

# Can a good farmer be nature inclusive?

Dr Judith Westerink

Newcastle, 23 October 2019



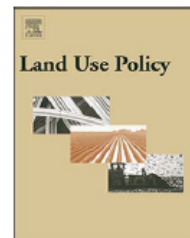


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### Collaborative governance arrangements to deliver spatially coordinated agri-environmental management



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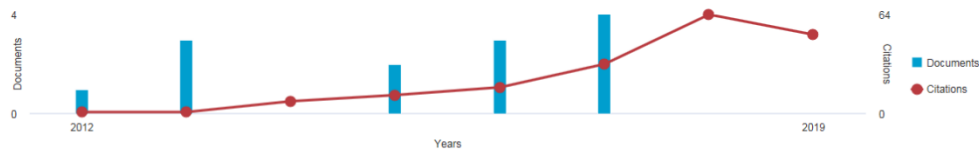
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Table 6.2 Social media influencers within WENR

Name	Twitter account	Media reach (2018)	Topics
Hugh Jansman	@HughJansman	83.076	Wildlife in NL
Anne van Doorn	@AnneMvanDoorn	63.918	Farming and wildlife
Wieger Wamelink	@wamelink_wieger	49.716	Moon and Mars
Judith Westerink	@JudithWesterink	49.267	Farming and wildlife
Fokke de Jong	@fokke	31.582	Climate and water
Tia Hermans	@tia_her	11.709	Wildlife policy in NL
Catharien Terwischa	@CatharienTVS	10.900	Delta Plan Bangladesh



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100 years  
1918 — 2018

# Seeing Through the 'Good Farmer's' Eyes: Towards Developing an Understanding of the Social Symbolic Value of 'Productivist' Behaviour

Rob J.F. Burton

Sociologia Ruralis, Vol 44, Number 2, April 2004  
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ISSN 0038-0199

## 2 The Forms of Capital

Pierre Bourdieu

Journal of Rural Studies 27 (2011) 95–104



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Journal of Rural Studies

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud)

## Creating culturally sustainable agri-environmental schemes

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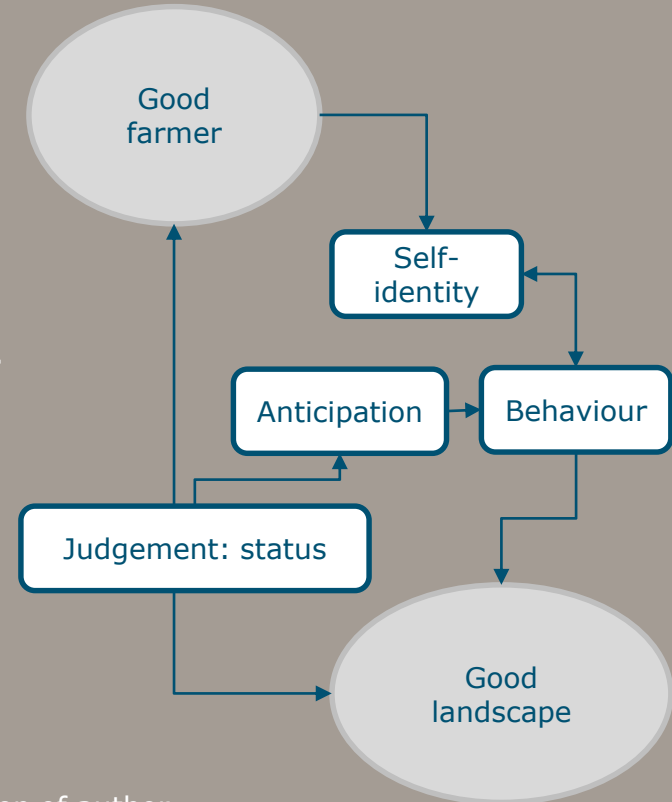


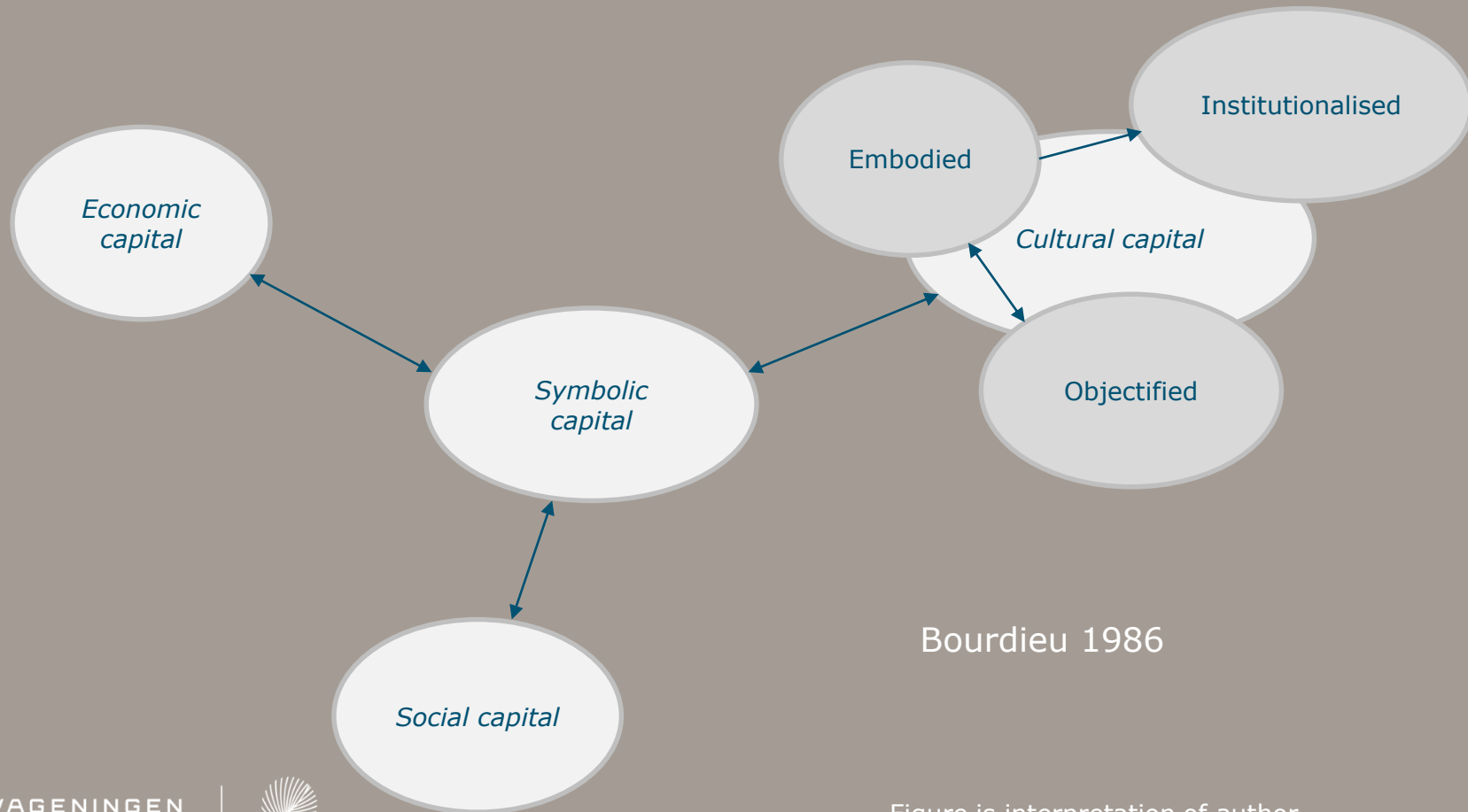


# Factors influencing decisions of farmers include cultural norms with respect to 'good farming' and 'good landscape'

Burton (2004):

- Farmers drive around to judge each others land
- They know that their peers do the same
- They perform 'roadside farming' to maintain their status as good farmer





Bourdieu 1986

Figure is interpretation of author

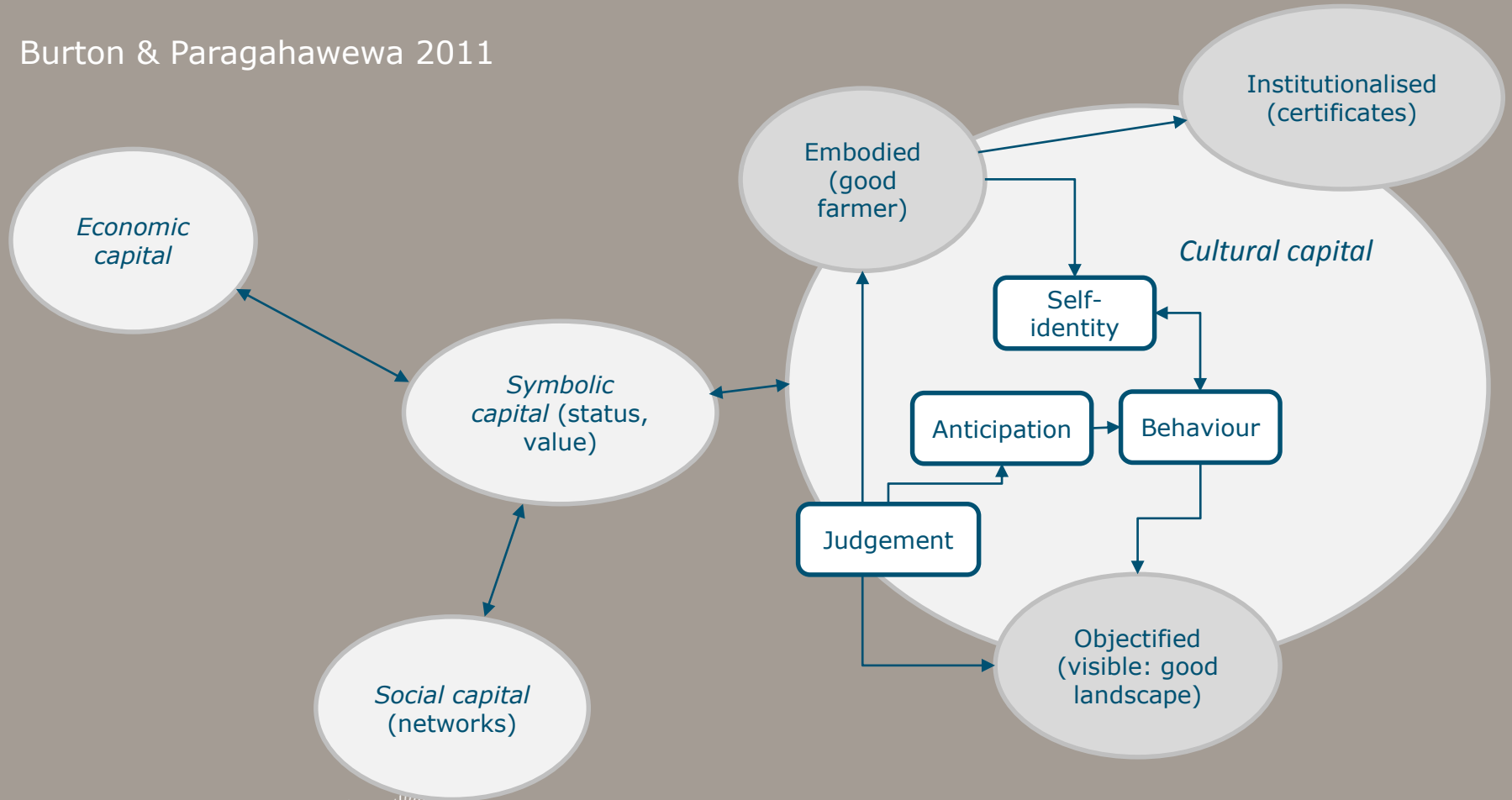


Figure is interpretation of author

- Subcultures & farming styles (Vanclay 1998, Vd Ploeg)
- Change (Giddens 1984)

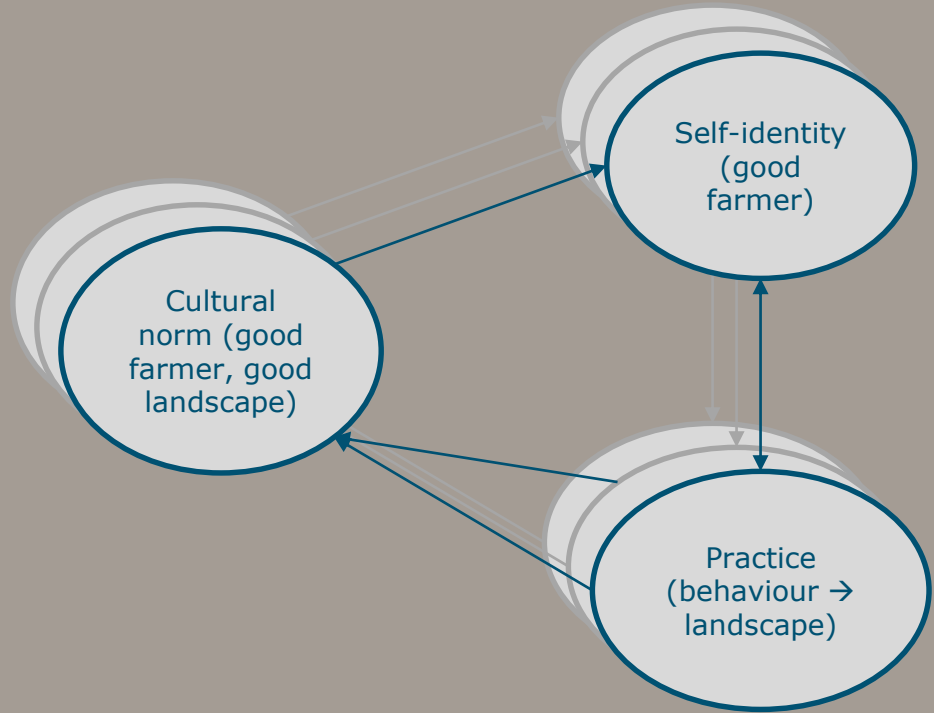


Figure is interpretation of author

STRUCTURE

AGENCY

# Nature-inclusive farming

- Reduces negative impact on biodiversity
- Makes use of biodiversity
- Takes care of biodiversity

→ Can a good farmer be nature-inclusive?



## Landbouw, natuur en voedsel: waardevol en verbonden

Nederland als koploper in kringlooplandbouw



# Case study Midden-Limburg



Small-scale  
landscape  
Diverse farm types

# Case study Noord-Beveland



Arable farms



# Case study Achterhoek



Small scale  
landscape  
Dairy farms

# Case study Noordelijke Friese Wouden

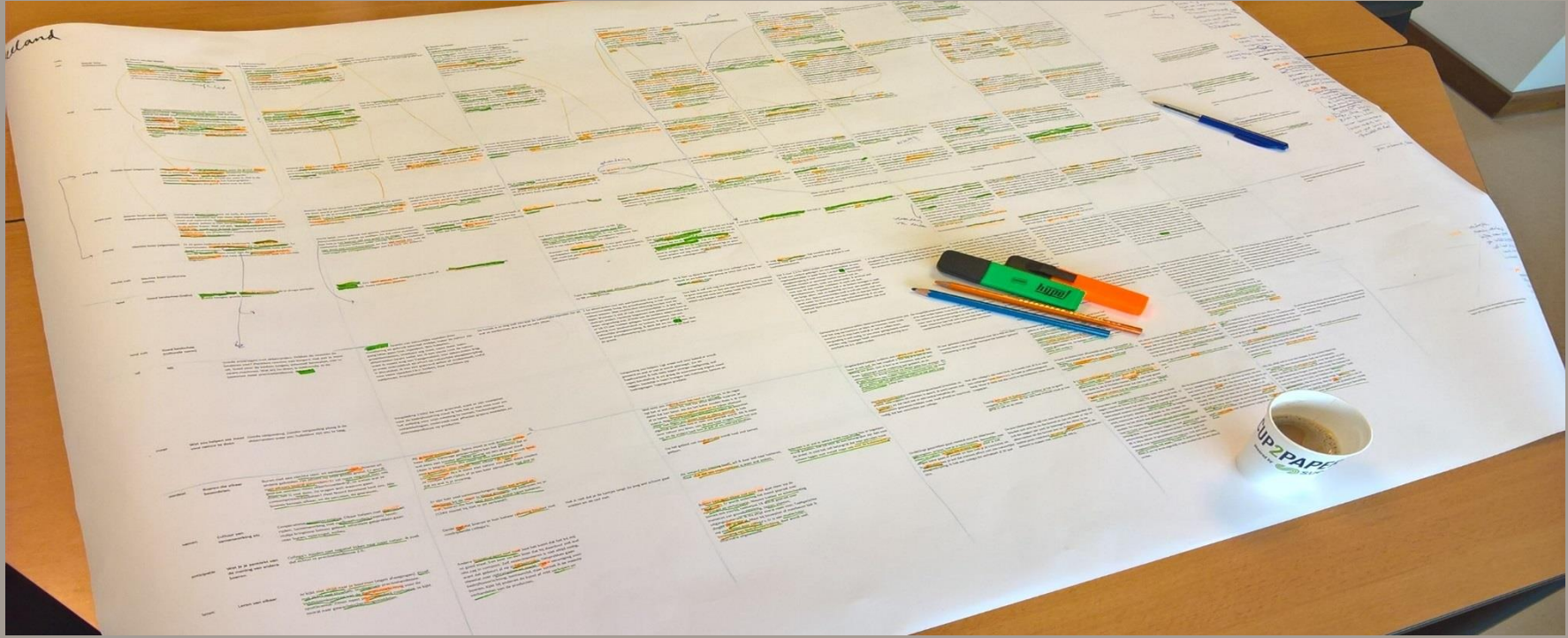


Open landscape  
Dairy farms

# Methodology

- 4 case study areas
- 6 farmers per case study (not anti-nature, no 'frontrunners')
- Individual interviews and focus groups
- Semi structured
- Sound recorded, transcribed (verbatim)
- Coding by 2 researchers based on protocol
- Structured in tables per case study
- Configuring and aggregating analysis

# This is Noord-Beveland



	Midden-Limburg	Noord-Beveland	Achterhoek	NFW
Nature inclusive	The landscape is small scale anyway	Less intensive is better (crop rotation 1/5-6)	We already have those landscape features	Suits in this landscape and the farmers
Themes	Partridge, hedges	Natural pest reduction, soil quality, flower strips	Tree hedgerows	Strips along ditches, waders, circular farming
Roadside farming	Everyone does it, but you don't confront each other	Everyone does it, but you make your own decisions	Live and let live	People watch each other, but you do not take that into account too much.
Good farmer	Good crop, healthy cows, good entrepreneur, social, diversity is good	Takes care of the land, good entrepreneur, social	That is different for everybody	Has a balance in the farm (inputs and outputs)
Good land	Tidy, taken care of, but what it should look like depends on the objective	Tidy, straight and neat, but what it should look like depends on the objective	No weeds, good yield	Evenly green, well drained, high in organic matter, but what it should look like depends on the objective
Change of view/ cultural change	Use less pesticides, less admiration for new stables, appreciation of agri-environmental measures of others	Nature is increasingly enjoyable, more appreciation for useful insects		Shallows are no longer abnormal, birdland can also be good land

# Nature inclusive

- Landscape management (features)
- Species management (partridge, waders)
- Management of natural areas (grazing, mowing)
- Soil management (organic matter, no till, bokashi)
- Natural pest reduction (flower strips)
- Circular farming (less input, combinations of cattle and crops)

# Good farmer/ *bad farmer*

- Takes good care of cattle, crops and soil
  - Masters the food production and business sides of farming
  - Is innovative and adaptive
  - Has a good (not necessarily high) yield
  - Is responsible towards environment, biodiversity, society
  - Is sociable, happy, has enough time for other things
- *Goes bankrupt (but this can also be bad luck)*
  - *Treats his cattle badly*
  - *Plows too far*
  - *Degrades the soil*

Most farmers show consistency between good farmer as self-identity and good farmer as cultural norm (self-reported)

# Some quotes

'Using no pesticides at all and loosing the crop would conflict with me being a farmer'

'I always say we are in nature inclusive farming because we cannot do it without nature'

'I do not believe that the natural areas have more waders than our farmland'

'I just want to make a living out of what I like to do and I hope that one day I can hand over the farm to my son'

'I enjoy those beautiful flower strips, you just see more wildlife than before'

'Everyone has his own way and as a farmer you should have that freedom'



# Good land

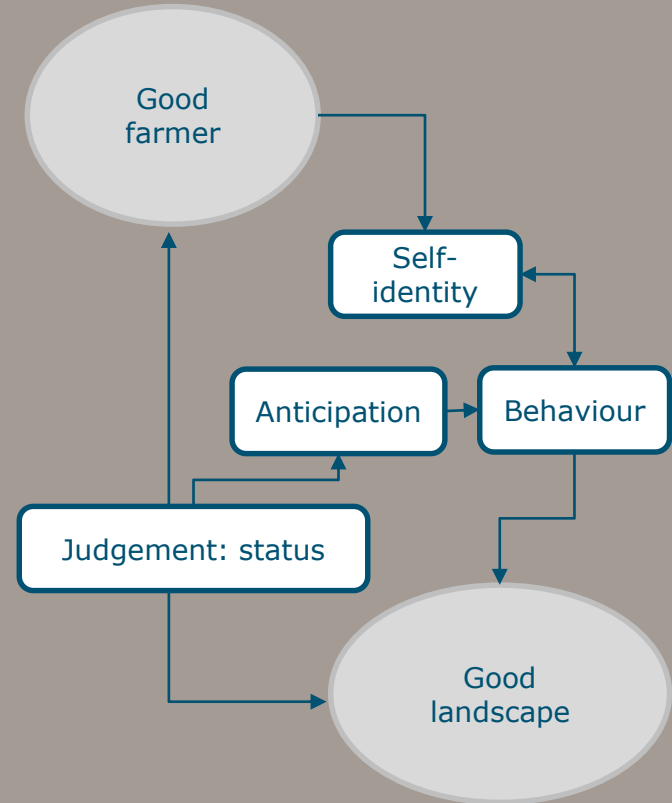
- Is productive
- Tidy, neat, straight lines
- High in organic matter
- No weeds, no stagnant water
- Healthy, even crop
- Cattle, farmyard and buildings look well taken care of
- **Depends on objective!**
- Birds, flowers, landscape features
- Farmland with AEM looks better than natural areas: *farmers are better at managing this landscape*

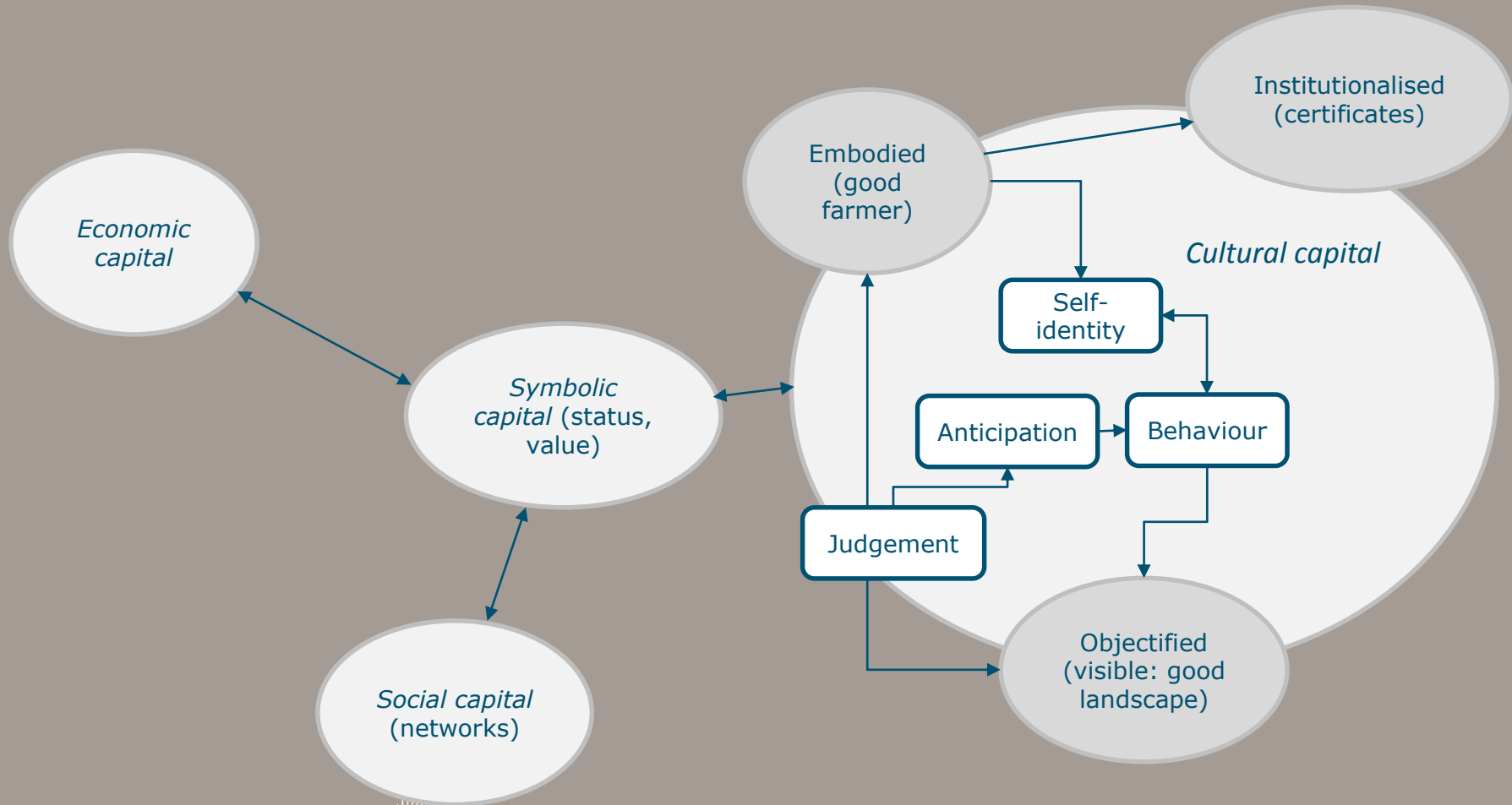
# Roadside farming

- A good farmer is recognised by her land
- Dutch farmers drive around to benchmark and to learn
- New buildings no longer symbol of prosperity
- New visible symbols: data on websites
- 'We do not consider the opinion of others'

# The influence of cultural norms on farm decisions

Is the influence of cultural norms greater through the construction of self-identity than through anticipation on the opinion of local peers?






# How forms of capital relate

- 'Good nature inclusive farming' requires new embodied cultural capital (farmer) to be able to manage and to recognize objectified cultural capital (landscape)
- Agri-environmental collectives have role in build up and transfer of cultural capital
- Productive land is appreciated:
  - Taste of necessity?\*
  - 'The land is too expensive for that'/ 'good land needs to produce'
  - 'A buffer strip is a type of crop too'/ 'it needs to yield'

# Subcultures

## Farmers are part of multiple subcultures

- Local subculture
- Organic subculture
- Farm type subculture (top dairy vs circular farmers, dairy vs arable farmers)
- Agri-environmental subculture
- Study groups, cooperatives, etc.
- Non-farming subcultures
- ...



Who are peers?

# Evolution of cultural norms

- Farmers report a change of view
  - 'I find biodiversity increasingly more enjoyable'
  - 'I have bought a new pair of glasses'
  - 'Even advisors talk about natural pest reduction now'
  - 'At first they thought I was mad when I implemented shallows, but now nobody is surprised any more'

# Can a good farmer be nature inclusive? (1)

- Taking care of biodiversity can be part of being a good farmer, and good land can be biodiverse
- Biodiversity is a form of production, which requires skill
- Practising AEM builds embodied cultural capital
- Agri-environmental collectives provide peers and develop a nature-inclusive subculture
- Some landscapes make nature-inclusive farmers



# Can a good farmer be nature inclusive? (2)

- Farmers take pride in landscape management
- Farmers can enjoy biodiversity
- Public opinion and market demand influence cultural norms
- Farmers have interest in ecosystem services
- Seeing results is motivating
- Agri-environmental management can be sign of good entrepreneurship

# Discussion

- We studied a subculture (the group behind the front runners)
- Limited insight into the influence from public opinion and market demand on cultural norms
- There are more behavioural factors
- There is need for a discourse in policy and science that integrates farming and ecology

# What we add to literature

- A broader conception of good farmer and good landscape
- Self-identity may be a stronger driver than peer pressure
- Farmers report evolution of cultural norms
- Collaboration in AEM helps to make nature inclusive practices visible and recognizable
- Evolving subcultures with fuzzy boundaries

# So what? Clues for supporting a transition

1. Find visible symbols for the display of the skill of a nature inclusive farmer
2. Monitor and publish biodiversity results
3. Organise competition and benchmarking
4. Organise demonstration, experimentation, exchange and learning
5. Facilitate certification and awards
6. Provide result-based payments
7. Provide farm-economic examples
8. Facilitate contacts with citizens
9. Take into account diversity
10. Support the development of nature inclusive subcultures

# Thank you

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