012: p. 15). This practice-oriented worldview aligns with the perspectives of scholars like Giddens and Bourdieu, whose work inspired the development of the PAA. It is noted by Arts and Van Tatenhove (2004: p.341) how the idea of the policy arrangement is 'comparable with Giddens' notion of practices', as both aim to study social dynamics through the interplay of day-to-day interactions and processes of social and political change. Both the PAA (e.g. Arts and Leroy, 2006; Ayana, 2014) and practice theories (e.g. Shove et al., 2012; Orlikowski, 2007) have a holistic view on the practice or policy arrangement, highlighting how different elements are connected and how change within a certain element can instigate change in others.

Among practice theorists, and also between practice theorists and those working with structuration theory, there are different views on how the world should be understood. The main distinction in the unit of analysis between practice theory and structuration theory is that practice theory focuses less on the interaction between agency and structure and much more on the analysis of practices themselves. In this sense, the original use of the PAA in analysing policy arrangements is more closely related to structuration theory. The work in this thesis has moved the application of the PAA closer towards practice theory by explicitly focusing on the role of practices when explaining social reality, with both agency and structure being embedded and enacted within practices (Schatzki, 2002). For my research, I have also adopted three notions from practice theories: activity, teleoaffectivity and materiality.

Since the scholars in the above theoretical fields differ in their understanding of what a practice is, this thesis is not a reflection of *the* use of the PAA or of *the* study of practices. There is no unified theory of practice (Nicolini, 2012) and as such, my work will not align with the writings of all practice scholars. For example, Schatzki does not see materiality as a part of a practice, he argues materiality and practices are linked through a practice-arrangement bundle (Schatzki, 2001). This is not congruent with the PAA, which, as practice scholars such as Shove et al. (2012) and Orlikowski (2007) describe, sees materiality as a part of the arrangement or practice, and not as something that bundles with it. And Giddens focuses on a distinct assessment of structure and agency through a technique called 'bracketing' to assess one vis-à-vis the other while still seeing the two as fundamentally inseparable. In this thesis, both are assessed as a property or endogenous part of practices, as other scholars who study practices would propose (Arts et al., 2013a; Orlikowski, 2007; Nicolini, 2012).

If one were to depart merely from the perspective of Schatzki or Giddens (or any other scholar studying practices), certain stances in this thesis would not be in line with their work. The aim of this thesis is not to solve these fundamental theoretical debates and different positions among scholars. Rather, as elaborately discussed in chapter 2, this thesis integrates relevant perspectives offered by these bodies of theory, driven by the substance of this study. The different theoretical backgrounds of the PAA and practice theories did not cause tensions during fieldwork and data analysis (see section 8.4.2). Rather, as I will explain in the remainder of this section, the insights from practice theory helped to theoretically as well as analytically strengthen the PAA for the study of local governance practices.

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Activity, materiality and teleoaffectivity

In order to tailor the PAA towards the study of practices on a mostly local scale, I made some modifications to the framework. In chapter 2, I argued that, for the purpose of this research, the PAA needed a stronger focus on daily human activity; a more explicit focus on the role of materiality; and the explicit consideration of teleology and affectivity. Since the PAA was originally not developed to study local practices, these modifications were important for the purpose of understanding local governance practices with it. While the theoretical arguments for doing so are elaborately covered in chapter 2, these modifications were also beneficial for the empirical understanding of practices in this PhD-research.

In this thesis, the notion of human activity has a central position in all four empirical chapters. For example, it is one of the main distinctive aspects in the typology in chapter 5 and of central relevance to understand the effects of active citizenship, which are realized through engaging in these activities. Throughout chapters 4 to 7, it is indeed shown how the daily on-site activities of citizens change and maintain specific green spaces. As in the work of others, this thesis' focus on human activity has thus been proven to be of key importance to understand how the green environment is being managed and modified (Torkar and McGregor, 2012; Burton et al., 2014).

The focus on materiality also resulted in important insights. The analysis in chapter 7 shows how the material world has a central role in the conception and development of a range of practices. Chapter 4 also shows a relation between different types of green spaces and the activities which citizens employ, highlighting how materiality influences what citizens do – also visible in differences between for example urban and rural practices. As Van Dam (2016) also emphasizes, people often draw their motivations from the spatial environment, the place where their practice is situated. The attachment to place is thus an important motivation for citizens to act in the green environment (Buta et al., 2014; Measham and Barnett, 2008). As the activities of citizens in a specific green space are connected with the character of this space, we should consider this role of materiality.

Finally, the focus on teleoaffectivity proved to be crucial for understanding the efforts of different actors. After all, citizens need a motivation or objective to act (García, 2006), to become active citizens. In the empirical work in this thesis, the objectives of practitioners were the main focus in order to identify the telos and

affectivity of a practice (Johnson et al., 2011). While all elements work towards this telos, the PAA-dimension of discourse was thus most useful for identifying the teleology and affectivity of various practices, also in the semi-quantitative work where the focus was mostly on mapping the objectives of citizens.

8.4.2. Studying practices in the field

A 'thin' and 'thick' understanding of practices
Conceptually as well as methodologically, this thesis focuses on the study of a broad range of governance practices – some in-depth, others on a more general and descriptive level of understanding. This explicit conceptual and methodological focus on practices is a relatively novel perspective to study active citizenship in green space governance.

The use of the term practices shifted while I was working on this thesis. Generally, practice theory is employed for providing 'thick' descriptions through case study work where the focus is really on an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of study (Arts et al., 2014; Jonas et al., 2017). However, a conceptual focus on practices can also be used in semi-quantitative studies (Browne et al., 2014). In chapters 4 and 5, this use can be seen as a 'light' or 'thin' version of practice theory, where the focus is not so much on an in-depth understanding of specific practices, but more on understanding specific elements of these practices, linked to the five analytical dimensions.

Throughout the empirical chapters 4 to 7, the work in this thesis gradually shifts from such a 'thin' version towards a more 'thick' theoretical approach. While the notion of activity is central in all these four chapters, materiality and teleoaffectivity play a smaller role in the earlier empirical chapters. In chapters 4 and 5, a focus on teleoaffectivity is mostly incorporated through understanding people's objectives. Materiality is mainly studied by looking at types of green space in chapter 4, although it has a more important position in the scope of my work when the benefits and co-benefits are discussed in chapter 5. As part of the theoretical journey in my PhD-research, but also in line with this thesis' layered methodological approach, chapters 6 and especially 7 employ a stronger theoretical focus on practices, paying more attention to materiality and teleoaffectivity.

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In all four empirical chapters, the focus on practices has provided the work with a much broader and richer scope of analysis in comparison to perspectives that focus on either agency or structures. The notion of agency and the central position for human activity is often overlooked in institutional theories, but proved to be very useful for studying how humans manage and change their natural environment. The notion of institutions, often not central in agent-based perspectives, helped reveal how these citizens were guided by elements deeply embedded across practices. In chapters 6 and 7 this combined focus on agency and structure, both centred within practices, allowed for a study of the interaction between situated agents and institutions, but also between different practices. This study of practices, and the roles of different actors in these practices, also illuminated how the roles of citizens and governments are interrelated and influence each other (Van Dam, 2016).

The difficulties of studying complex governance practices
Scholars have a broad range of views on how to identify, delineate and analyse practices in the field. As described in chapter 3, this lack of a generally accepted starting point in practice theory can make life rather difficult for researchers (Jonas et al., 2017). Especially in the case-study work, I experienced engaging with this body of theory as a challenging task, which raised regular discussions with co-authors about how to identify practices in the field, and how to collect and analyse data on these practices. The ongoing debates among practices scholars (Nicolini, 2017; Schatzki, 2002; Reckwitz, 2002b; Shove et al., 2012) show that these issues are not limited to the work in this thesis.

An important methodological point of departure in practice theory is that one should be cautious in predefining what a practice looks like, but rather to find this out while engaging with practices in the field (Nicolini, 2017). While this was not a central dilemma in chapters 4 and 5, which focus on specific elements of practices, it turned out to be a tough challenge for the work in chapter 7. With the people involved in fieldwork, we had many discussions about this. Are all the elements associated with Foundation Heiligenbergerbeekdal, the group of citizens who want to green the Elisabeth-area, a practice? Or is the protest in which this group engages (an enactment of) a certain practice, and can the tours of the area that they organize be seen as another one[19]?

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[19] Since both the protest and tours worked towards the same telos, the eventual decision was taken to treat all elements associated with Foundation Heiligenbergerbeekdal as a single practice.

While the iterative nature of this praxeological process was very helpful in sharpening and improving different parts of the work in this thesis, this approach was somewhat burdensome. It required regular discussions among colleagues over time and the analysis was conducted over multiple iterative steps. Through 'engaging with the phenomenon in the field' and 'allowing it to bite back', as Nicolini (2017) would have us do, our team of researchers eventually developed a framework that we considered suitable for our analysis, and which led to the rich and thick description of the work in chapters 6 and 7. However, while the praxeological perspective has a lot of advantages, it is certainly not a quick and easy way of doing analysis.

'Theoretical' concepts such as teleoaffectivity, while valuable for conducting the eventual analysis, were also not easy to apply during fieldwork. Formulating suitable interview questions or selecting the right criteria for document analysis to search for such concepts was an arduous task. While these are important sensitizing concepts, their main contribution was not made during fieldwork, but in the later stages of analysis, when I started to get a truly in-depth understanding of what was going on in the field. Only at that point in time did such theoretical concepts truly make sense in the context of the collected research data.

Identifying practices in the field
While the notions adopted from practice theory played an important role in the analysis of data and understanding of the research findings, I used the PAA with the added fifth dimension of activities as the main analytical framework for data collection.

n chapters 4 and 5, most practices were identified with the PAA by looking at the actor coalitions involved in these practices. As shown in these chapters, active citizens form such coalitions in most local practices of green space governance. These coalitions collectively adopt a group name, formulate common objectives and adopt some sort of internal governing structures (Van Dam, 2016). The vast majority of local governance practices in this thesis are closely associated with such actor coalitions – also in chapters 6 and 7. For the purposes of my fieldwork, identifying and studying such actor coalitions proved to be an important way of locating practices.

While the actor-dimension was this thesis' most important entry point for finding practices in the field, the inventory in chapter 4 used many different methods to

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identify a wide variety of practices. Sometimes, other dimensions also played a role in locating practices. Certain practices were identified through the observation of activities in the field. When, for instance, a newspaper article would describe the adoption of green spaces or a protest by citizens, this description of these activities functioned as an entry point for collecting additional information. In a few other instances, discourses around certain issues at stake (for example different views on green space management between citizens and authorities) could also provide an entry point.

Even so, most practices in the field were found via the actor-dimension. Once actor coalitions had been identified, it was easier to study their activities, the employed resources, the promoted discourses, and the rules that govern their activities. The analysis thus focused on practices as a whole, or at least on multiple elements of these practices in chapters 4 and 5, but the actor coalitions often functioned as an entry point into the field. As Liefferink (2006) explains, this method works well for studying the role of specific actors and of the day-to-day practices in which people deal with other people. It is thus in line with this thesis' focus on active citizens and the practices in which they operate.

Tensions that come with praxeology
During the work for this thesis, there were some tensions between 'putting flesh on the bones of practice' and 'allowing the phenomenon to bite back': between getting a clear grip on things on the one hand and praxeologizing and retaining an open approach for the collection of data on the other.

In chapters 4 and 5, the focus lies on specific elements of governance practices (the five dimensions of my analytical framework). In order to allow for a comparative analysis, work in these chapters required a somewhat strict predefinition of the criteria of analysis. Although these criteria themselves were repeatedly changed and fine-tuned while conducting fieldwork, my focus was less on the principle of praxeology and more on creating a suitable analytical framework that allowed an overall analysis of these practices. This most of all required a sound justification of the specifically selected elements, which had to be comparable; and this is not perfectly in line with a praxeological research approach.

In chapters 6 and 7, the research framework was much more open and in-depth, with a strong focus on praxeology. The thick descriptions in these chapters are more in keeping with most practice-oriented research. Even so, experiences in

the peer review process have taught me that some researchers see a praxeological framework as a weakness. One particular reviewer heavily criticized chapter 6 due to the lack of a strict, predefined plan for conducting fieldwork and analysis, seeing the praxeological approach as a weakness, rather than as a strength, which others consider it to be (Jonas et al., 2017; Nicolini, 2017). Advocates of praxeology regard such a perspective as helping the researcher to tailor the analysis to the actual findings in the field, increasing the reliability of findings (Nicolini, 2017). Even so, the principle of praxeology is not in line with strictly linear approaches to research, where the belief is that the researcher should implement a carefully wrought-out, predefined research plan.

8.5 Recommendations

8.5.1. Practical recommendations

This thesis shows that there are many different forms of active citizenship through which citizens engage in the governance of diverse types of green spaces in various socio-economic conditions. As a consequence, one should be careful with generalizing statements about active citizenship: the implications of one specific practice may strongly differ from those of the next. For authorities, this diversity makes it difficult to address active citizenship through generic policy. I therefore strongly argue for a tailor-made approach, where authorities interact with practices of active citizenship in the green domain on an individual basis, with regard for the social and material context in which these practices are situated.

Citizens often realize ecological benefits through their activities in green space governance. This contributes towards the protection of nature, but citizens also realize important social, cultural and economic co-benefits. This underpins a need to look beyond the ecological benefits of green self-governance practices, stressing the need to assess these outcomes in relation to broader social, cultural and economic systems. In this sense, active citizenship in green space governance also has the potential to contribute towards policy objectives and/or public values outside of the green domain.

In all of this, one should be aware that active citizenship is mostly additional to what authorities do, and generally not a substitute for it. While active citizens do

have the potential to realize many different benefits and co-benefits, such effects are usually limited to the local scale and often found outside protected areas. For impacts on a larger scale, a strategic overview remains important. In this sense, it is important that authorities provide a strategic framework in order to accomplish government policies. Within this framework however, authorities should be open, flexible and stimulating towards active citizenship. In this way, the participatory democracy functions as complementary to the representative model (Van Dam, 2016).

My argument for a stimulating environment to nurture active citizenship thus comes with a plea for an active role of authorities (Buijs et al., 2016a; Sørensen, 2006). Besides the realization of strategic policy objectives, authorities have a responsibility to also represent non-active citizens and to promote environmental justice. In this sense, it is important that authorities do not overlook political groups and do not focus solely on those forms of active citizenship that fit exactly within their policy frameworks (Vierikko and Niemelä, 2016; Buijs et al., 2016b). Rather, authorities should recognize the plurality of meanings and values that citizens attribute to green space (Vierikko and Niemelä, 2016).

For active citizens, the dependency on authorities means that they will often need to operate within certain governmental frameworks. When citizens wish to remain independent, this limits their options. Linking up and even collaborating with authorities is often an important strategy for realizing more impact and/or doing so on a larger scale (Buijs et al., 2018b; Aalbers and Sehested, 2018), but reduces the autonomy of citizens.

Citizens also need to be aware of the risks of volatility in policy and of the importance of an adaptive capacity for the continuity of their activities. Formalization might be a valuable strategy for citizens in order to be eligible for subsidies and to have a stable internal governance structure. However, there are also groups that work best with an informal approach – there is really no simple solution here. In a general sense, larger practices in terms of the area of land and/or number of people involved will be more likely to experience a need for formalization.

In conclusion, I want to repeat that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions, and there is no 'best' way to govern green spaces. The local context is key. Successful active citizenship in green space governance is not a given and often requires serious effort from citizens as well as from other actors. All of this points to a need for tailor-made, context-sensitive approaches to governance, with governments

facilitating active citizenship where possible, but also taking on a strong leading role whenever necessary.

8.5.2. Recommendations for further research

This thesis provides many insights into the scope and nature of active citizenship in green space governance and in relation to a number of important debates surrounding this active citizenship. Yet, there are still many more questions to be asked and research directions to be explored with regards to the involvement of active citizens in green space governance. Below, a few topics are listed to provide directions for future research.

Expanding the scope

There are a number of issues that were the beyond scope of research for this thesis, but that would contribute to broadening and expanding the scope of the presented work.

1. This thesis mainly focuses on citizens, while commercial actors and NGOs also play an important role in public life and in the protection of nature. Studying the activities of such actors is just as relevant as studying the role of active citizenship in the green domain. Linking the work in this thesis with such studies will lead to a better overview and understanding of the role of non-governmental actors in nature conservation.
2. While this thesis focuses on nature, landscape and urban green space, it has parallels and cross-links with research in other societal fields, especially in neighbouring domains such as the environment, recreation, infrastructure and well-being. While society is addressed in more general debates throughout this thesis, a comparison and integration with the work of others outside the green domain could lead to relevant insights.
3. The scope of this thesis is limited to public land. But many citizens also manage private green spaces: their gardens, which can also contribute to biodiversity and many other ecosystem services. In this sense, it can be relevant to expand the findings in this thesis with research on how citizens protect and manage green spaces on land that is not publicly accessible, and to study what kinds of effects these activities have.
4. The main focus of this PhD-research is on the Netherlands, although it is related to international literature and I did conduct two international case studies. A further broadening to other countries would add to the international relevance of my work. It would be interesting to compare this research to work conducted elsewhere, also in non-Western countries.

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Addressing remaining knowledge gaps
With regards to content, there are a number of remaining knowledge gaps.

1. How representative the work for this thesis is, is still unclear. While chapter 4 presents a much larger overview of green self-governance practices in comparison to earlier studies, it is difficult to make any claims about the representativeness of this sample. As a consequence, measuring the total size and impact of active citizenship in green space governance is very complicated.

   In a number of follow-up projects, this is a main topic of discussion. Vullings et al. (2017) have aimed for a more representative view by zooming in on several municipalities for a complete local picture. Even on this spatial scale, this completeness turned out to be quite difficult. Arts et al. (2017) have conducted a follow-up study to estimate the total impact of active citizenship on biodiversity in the Netherlands. Also here, margins of uncertainty are large since there is little knowledge about the total population. In yet another study (Buijs et al., 2018a), researchers attempted to get more insight into the spatial distribution of active citizenship in the green domain. This project faced similar difficulties as the other follow-up studies. So, there are still steps to take in order to gain a more representative view of practices of active citizenship in green space governance.

2. Another important issue is that the quantitative work in this thesis is largely static or cross-sectional (Kumar, 2005). While literature often describes a rise of or a shift towards active citizenship, I have noted that such observations are thinly supported by broader empirical evidence. In this respect, this thesis merely provides a starting point for such a monitoring of large numbers of practices. This could for example be done by revisiting the original practices (especially those where interviews were conducted) or by making a new sample at another point in time and comparing research findings. This would be a way to identify and monitor trends and developments over time.

3. Due to the theoretical and conceptual focus, most of my work for this thesis focused on the level of practices, and not so much on the level of individual volunteers. Other researchers have studied the motivations of people to engage with nature (Admiraal et al., 2017; Ganzevoort et al., 2017; Van den Born et al., 2017) and why citizens become active citizens (Scientific Council

for Government Policy, 2013; Walker, 2009; Yetano et al., 2010). It would be interesting to see if there are links between my research and these studies, and to relate these individual motivations of citizens to a study of practices. This would offer insights into the relation between individual motivations and the teleoaffectivity of practices, and also into the reasons for citizens to initiate new practices.

4. Another important relationship worth scrutinizing is that between active citizenship and strategic policy: how do certain policy frameworks influence the emergence and success of active citizenship in green space governance? Also for the policy frameworks and objectives of authorities, such studies can provide valuable knowledge. An important and insufficiently studied topic relates to the associated costs and benefits for authorities related to active citizenship (Rosol, 2010). Is working with active citizens more cost- and/or time-efficient for authorities than it is to take the lead themselves?

5. From a democratic perspective, a further study on the relationship between active citizenship and environmental justice would be interesting. Case study research into such mechanisms has been done in the recent past (Paloniemi et al., 2015; Kabisch and Haase, 2014). However, a more general analysis of the procedural and distributive aspects of environmental justice in relation to active citizenship in the green domain could provide valuable insights in relation to the democratic debates described in section 8.3.2. Important topics of research in this context would include the representation of younger people and the distribution of environmental costs and benefits of active citizenship across the population.

6. Finally, the discussion in section 8.3.3 points to a need for flexible and interactive governance systems with shifting roles for both authorities and citizens. The ongoing debates in literature highlight that there is still much to be discussed and explored in this context (Buijs et al., 2016a; Ostrom, 2010; Hajer et al., 2015; Driessen et al., 2001; Michels, 2011; Bäckstrand et al., 2010; Eizaguirre et al., 2017) – on all levels of scale. While there is no such thing as one single 'best practice' for governing green space, debates on how to best govern our green spaces, with a broad range of associated research questions, will remain relevant.

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8.6 To conclude

This thesis provides many insights into the nature, scope, role and relevance of active citizenship in green space governance. However, there is still much more to be studied and discovered. In the future, studies like those conducted for this PhD-thesis will remain important in order to address ongoing and new scientific and societal debates. Only time will tell how the role of active citizens in the green domain will develop and whether the presumed shift towards active citizenship in green space governance will continue. Still, the large number of practices, the ongoing emancipation of citizens and the increasing policy attention for active citizenship all point towards one conclusion: active citizenship in green space governance is here to stay.

Summary

Summary

Background

The role of authorities in green space decision-making and management is increasingly supplemented with activities from citizens. Research has shown how citizens across Europe nowadays engage in a wide variety of practices to accomplish their green space-related objectives. In this way, citizens contribute to the management of protected natural areas, rural landscapes and urban green spaces.

The current focus on *active citizenship* in green space governance brings about important debates. This includes discussions about how to best govern and protect our green spaces. There are also democratic debates about the roles and responsibilities of different actors in green space governance. While citizens potentially contribute towards the realization of public policy, their objectives can also clash with the formal responsibilities and preferences of authorities. There might also be tensions between and inequalities among citizens.

Thesis aims and research questions

This PhD-project specifically focuses on forms of governance in which active citizens play a leading role in realizing, protecting and/or managing public green space. The main research aim is to contribute to scientific and societal debates on active citizenship in green space by studying its relevance for the governance, management and protection of green space. For this purpose, four main research questions have been formulated to address four main knowledge gaps regarding the involvement of active citizens in green space governance:

- *What are the overall scope and key characteristics of active citizenship in green space governance?*
- *What are the benefits and co-benefits of different types of active citizenship in green space governance?*
- *What factors contribute to or constrain the long-term continuity of active citizenship in green space governance?*
- *How can the transformative potential of active citizenship in green space governance be understood?*

Research approach

This PhD-research focuses on the study of daily *practices* that involve active

citizens in green space governance. To do so, this thesis departs from the Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA) and enriches it with elements from practice theory in order to tailor it towards this study of daily practices.

The Policy Arrangement Approach is an established analytical framework used to study the governance of natural resources through four analytical dimensions: *actors* (those involved in governance), *discourse* (the content and verbal aspects of governance), *rules* (guiding principles that govern actions of actors) and *resources* (tools and skills used to achieve certain outcomes). By adopting elements from practice theory this thesis adds a focus on human activities as a fifth dimension. It also adds a stronger recognition of the constitutive role of materiality in practices and an emphasis on the ends to which practitioners orient their activities.

I argue that a deeper understanding of the role and relevance of active citizenship in green space governance requires both a broader overview of the scope of these practices and a deeper understanding of specific practices. In order to do so, I used a 3-layered framework for this thesis. This started with a broad *inventory* and analysis of 264 different practices in order to gain an overview of their characteristics and diversity. The second layer progressed upon this with a d*etailed qualitative analysis* of a subsample of 50 practices in order to gain more reliable knowledge and a deeper understanding of these practices. In the third layer, four *case studies* have been conducted to gain in-depth knowledge on a number of specific issues.

The scope and key characteristics of active citizenship

When I started with this thesis, there was a scarcity of good quality baseline data on the nature and diversity of active citizenship in green space governance. The analysis of 264 examples of active citizenship across the Netherlands in layer one of this thesis gives a good overview of the variety of ways in which active citizens engage in green space governance. They for example aim to protect the habitat of an endangered species or manage land within a nature reserve. However, improving social cohesion through community gardening or providing access to a woodland can be important objectives just as well. Active citizenship in the green domain thus often works across traditional policy silos and crosses borders between nature, culture and social domains.

This study on the scope and key characteristics of active citizenship highlights that most of the practices in which citizens engage are small scale; they are usually

limited to local areas spanning no more than a few hectares, and often much less. Most of the active citizenship in green space governance takes place outside of protected reserves, often in (peri-)urban areas. It also shows that citizens do not always engage in the actual management of green space. In contrast to most previous studies, this research highlights the additional relevance of political activities such as lobbying and protesting, as these activities are important means for citizens to accomplish their objectives.

Active citizenship is often linked with other actors in the public domain. Citizens often cooperate with local authorities and NGOs, and occasionally also with business actors such as farmers. Funding from local authorities can be an important source of income, as well as sponsoring by companies and private donations. In many practices, involved citizens donate their own money and sometimes revenues are generated through delivering products and services.

The benefits and co-benefits of active citizenship

The detailed qualitative analysis in layer two addresses a lack of insight into the outcomes produced by active citizens. This makes it difficult to comprehend the implications of a shift towards active citizenship for the natural environment and the population.

The analysis shows how the large majority of the 50 practices contribute towards ecological benefits, such as biodiversity, urban greening, landscape restoration, expansion of green space areas, or species protection. This large majority also contributes towards socio-economic co-benefits, such as environmental awareness and the use functions of green space (accessibility, recreation, amenity). Other co-benefits relate to social cohesion, food production, employment and the protection of cultural aspects of the landscape. The exact benefits and co-benefits strongly depend on the type of practice.

The practices in this study generally generate benefits on a much smaller scale than those of authorities and large NGOs. While green self-governance does contribute towards realizing environmental and social objectives, this contribution is therefore mostly of local relevance. It is also important to be aware of potential tensions between benefits and co-benefits related to the activities of active citizens, for instance when an increase in recreation negatively affects biodiversity. Furthermore, citizens are not always successful in accomplishing their objectives and the activities of citizens can also produce outcomes considered as negative.

The long-term continuity of active citizenship

In the studies in layer one and two citizens expressed concerns about the long-term continuity of active citizenship in green space governance. This was an important motivation for me to conduct three European case studies into place-keeping, the long-term responsive management of places, in order to preserve the qualities and benefits that a place offers.

These cases show how citizens can manage public green spaces over multiple decades. While similar examples are rare, such cases can provide important inspiration for other groups that aim to protect certain green values in the long term. They show how citizens can develop an inspiring idea, mobilize fellow citizens, realize a green space and maintain it over time. Even so, these studies also highlight how even after several decades, groups still struggle to continue their activities. Changing policies such as declining subsidies, urban development such as encroachment, and the ageing of volunteers all put pressure on the continuity of citizens' activities.

A number of important lessons for continuity can be distilled from these cases. First of all, long-term continuity is supported by a degree of formalization: established rules and internal procedures provide stability to citizens. Secondly, the importance of adaptive capacity is also underlined: citizens need to be able to respond and adapt to political, socio-economic and cultural developments over time. Third, authorities play a key role in place-keeping by citizens: their long-term support can provide stability to citizens, but they can also constrain citizens when they change their policies.

The transformative potential of active citizenship

Tensions between the activities of citizens and the role of authorities are manifest throughout this thesis. Prior research shows that active citizens are often hindered by institutions and often face difficulties in scaling up beyond the local level. I therefore conducted an in-depth case study on how citizens can transform practices in governance and reshape the relationship between citizens and (local) authorities.

This fourth and final case study shows how discourses and activities promoted by citizens became embedded in spatial planning and green space management. This instigated institutional changes, and showcases a transformative potential in both substance (redevelopment of a green space) and governance (co-creation). Yet,

this study also highlights the persisting influence of institutionalized rules and procedures. Institutional change in local governance is often a slow and complex process, in which citizens need to align with the institutions that they want to change in order to be able to instigate these changes. This conditions the activities of citizens, reducing their autonomy.

Even so, transformation in governance is not necessarily a matter of citizens striving to realize their objectives vis-à-vis authorities trying to realize theirs. Instead, this study shows that when certain ways of working are under pressure, when motivations align towards a shared end-goal, and when there is a shared sense of urgency, transformation can take place through co-creation between citizens and authorities. In this, the success of practices that involve active citizens in governance can clear the way for involvement of citizens in other practices, eventually instigating a gradual rather than disruptive change in how society is locally governed.

Discussion

This thesis shows how citizens can make an important contribution to the governance and management of green space. Most practices are currently situated outside protected nature reserves, but they can enhance urban greening and biodiversity in the city or ensure the conservation of cultural elements in the landscape. Even so, the contribution of citizens to (inter)national policy goals and ecological networks is still relatively small, as the outcomes of active citizenship in green space governance are mostly limited to the local scale level.

In the long run, co-benefits of active citizenship in green space may increase people's connection and involvement with nature, leading to increased support for environmental protection. With this, co-benefits can provide a first step towards the realization of more direct benefits for nature conservation. After all, practices with an explicit focus on co-benefits often also produce benefits - and vice-versa. Relating to co-benefits can therefore be an effective strategy for governments or environmental NGOs aiming to involve active citizens in their work.

From a democratic point of view, critical scholars have highlighted how authorities prefer to deal with citizens whose objectives correspond with their own policy aims. While authorities often aim to promote active citizenship in their discourse, this will sometimes put them at odds with citizens who pursue different goals. Conflicts between citizens and authorities often manifest themselves in my work,

but such notions are often overlooked in the political discourse, which tends to focus on cooperative forms of active citizenship. My work also reiterates citizens' dependency on authorities and shows how the continuity of their activities can depend on the role of local governments.

Scholars have also been critical of the exclusion of non-active citizens in these debates. Previous research has shown how certain societal groups are less represented in active citizenship, and there are ongoing debates about how the costs and benefits of active citizenship in the green domain are spatially distributed. Authorities still have an important task to represent everyone, also disengaged or less successful citizens, to make sure that everyone has the chance to enjoy the benefits offered by green space. The fragmented nature and local scale of active citizenship also point towards a need for a continued central role of authorities in safeguarding green space values and realizing ecological networks.

In this, active citizenship can offer a valuable addition to what governments do, contributing important benefits and co-benefits to the environment and the population. By strategically supporting or collaborating with active citizens, authorities can strengthen their contribution to policy objectives and stimulate direct forms of democracy. Over the long term, authorities can support place-keeping by citizens by providing security via stable policies, formally protecting the involved spaces, allowing long-term management contracts and contributing resources.

In this context, the adoption of a more polycentric and context-sensitive approach to green space governance can help authorities in achieving their policy objectives. The diversity of active citizenship does not match with generic 'one-size-fits-all' policy and governing approaches of authorities. Rather, it calls for a flexible role of authorities in governance: in some instances authorities should have a leading role, in other instances an enabling or facilitating role, and sometimes a collaborative approach to governance is called for – all of this with sensitivity to the local context.

About the author

Thomas Johannes Maria Mattijssen was born in Arnhem (NL) on April 27th of the year 1987. He grew up in the town of Huissen as a curious child who was often eager to learn new things. As a child, he read many books and spent time on learning to play the piano. He also loved to play outdoors with the other kids in the neighbourhood. When he was a teenager, Thomas went to school at the Stedelijk Gymnasium in Arnhem, where he mostly specialized in the natural sciences as well as in geography. For most of this period, he also worked in a greenhouse and delivered newspapers. The money which he earned was mostly spent on various card games and lots of chocolate.

When the time came to decide what to study, this was a very difficult decision. Thomas visited many different places and found a lot of the programmes offered there to be of interest. The decision to study Forest and Nature Conservation at Wageningen University was not a very convinced one at the time. Even so, Thomas enjoyed the programme and university and moved to Wageningen when he got the opportunity. During his studies, he discovered that while he liked trees, people were even more interesting to him. Over the years, he specialized in policy and gradually moved towards the social sciences within his study programme. He graduated his MSC in Forest- and Nature Conservation in 2011.

Since 2012, Thomas has worked as a socio-environmental scientist for various academic research institutes. Over the years, he developed a passion for science and decided to try his best to stay in this field of work. He started as a part-time teaching assistant and junior researcher at the Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group of Wageningen University. He has also worked as a researcher for the Institute for Science, Innovation and Society at the Radboud University Nijmegen; as an academic intern at Forest Research in Bristol and Roslin; and as a researcher for The Section for Landscape Architecture and Planning at Københavns Universitet. This was not a planned career of switching between jobs - it just happened the way it did in a competitive academic job market during an economic crisis.

Thomas Mattijssen is currently employed at Wageningen Economic Research as researcher and project leader on the interfaces between people and their natural environment. His work focuses on three of those interfaces: (1) perceptions and

opinions about the natural environment; (2) the interactions between humans and their environment in practices; and (3) strategic governance and policy interventions to promote the socio-economic and environmental values of the environment. Simply put: it's what people think; what they do; and how to deal with this. Thomas is still a self-proclaimed nerd, who loves to play music and card games and enjoys to spend time with his loved ones. He has 'sort-of' kicked his chocolate habits, but it's still a weak spot.

You may contact Thomas at thomasmattijssen@gmail.com

Thomas Mattijssen
Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)
Completed Training and Supervision Plan

Wageningen School
of Social Sciences

Name of the learning activity	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS*
A) Project related competences			
Organising a WASS thematic activity: citizens for Nature.	WASS	2015	2
Research Methodology, from topic to proposal	WASS	2014	4
Writing project proposal	WUR	2015	6
'Self-governance in nature conservation: from benefits to co-benefits of active citizenship'	ALTER-Net, Ghent	2017	1
'Green citizen governance: citizens governing nature and landscape in the Netherlands'	Poster presentation on seminar citizens for nature, WASS	2015	0.5
'Citizens governing green space: a study of 264 green self-governance initiatives'	WASS PhD-day	2016	1
'From place making to place-keeping? Long-term perspectives for the management of urban green by citizens'	European Forum on Urban Forestry	2016	1
'From place making to place-keeping? Long-term perspectives for the management of urban green commons citizens'	IASC, Utrecht University	2017	1
B) General research related competences			
ESD thesis supervision	WUR	2013	1
Competence assessment	WGS	2015	0.3
IPA conference (methodology proposal presented)	WUR	2014	1
Academic internship	Forest Research, UK	2016	6
Attending and participating in FNP research seminars	WUR	2012 - 2017	4
WASS introduction course	WASS	2015	1
Academic peer review work (3 reviews)	WUR	2015 - 2018	0.8
Creating and managing the FNP Twitter account	WUR	2015 - 2017	3
Participation in reading group 'Visions of Nature'	Radboud University/ISIS	2014	1.5
Organizing excursion for a summer school on 'Landscape restoration'	FNP, WUR	2015	1
PhD-representative at FNP chairgroup	WUR	2016 - 2017	2
Creating and managing the FNP-blog	WUR	2016 - 2017	1
Participation in PhD writing retreat	Governance cluster, WUR	2017	0.5

C) Career related competences/personal development

BSc and MSc Thesis supervision	FNP, WUR	2013 - 2014	1
Lecturing FNP 24806	WUR	2013 - 2015	2
Several guest lectures	FNP, WUR; Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen/ISIS	2013 - 2017	1
Career orientation	WGS	2016	1.5
Total			**45.1**

*One credit according to ECTS is on average equivalent to 28 hours of study load

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