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Land-Sparing and Land-Sharing in Dutch National Parks: A Historical and Transition Perspective

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Abstract: Global biodiversity rates remain in decline despite the fact that worldwide 16% of the land is protected. Some argue that to stop the biodiversity decline, a shift from "land-sparing" (agricultural production and nature conservation on different plots of land) towards "land-sharing" (both activities on the same plot of land) may be needed. We use the regime dimensions of the multi-level perspective to analyze the development and implementation of land-sparing and land-sharing in Dutch national parks as they are experimenting with this. Our qualitative text-based analysis of Dutch national park policy documents from 1930 until 2022 shows that the first Dutch national parks focused on nature conservation and land-sparing. In contrast, the so-called Dutch national landscape parks were the first serious attempt to integrate nature conservation and agriculture and to implement land-sharing. However, this failed because of the misalignment between nature conservation and agriculture at that time. A new attempt is currently being made with the national parks "new style" in which more land-sharing should take place. We argue that for this, a hybrid agriculture nature-conservation regime is needed for which different dimensions of both regimes should align, which currently appears to be starting in The Netherlands.

Keywords: nature conservation; land use; extensive agriculture; multi-level perspective; regime change

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Academic Editors: Fanglei Zhong and Lihua Zhou

Received: 17 December 2024
Revised: 4 April 2025
Accepted: 6 April 2025
Published: 9 April 2025

Citation: Zevenberg, J.; van der Windt, H.J. Land-Sparing and Land-Sharing in Dutch National Parks: A Historical and Transition Perspective. *Land* **2025**, *14*, 808. https://doi.org/10.3390/land14040808

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1. Introduction

Despite the growing attention to nature conservation and the fact that worldwide 16% of the land is legally protected [1], global biodiversity rates remain in decline [2]. Human-induced environmental problems like land-use change, climate change, and pollution are the main driving forces behind biodiversity loss and are more abundant than ever [2]. Agriculture plays an important role in biodiversity loss worldwide, leading to an increase in conflicts between agriculture and biodiversity [3]. A common response to this conflict is to "spare" nature by spatially separating high-productive agricultural land and land for biodiversity conservation. Others suggest "sharing" instead of sparing by combining agricultural production and biodiversity conservation on the same plot of land [4].

Which approach is the best solution to the ongoing biodiversity decline is still debated [5,6]. Some argue to step away from the dichotomy between sparing and sharing, as, in the complex real world, food production, food security, and biodiversity conservation are interrelated [7]. Therefore, many countries are exploring what combination of land-sparing and land-sharing can support biodiversity conservation and agricultural production, as well as how and where this should be implemented [3,8]. Recent research shows that

land-sparing does not automatically lead to higher biodiversity rates [9,10], and it is widely acknowledged that, in addition to nature conservation, sustainable agricultural production is needed to stop the ongoing biodiversity decline. A combination of land-sparing and land-sharing seems to be promising for both biodiversity conservation as well as economic development [11,12].

The sparing and sharing framework is also used in policy and practice [7]. Land-sparing nature is usually separated from agriculture in so-called protected areas, which is a common strategy for conserving biodiversity. However, in practice, this does not mean that in protected areas, all nature is always 100% protected. For instance, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) distinguishes six different categories of protected areas, ranging from strict land-sparing in category Ia (strict nature reserves) to land-sharing in category VI (protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources) where nature conservation is combined with limited, extensive and sustainable resource extraction [13]. IUCN category II refers to national parks, which should consist of *"large natural or near-natural areas protecting large-scale ecological processes"*. It is required that at least 75% of the area consists of nature, in which unimpaired natural processes can occur [14]. In The Netherlands, the establishment of the first national parks took place decades before the definition of IUCN category II was published. This applies to many other countries worldwide and is also acknowledged by the IUCN. Therefore, they state that *"the fact that a government has called, or wants to call, an area a national park does not mean that it has to be managed according to the guidelines under category II. Instead, the most suitable management system should be identified and applied; the name is a matter for governments and other stakeholders to decide"* [14] (p. 11).

This is also the case for The Netherlands, where most national parks have a dual designation: as an IUCN category II area (national park) and as an IUCN category IV area (habitat or species management area). In a habitat/species management area, particular species or habitats are protected, whereas in category II, the full ecosystem should be protected [14]. Of the 21 national parks in The Netherlands, four are only designated as an IUCN category II area and nothing else (Hoge Veluwe, Utrechtse Heuvelrug, Zoom-Kalmhoutse Heide, and Nieuw Land). Because of this diversity of management categories and related practices, in this article, the term national park does not refer to an area that is exclusively managed as an IUCN category II area.

Therefore, while IUCN category II aligns mostly with land-sparing, some of the other IUCN management categories are more suitable for land-sharing approaches. In many cases, nature conservation is combined with recreation, but also combinations with hunting, forestry, agriculture and military training can be found [14,15]. This is also true for areas with the title national park where, for instance, with a zoning system, a difference is made between the nature cores (where usually the focus is on land-sparing and sometimes these nature cores are also designated as an IUCN category II area) and the wider multi-use landscape scale in which more land-sharing approaches occur.

For example, in Italian national parks, the so-called zone A is a strict nature reserve where no human activities are allowed, while the outer zone D is the development zone where also built-up areas are allowed because "a national park is not only nature" [16]. Also, in Danish national parks (designated as an IUCN category II or category V area), biodiversity conservation is combined with supporting the local communities and economy [17]. In England, where most national parks are designated as IUCN category II areas, this plural aim is explicitly stated as sustainable farming, and land-management systems form an important part of the living and working landscapes of the national parks [18]. In other countries, combinations of land-sparing and land-sharing take place in areas that are named differently. For instance, in the French regional nature parks (parcs naturels

regionaux, IUCN category V areas), land-sharing is common as economic and social development are both pursued while maintaining biodiversity [19]. The so-called Naturparke in Germany (mostly IUCN category IV or V areas) are specifically known for promoting regional agricultural and forestry products [20] and integrating regional development with biodiversity conservation [21,22].

Various examples of land-sharing can be found in national parks and comparable areas worldwide. However, land-sharing is not easy, as it is often debated which use should prevail and which role the multiple landowners play [10]. The combination of different stakeholders with their own interests and values brings up the question of whether and how national parks provide the needed response to the land-sparing or sharing debate. This also applies to The Netherlands, where the land-sharing strategy has always played an important role in national parks. Foremost with regard to recreation, but in the current recalibration of the national park concept, agriculture plays a prominent role [23]. About 54% of Dutch land has an agricultural function, while 12% of Dutch land is forest or other types of open natural areas [24]. As the consequences of high-intensive agriculture on Dutch nature demand response, in the newest Dutch national park policy, national parks are suggested as a means to integrate nature conservation and agricultural production to ensure sustainable nature conservation [25].

Therefore, we focus in this article on the development of the Dutch national parks from 1930 until the present day and address two questions regarding this development:

1. How did the Dutch national parks develop and implement land-sparing and land-sharing?
2. When and how, i.e., concerning what aspects, did the Dutch national parks align with the nature-conservation and agricultural contexts?

Here, we focus on the wider multi-use landscape scale of the parks in which sharing options can take place. As these options are very limited in IUCN category II areas, our focus is on the outer layers and the surroundings of the national parks, which, in most cases, will fall under IUCN category IV areas in The Netherlands. We regard land-sparing and land-sharing as the two endpoints of a continuum [6,8]. Because serious sharing requires an integration of nature conservation and agriculture, a fundamental transformation of both domains is needed for this. To examine to what extent this transformation is happening, we use a sociotechnical transition perspective to take both societal as well as scientific aspects of this development into account.

In Section 2, the transition perspective will be explained and conceptualized. In Section 3, we present our results, and in Section 4, our conclusions and the discussion can be found.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Theoretical Framework: Multi-Level Perspective

Hebinck et al. (2021) identified research on the integration, or hybridization, of the agricultural sector with other sectors (e.g., energy, water, and mobility) as a research gap in the sustainability transitions research of agri-food systems [26]. Sustainability transitions consist of different elements (e.g., policy, industry, market) [27], and the multi-level perspective (MLP) framework is widely used to study sustainability transitions in agricultural systems [28–32]. Although the MLP originally focused on technological and energy systems, it is increasingly used to analyze transition in other domains such as agriculture [29], care farming [33], and mobility [34].

The MLP is not commonly used to study developments in nature conservation. An exception is the study of van der Windt and Swart [27]. More common in studies on nature-conservation development is the use of an ecological assessment framework [35],

the role of governance arrangements [36], or the organizational change in and funding from government [37]. Articles that do use a transition perspective usually focus on only one specific aspect of the transition, like, for instance, path dependency [38]. As the aim of this article is to examine the alignment of nature conservation and agriculture in the Dutch national parks more broadly, we not only focus on governance and policy aspects but also take scientific and economic aspects into account. We believe that addressing these different aspects is necessary because of the complexity of the systems involved, and the MLP enables us to do so.

The MLP views transitions as non-linear processes that result from the interplay of developments at three analytical levels: macro (landscape level), meso (regime level), and micro (niches) [28]. In the MLP, niches are seen as *"protected spaces"* in which niche actors work on *"radical innovations that deviate from existing regimes"*. In this article, we regard the different forms of the Dutch national parks as niches. The regime level refers to *"the semi-coherent set of rules that orient and coordinate the activities of the social groups that reproduce the various elements of sociotechnical systems"*, and the landscape level represents the broader long-term political, social, and cultural developments [28]. Here, we see the different aspects of how nature conservation is carried out in The Netherlands as the nature-conservation regime. Likewise, as the agricultural regime, we consider the different aspects and the role of agriculture in The Netherlands.

2.2. Regime Conceptualization

Many transition studies focus on the niche and landscape level and less on the regime level, while regime change is necessary for a sustainability transition [39]. While Runhaar et al. [39] and Fünfschilling & Truffer [40] analyzed the institutional logic of the regime and others focused on the destabilization of regimes [41,42], our approach contains multiple regime dimensions and the relations between these dimensions. The conceptualization of the regime level remains somewhat implicit in many articles using the MLP. Usually, the six dimensions (market and/or user preference, science, culture, technology, policy, and industry) are used as guidance to conceptualize the regime level [43,44]. In addition, we use institutions/governance as a seventh dimension, as suggested by Barbanente & Grassini [43] in our conceptualization of the regime level.

For the market/user preferences dimension (hereafter market dimension), we look, for example, at visitor numbers, attention for tourism and recreation, and (potential) revenue of the agricultural sector or the national park. As forestry is not a specific goal of national parks, while recreation is, we only mention forestry, but did not take aspects like forestry revenue into account in this article. The science dimension is conceptualized by the role and form of knowledge and scientific legitimization. Under the cultural dimension, we look at "ways of doing things" as well as the (historical) background and reasons why these things are done in that specific way. Also, the way in which people perceive nature plays a role in this, as this can influence their receptibility to change. The technology dimension is conceptualized as the management methods and practices that are used in the nature conservation as well as agricultural context, including the use of technological (e.g., machinery, mowing) and non-technological means (e.g., land consolidation, changing agricultural land into nature). The policy dimension is related to different policy instruments like rules, laws, and subsidies in addition to the actual written policy self. In the industry dimension, we look at the role of the agri-industry in the agricultural sector and the recreational industry in nature conservation. For the institutions/governance dimension (hereafter governance dimension), we broadened the focus on governmental actors by including the role of local communities. We focus on the full governance network, which influences and implements

the policy. This includes, but is not limited to, local communities, various governmental actors, businesses, and organizations.

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection is based on a review of the Dutch national park policy documents from the period 1930 until 2022. We chose to start our analysis in 1930, as the first Dutch national park was established in that year. We consider three historical periods. Section 3.1 centers around the period 1930~1970 in which the first Dutch national parks were established. The next period, 1970~2010, is described in Section 3.2 (focus on the national parks) and Section 3.3 (focus on the national landscape parks). The period 2010~2022 is described in Section 3.4.

For these three periods, we used available Dutch national policy documents and legislation; provincial or other regional policy was left out (except for our illustrative cases, see Section 2.4). Documents were found through the library for non-digitalized documents and an online search using Google with the Dutch search terms: "nationaal park" (English: national park) and "nationaal landschap" (English: national landscape). From the first official policy document, we identified new policy documents through snowball sampling. Documents that did not include the term "national park", "national landscape", or "national landscape park", or did not provide enough information about the different regime dimensions were left out of the analysis. In addition to the policy documents, other literature (such as newspaper articles, opinion articles, vision documents, and reports) was used as well to examine the implementation of the policy and to provide data about the context in which the development of the Dutch national parks took place. This literature was also identified with snowball sampling.

In total, 14 documents (2 policy documents and 12 other documents) on the national level were analyzed for the period 1930~1970, and for the period 1970~2010, a total of 20 documents (9 policy documents and 11 other documents) on the national level was analyzed, and 15 documents (5 policy documents and 10 other documents) were used for the period 2010~2022.

We used a qualitative text-based data analysis approach on all documents. Because often policy documents are *"partial or superficial, representing aspirations rather than realities"* [45] (p. 259), we included the implementation of the policy where possible. To examine the alignment between the different forms of Dutch national parks and the nature-conservation and agricultural context, we used the conceptualization of the regime dimensions (see Section 2.2) for our interpretative text analysis. For each regime dimension, we looked for similarities between the nature-conservation and agricultural context and the national parks policy as described in the documents to examine when and where the policy aligned with the regime dimensions.

2.4. Illustrative Cases

Our results are based on the national policy. To illustrate the national development of the Dutch national parks and their alignment with the nature-conservation and agricultural regime, we use two Dutch national parks (Schiermonnikoog and Drentsche Aa) as illustrative cases. We do not aim to provide an in-depth analysis of these two cases. Therefore, we regard them as illustrative cases instead of case studies. We chose these two national parks because they both have a long history and for both parks, written resources were available for our timeframe from 1930 until 2022. However, the most important reason we use these two national parks is their prominent and long relationship with agriculture. Although there are other national parks in The Netherlands where there are relations with the agricultural sector, this relationship is not as strong nor as old as at Schiermonnikoog

and the Drentsche Aa. We use these two "frontrunners" as illustrative cases because their development can show insights into the other national parks in which the relationship with the agricultural sector is still under development.

As shown in Figure 1, Schiermonnikoog is one of the five inhabited Wadden Islands of The Netherlands and was officially established as a national park by the national government in 1989. Although the residential and agricultural areas (approx. 10% of the island) are excluded, the rest of Schiermonnikoog is a national park and designated as an IUCN category II and as an IUCN category IV area. In total, the national park has an acreage of 5400 ha, and Schiermonnikoog has about 950 inhabitants. The national park consists of dunes, beaches, salt marches, mud flats, forests, and a freshwater lake.



Figure 1. Map of The Netherlands with Schiermonnikoog National Park indicated in red (one of the Wadden Islands) and Drentsche Aa (a large area in the north).

The national park Drentsche Aa is one of the largest national parks in The Netherlands, covering over 33,000 ha in which 21 villages and hamlets are situated with altogether over 35,000 inhabitants. The park is situated in the northern part of The Netherlands around the brook Drentsche Aa. The landscape is characterized by flowery meadows bordering the brook and patches of forest. The first ideas to protect the stream valley of the Drentsche Aa stem from the 1930s. Eventually it took until 2003 before the Drentsche Aa was given the official status of a national park. The non-agricultural lands of the Drentsche Aa are designated as an IUCN category II area, and the agricultural lands of the Drentsche Aa are designated as an IUCN category IV area.

3. Results

3.1. Establishment of the First Dutch National Parks

The establishment of the first Dutch national parks took place at a time when there was no large-scale nature-conservation regime in The Netherlands. At the beginning of the 20th century, nature conservation was primarily done by private individuals who purchased land to protect and conserve it for future generations [46]. The first Dutch nature monument was the Naardermeer, founded in 1905 from a private initiative for which the Association for the Conservation of Nature Monuments in The Netherlands was established [47]. Next to this association, the State Forestry Service started to play a role in nature conservation as they regarded, next to their forestry task, also the conservation of the beauty of nature as one of their tasks. Consequently, they also started to establish nature reserves in the same period [48], followed by the Dutch national government [49], especially in The Netherlands East Indies. The term "national park" was avoided there as this was not regarded as an appropriate term for a park in the colonies [50].

The first two Dutch national parks (the Veluwezoom, established in 1930, and the Hoge Veluwe, established in 1935) were founded from a private initiative of a group of concerned citizens, although the government was implicitly involved as well. In 1950, the third national park, Kennemerduinen (now Zuid-Kennemerland), was also initiated by private nature protectionists but established by the national government, province, and municipality [51]. Therefore, before World War II, only a small group of citizens, mainly consisting of some scientists and nature protectionists, either privately involved or working for one of the nature-conservation organizations, were concerned with the protection of nature, while the government played a limited role [46,52].

Still, there was no official national policy for national parks or nature in general, as the first integrated law on nature protection in The Netherlands was not established before 1967. In the national parks and most other nature reserves, there was room for recreation, and extensive use (e.g., forestry and hunting) was generally accepted [53,54]. Ecological knowledge was most influential in nature management [48,52], and the aim to conserve certain special nature areas was fueled by the main vision of nature in which the intrinsic value of nature dominated the idea that "pure" nature should be protected against human influences [48,55]. Although the governance network of the above-mentioned scientists and nature protectionists was small, they were prominent members of society with good connections to noble estate owners and other important members of society. Due to these connections, they were able to influence policy decisions [46]. In this period, the different regime dimensions of the Dutch nature-conservation regime were mostly still under development and only loosely connected.

At the beginning of the 20th century, agriculture was already an important economic sector. In 1920, 23.5% of the Dutch working population worked in the agricultural sector [56]. Agriculture took place on other land than nature conservation, and although the actors from both regimes were interested in the reclamation of the wastelands in The Netherlands, the economic crisis of the 1930s and later World War II created favorable conditions for the agricultural regime [57]. Especially after World War II, the government focused on the reconstruction of the country, and the revitalization of agricultural production was part of that [58]. The aim was to produce affordable agricultural products for the Dutch market and also the world market, and for this, a strong increase in production was needed [59].

Nature conservation integrated with agriculture was almost non-existent at that time. The focus was on land-sparing. Research on technological development to increase the production per unit of land (or, e.g., per cow) played an important role [59]. The industrialization of the agricultural sector was part of the industrialization of the whole society

after World War II. To establish this, the government actively implemented an agricultural modernization policy [60], which stimulated the uptake of new technologies to increase mechanization and intensification [61]. For example, horses were replaced by tractors (increasing from 18,000 to 64,000 from 1950 to 1960), and the number of milking machines in The Netherlands increased ten-fold from 1950 to 1960.

This was not possible without the contribution of the growing agricultural industry to provide this technology and to process the agricultural produce into consumer products [59]. However, because these machines also replaced human power, in 1950, the share of the Dutch working population that worked in the agricultural sector decreased to 13.4% [56]. The important role of the government and industry in the ongoing industrialization of the agricultural sector can also be seen in the governance network in which farmers, farmers' organizations, the supplying and processing industry, and the government work closely together [60]. Because of the strong connections between the different regime dimensions, by the mid-20th century, the Dutch agricultural regime was already rather stable.

Around the mid-20th century, the nature-conservation regime and the agricultural regime were almost completely separated. The national government was heavily involved in the agricultural regime but much less in the nature-conservation regime. This changed in the 1960s and 1970s as the influence of intensified agriculture on the nature areas was noticed by the public as well as policymakers [57]. The development of the first official policy for national parks in The Netherlands was influenced by the General Assembly of the IUCN in New Delhi in 1969, where the official IUCN definition of a national park was determined. This definition—*"A relatively large area where one or several ecosystems are not materially altered by human exploitation and occupation"* [62]—followed the sparing strategy as inhabited and exploited areas were excluded from a national park.

Although this fueled the discussion about the development of the Dutch national parks, it also created problems because most of the Dutch national parks and other nature reserves were not large and had been altered by human exploitation. In the countryside, the agricultural regime played a more important role than the nature-conservation regime, which primarily focused on nature reserves. This created a gap in the protection of the agricultural areas that was also recognized by the government. Therefore, a new form of national parks was invented in The Netherlands: the so-called national landscape parks in which the natural and cultural landscape should be protected [63]. In 1972, the Interdepartmental Commission National Parks and National Landscape Parks was founded, and their advice was published in 1975 in the so-called "Three Green Notes": one about national parks, one about national landscape parks, and one about how nature conservation and agriculture could be integrated in The Netherlands (also called the Relation note) [64–66].

In Section 3.2, we take a closer look at the proposed national parks, and in Section 3.3, we focus on the other two notes of the Three Green Notes.

Drentsche Aa

The developments in the Drentsche Aa are exemplary for the developments in both nature conservation as well as the agricultural regime in the period 1930~1970. Attention to the special status of the Drentsche Aa and its high ecological value of the typical meadows started in the 1930s. However, most of these meadows were owned by farmers, and the ongoing land consolidation led to a growing urgency that the nature, culture, and landscape of the Drentsche Aa needed to be protected before there was not much left to protect [67]. The focus on the ecological value of the Drentsche Aa and the idea that this should be protected against further human influences aligned with the science and cultural dimensions of the nature-conservation regime. A small coalition of the State Forestry

Service, a few scientists, and the province tried to bring the Drentsche Aa under protection, preferably as a national park [68].

However, there was also tension between the aim of the nature-conservation regime to protect special nature areas against further human influence and the aim of the agricultural regime to produce as much as possible. The title of the Vision plan that was published in 1965 shows this tension: "Stream valley landscape Drentsche Aa. Description and vision plan with regard to the management and agricultural use, and the rural and recreational development" [69]. The extensive description of the recreational potential of the Drentsche Aa, shows alignment with the market dimension of nature conservation. This was not true for the agricultural regime. Although agricultural use was also explicitly mentioned, for the farmers, the idea to take land out of production for nature conservation did at first not align with the market, science, cultural, and technological dimensions of maximizing production and agricultural industrialization [70,71]. Farmers feared that their income would decrease and that the compensation for income loss was too low [70].

However, a couple of years later nature was given an explicit market value as the farmers were offered prices way above the market price for their land, convincing the farmers to sell their land to the State Forestry Service [72,73]. The State Forestry Service also started to hire farmers for the management of the meadows [68,73]. These new management practices of active acquisition and change in agricultural land for nature conservation and management of this by farmers influenced both the nature-conservation and the agricultural regime on a regional scale [71]. The tension between both regimes and the consequences of this for the implementation of land-sharing was already present in the Drentsche Aa from halfway through the 20th century. However, the case of the Drentsche Aa also shows that around that time, there were already attempts to implement a shared national park.

3.2. A New Wave of Dutch National Parks

The development of the Dutch national parks was part of a large-scale implementation of nature policy by the Dutch government. The establishment of national parks in other European countries fueled the proposal to establish 21 national parks in The Netherlands [64]. This sudden interest in and prompt action to establish many national parks in The Netherlands shows a more active role of the national government in nature policy. Although most of the proposed areas were already (partly) owned by the government and/or nature-conservation institutions like the State Forest Service [74], the national government did not claim such a large role before. The active role of the national government and top-down approach can also be seen in the implementation of the policy a couple of years later [75]. The selection committee for the national parks, established in 1980, decided which areas could become a "national park in establishment". When a park was officially "in establishment", the minister installed a Consultative Body, which had to write a management and development plan. After ministerial approval of this plan, the park received the official status of a national park [74].

This selection practice and power of the national government differed from the former practice of citizens' initiative in the nature-conservation regime. The inclusion of new organizations (e.g., water authorities and, in some parks, recreational organizations) in the Consultative Body also changed the governance network. In some of the parks that were established at the beginning of the 21st century, also a representative of the farmers joined the Consultative Body, although in general, they represented a small group of, e.g., reed cutters or extensive farmers who used only a small part of the national park.

The aim of the national parks is to protect *"natural areas, waters and/or forests, with a special natural and scenic condition and a special plant and animal life"* [64] (p. 4), fitting perfectly

in the existing ecological focus of the nature-conservation regime. Agricultural use was not foreseen within the borders of the Dutch national parks, but the Dutch government was looking for ways to combine nature conservation and agriculture in the national landscape parks, which will be discussed in detail in Section 3.3. Recreation was another important aim as the last part of the first Dutch definition of a national park says: *"Goal of the management is the maintenance and/or development of the existing natural scientific, landscape and cultural-historical qualities, whereby, within this objective, opportunities are created for getting to know and enjoying the beauty and value of the area"* [64] (p. 4). Combining nature conservation and recreation was far from new, but the emphasis on the importance of social knowledge in addition to ecological knowledge was novel and aligned with the changes in the nature-conservation regime [64].

The last area to receive the official status of national park was De Alde Feanen in 2006. After this, the Dutch national park network consisted of 20 national parks, covering a surface of 128,830 ha, about 3% of the total surface of The Netherlands [76]. Most of the areas were already nature areas and only acquired the label national park, while the legal protection of these areas and the management practices did not change. Therefore, the national parks aligned relatively easily with the culture and technology dimension of the nature-conservation regime, making it easy to implement the national parks. However, it also created the situation that national parks were not regarded as outstanding areas of natural beauty as some of their counterparts in other countries were.

During the establishment of the Dutch national parks, the different regime dimensions of the nature-conservation regime started to reinforce each other. Some elements that played an important role in the strength of the agricultural regime, like having a specific research institute and governmental support, also developed in the nature-conservation regime. Research into nature conservation became more important as, just like there was a research institute for agri-research, also a special research institute dedicated to nature conservation was established [48]. In addition, the role of the national government changed. Although this was not as prominent as in the agricultural regime, the clear policy for national parks, which included the implementation of a broad governance network, helped in strengthening the coherence of the nature-conservation regime in The Netherlands.

Schiermonnikoog

The establishment of the national park Schiermonnikoog illustrates to a large extent the situation of the national parks in the late-20th century. Schiermonnikoog is one of the areas that were marked as potential national parks and the first that was examined by the selection committee [64]. It was also the first national park that was established in The Netherlands after the publication of the Note National Parks in 1975.

Schiermonnikoog was owned by the national government and managed by two governmental bodies: the Dienst der Domeinen and the Water Authority [77]. As they already managed the island as a nature area, in theory, the science, culture, technology, and policy domains did not need to change much with the designation as an official national park. However, the proposal to make a national park of Schiermonnikoog was not received with enthusiasm by the residents [78]. Especially the statement that the whole island, including the agricultural areas, would become a national park and the top-down way in which the national government determined this did not align with the cultural dimension of how things were managed on a small island as Schiermonnikoog [79].

As the commission concluded that the national park should not have negative consequences for the socio-economic situation of the inhabitants of the island, it proposed to exclude the agricultural lands from the national park [77]. With this, Schiermonnikoog followed a clear land-sparing strategy. The national park aligned rather seamlessly with the

market of both the nature-conservation regime and the agricultural regime, as the farmers were renting out their sheds in summer for camping guests as an additional source of income [79]. In addition, the island already saw an increase in visitor numbers from 35,000 to 85,000 per year from 1960 to 1971, long before the establishment of the official national park in 1989.

Interestingly, one of the already ongoing management practices (technology dimension) was that farmers used the salt marches that they leased from the Dienst der Domeinen to be grazed by their young cattle in the summer months. Before the establishment of the national park the farmers used artificial fertilizer at the salt marches, but this practice was gradually phased out [80]. The extensive grazing of young cattle can be regarded as an early form of agricultural nature conservation and aligned with both the nature-conservation and the agriculture regime [81].

3.3. National Landscape Parks and National Landscapes

As agriculture played an important role in the countryside, in the second and third notes of the Three Green Notes, new relationships between agriculture and nature were explored [66]. The aim of the Relation note was to establish 200,000 ha of national landscape parks in The Netherlands, of which national parks could also be part. On half of this acreage, adapted (extensive) agriculture should still be possible (land-sharing), also called the "adapted management" areas. It was foreseen that farmers would take on a dual function in these areas, a producing as well as a nature and landscape managing function. For the other 100,000 ha, farmers had to be bought out as in these areas' nature conservation and extensive agriculture production could not co-exist (land-sparing) [66].

In the period in which the national parks and national landscape parks were established (1970~2010), the nature-conservation and agricultural regimes both changed. In the nature-conservation regime, the culture and science dimension of protecting "pure" and wild nature areas against human influences, substantiated by mainly ecological knowledge, changed towards a focus on nature development and the incorporation of different kinds of knowledge, including the inclusion of other policy fields [57] and more attention for the integration of nature and agriculture [82]. The role of forestry as an economic function decreased, and the importance of nature for recreation grew [53]. The growing attention to the integration of nature and agriculture also influenced the technology, policy, and governance dimension. Nature restoration and nature development practices became prominent in policy and practice, leading to the involvement of a larger diversity of stakeholders [82].

Although the efficient production of agricultural produce for both the domestic as well as internal market remained an important and driving aspect of the agricultural regime and the ongoing mechanization and enlargement of the farms, there was in the same period growing attention on the environmental impact of agriculture on nature and the landscape from both society and the national government [61]. The position of nature and landscape protection in agricultural landscapes was actively implemented in policy and new governance arrangements [36]. The recreational potential of the proposed national landscape parks aligned with the recreational focus of the market dimension of the nature-conservation regime. In the first definition of the national landscape parks also, alignment with the market dimension of the agricultural regime was envisioned as the definition stated: *"While taking into account the social-cultural and economic interests of the population living and working there"* [65] (p. 7). However, the practice of modern agricultural production was seen as contrary to nature conservation [83], and the idea of national landscape parks in which human influences were not turned away but protected was opposite to the culture of protecting nature against human influences. According to the Scientific Committee of

the Nature Protection Council, the pursuit of nature conservation was incompatible with modern agricultural production methods [84].

Subsidies and other new income streams (e.g., recreation) should replace (part of) the income of the farmers. However, whether those new income streams would be sufficient was firmly questioned by the farmers. This was a new market for the farmers and was also not part of the culture of maximizing production. Farmers were concerned about the possible expropriation of the "nature reserve" areas, and they were reluctant to take part of their land out of production. The idea of farmers in the role of "park manager" was an image that many farmers did not recognize themselves in [85], and the term "park" was associated with a decrease in entrepreneurial possibilities for further agricultural modernization [86]. Farmers criticized the idea that some of their common management practices, like land consolidation, were not available anymore and were against the idea that "they had to go back to extensive production methods" [87]. Some farmers were less reluctant to remove their marginal lands on which farming was problematic and economically unfavorable. This can also be seen as a reinforcement of the agricultural regime and a clear land-sparing strategy: maximize production on the preferred lands and nature conservation on the marginalized lands.

Despite the resistance, the idea of the national landscape park was piloted in five areas [65]. However, after these pilots the farmers remained skeptical about their opportunities to continue their business in the adapted management areas [88]. The final advice, published in 1980, proposed to speak of national landscapes onwards, as the term "park" could create uncertainty about the possibilities for agricultural development [89]. However, due to a change in the national government in which the responsibility for nature as well as agriculture was moved to the same ministry, the national landscapes turned out to be too difficult to implement in practice. There were too many contradictions between the agricultural and nature-conservation regimes to come up with a workable solution. Therefore, were the national landscape(s) (parks) completely removed from the Dutch nature policy in 1983 [90].

While the national landscapes were stopped, the Relation note remained actively implemented, and over time, the number of farmers who were less reluctant to change grew. Possibly, the increasing concern of citizens and policymakers about the influence of agricultural intensification on the environment, animal welfare, and more sustainable production methods contributed to this [60]. Also, the government remained optimistic as in the Nature policy plan, published in 1989, the foreseen "adapted management" areas were doubled to 200,000 ha [91]. However, the coverage of these areas grew from only 4700 ha in 1985 to 16,400 ha in 1990 and 63,800 ha at the end of the 20th century, a bit over 3% of the total agricultural land in The Netherlands [92].

It took a long time before the national landscape parks entered the policy agenda again. The Note Space proposed the establishment of 20 national landscapes to protect them against urbanization [93]. Part of these proposed 20 areas overlapped with the proposed areas of 1975 (see [94] for a detailed comparison), and in some cases, also, national parks were also part of these proposed national landscapes [94,95]. Spatial developments (e.g., commercial buildings and infrastructure) were possible in the national landscape as long as the core qualities of the landscape would be preserved. With this so-called "yes, provided that" spatial policy [93], the government tried to address the resistance of the farmers against the national landscape parks. In doing so, the national landscapes aligned more with the culture of the agricultural regime (e.g., enough entrepreneurial possibilities) than with the nature-conservation regime (e.g., protection of nature). However, the implementation of this new policy for national landscapes proved to be difficult due to weak legislation and lack of public acceptance [20,95]. As a result of the decentralization of

the Dutch national nature policy, the national landscapes were omitted from the national policy in 2012.

Drentsche Aa

Here, we examine the development in the Drentsche Aa in the period 1970~2010 as it is illustrative of the struggle around the national landscape(s) (parks). The implementation of the Relation note in Drenthe was slow compared to other provinces. Although "nature reserve areas" were bought off the farmers, the progress in closing management agreements for the "adapted management" areas of the Relation note areas was difficult.

The new cooperation between farmers and the State Forestry Service in the "nature reserve areas" influenced the governance of both regimes. However, this did not mean that the resistance between the farmers and the State Forest Service and ecologists completely disappeared. The polarization between the two parties even started to grow again when the Drentsche Aa was officially proposed as a national park in 1993 [96]. This proposal was fueled by the strong wish of the province of Drenthe to receive the official national park status for the Drentsche Aa [72]. However, inhabitants were not in favor of the idea of becoming part of a national park and did not like the top-down way in which this was determined [97]. This did not align with the policy, cultural, technological, and market dimensions of the agricultural regime, where the farmers feared a loss of entrepreneurial opportunities [72].

After years of struggle between the various aims and objectives of the Drentsche Aa, the advice was to include villages and agricultural areas in the national park and establish the first Dutch national park "with extended objectives" [96]. Eventually, in 2002, the Drentsche Aa was given the title "National Brook and Angerdörfer Landscape Drentsche Aa". These different titles for the same area show the attempt to content all stakeholders involved and to integrate the nature-conservation and agriculture regime.

3.4. National Parks "New Style"

After the completion of the scheme of 20 Dutch national parks in 2006, the political attention and funding for the national parks declined sharply [98]. From 2011 onwards, all Dutch nature policy, including that of national parks, was decentralized and transferred from the national government to the regional government (provinces) [99]. This large change in the policy dimension influenced the national parks as the provinces were given a leading role in the implementation of nature policy, including deciding on the budget. This led to the situation in which some national parks received the same subsidy as before 2012, while other national parks in other provinces received far less subsidy [98].

After a few years of neglect, the Dutch national parks received new political attention around 2014, resulting in a new policy [98,100–102]. The term national parks "new style" was coined [103], and the policy program "National Parks of World Class" was the start of the so-called transition towards national parks "new style". In the transition plan "Towards National Parks of World Class", there is much attention to the market potential of national parks. The "new" national parks should increase their market position by, among other things, attracting a growing group of international tourists [104].

Meanwhile, both the agricultural and the nature-conservation regimes are also changing, influenced by the different pressures and tendencies at a larger level. On the one hand, the preservation of nature is important for Dutch citizens [105], and this changing value of nature is also diversifying the stakeholders involved in nature conservation, including farmers [99,106]. The dominant focus on the protection of "pure" nature areas because of their intrinsic value is being replaced by a new focus on the importance of nature areas for the whole society [99]. This aligns with the increase of attention to the multifunctional

value of nature, especially with regard to the changing climate, but also the relationship between nature and other sectors, like energy, is more prominent [106]. These sectors should become nature-inclusive to contribute to a wide array of related challenges like the biodiversity decline, the sustainability crisis, climate change and the decline of the livelihood of the countryside [107]. Meanwhile, the role and importance of the agricultural sector is decreasing. There is an ongoing decline in the acreage of agricultural land in The Netherlands, while at the same time, the acreage of nature areas increases [24,108], as can be seen in Figure 2.

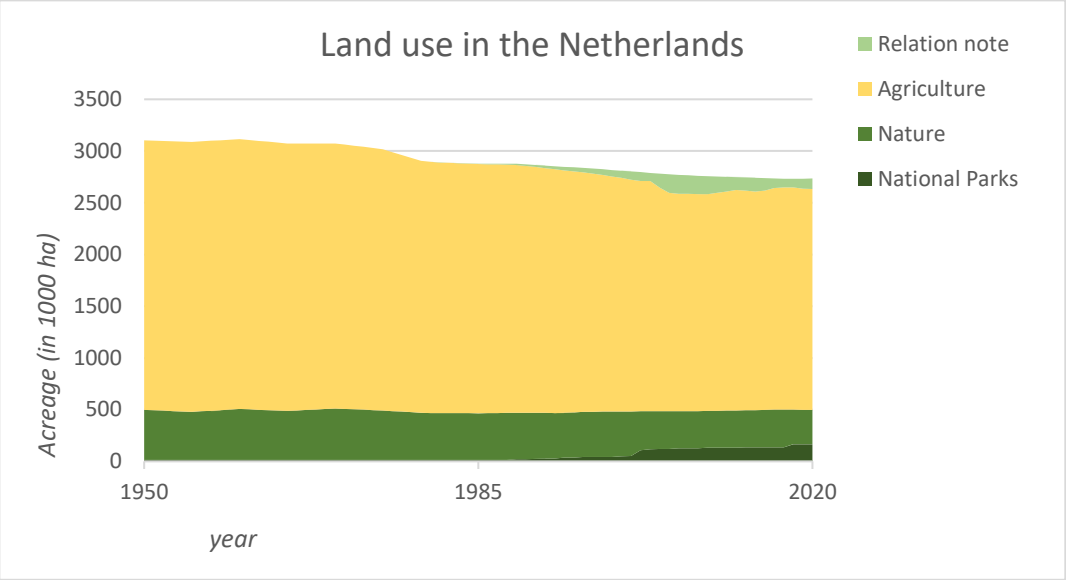


Figure 2. Land use in The Netherlands from 1950 to 2020. Relation note areas are areas designated as areas in which extensive agriculture should take place in addition to nature conservation, they were implemented from around 1980. Agriculture is land with an agricultural function. Nature is land that is protected as a nature area. National parks are specifically designated as national parks from 1975 onwards. Based on [24,92,108,109].

In 2020, only 1.2% of the Dutch working population was still working in the agricultural sector [56], and the share of agriculture in the Dutch gross domestic product has halved from 2.8% in 1995 to 1.4% in 2019 [110]. When the total industry chain (supplying and processing industry) that is connected to the agricultural systems is also taken into account, this share is 6.7% of the Dutch gross domestic product [111], showing the still important role of the agri-industrial complex. The number of farmers who have an alternative additional income source (e.g., house sale of agricultural products, health care, work for third parties, agricultural nature and landscape management, agricultural childcare) is increasing, and this also means other forms of science are becoming more important in the agricultural sector [111]. The agricultural sector is also experiencing disadvantages of the dominant focus on maximization and increase, as it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain high production with decreasing economic margins. Therefore, there is growing attention to the sustainability of the agricultural sector and, with that, more sustainable production methods [112]. In Table 1, the shifts in alignment with both regimes are summarized for the Dutch national parks, national landscape(s) (parks), and the national parks "new style".

Table 1. Overview of the different forms of Dutch national parks and their alignment with the regime dimensions of the nature-conservation and agricultural regime.

Regime Dimension	Different Forms of Dutch National Parks				
	NP [1]	**NL(P) [2]**	**NP "New Style" [3]**	**NL(P) [2]**	**NP [1]**
	Nature-Conservation Regime			**Agricultural Regime**	
Market	Recreation (main), forestry, and hunting (minor) [54]	Increasing influence of recreation [53]	Increasing attention to the multifunctional value of nature [106]	Increase in additional alternative income sources [111]	Increase in production for the world market [59]
Science	Scientific knowledge with a strong ecological focus [52]	Decreasing role of ecological knowledge and increasing uptake of other knowledge (e.g., social sciences) [57]	Focus on sustainable development of the wider landscape [99,111]		Decrease of technological focus and uptake of other sciences [61]	Agro-research with a focus on technology to increase the agricultural production [60]
Culture	Intrinsic value of nature [48,55]	High public support for nature conservation [82]	Importance of nature for the whole society [105]	Focus on the sustainable livelihood of the agricultural sector [112]	Growing environmental awareness and changing role of the countryside. Efficiency increase to maximize production is still important [61]	Industrialization of society [60]
Technology	Protective management practices to limit human influences [48,55]	More nature development management practices [82]	Focus on making other sectors (e.g., agriculture, construction) more nature-inclusive [106]	Growing attention to more sustainable production methods [112]	Ongoing increase in the use of mechanization and intensification [61]	Large role of technological developments in mechanization and intensification [59]
Policy	Indirect national governmental influence, but no specific nature policy [46,52]	Increasing integration of agriculture in nature-conservation policy to protect cultural landscapes [57]	Integration of agricultural and nature policy [107]		Increasing integration of nature and landscape conservation in agricultural policy [36]	The national government actively implemented an agricultural modernization policy [61]
Industry	Forestry [53]	Decreasing role of forestry and small role of extensive agricultural production [53]	Growing attention to nature-related goods and services [106]	Large-scale supplying and processing industry [59,111]		
Governance	Small network of nature-conservation organizations, governmental actors, and scientists [46,52]	Growing network with a larger diversity of stakeholders [82]	Large network with an increasing diversity of stakeholders [99]		Growing network with a larger diversity of stakeholders [36]	Closely knit and large network of farmers, governmental actors, and industry actors [60]

[1] National Park (NP) as proposed in the first policy in 1975 until 2018. [2] National Landscape(s) (Parks) (NL(P)) as proposed in 1980 until they were omitted from the national policy in 2012. [3] National Parks "New Style" (NP "New Style") as proposed in 2018.

As the new national parks should become more and better connected to the wider landscape [104], they are explicitly placed in the wider multi-use landscape. This new land-sharing approach includes agriculture, although the new policy is not clear about how the new national parks relate to the requirements of the IUCN and how the resources and responsibilities of the national parks compare to those of the wider landscape [113]. A new zoning model, which is based on the model of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Man and Biosphere Reserves, is one of

the new management practices. This zoning model, in which the national parks should contain nature cores (in most cases, the official boundaries of the "old" national park) and a surrounding landscape zone where there is also room for (extensive) nature-inclusive agriculture, residential areas, and recreation [114], aligns with the technology dimensions of both regimes. As all these new stakeholders living and working in or surrounding the "new" national park also must be involved, the governance dimension is also changing [99]. Although the immediate stakeholders around the national parks value the new attention for the parks and the new focus on the wider multi-use landscape scale, there are also concerns. Stakeholders question the feasibility of the implementation, especially regarding the funding possibilities and what type of nature and (agricultural) activities are desirable and appropriate within the landscape zone of the new national parks [115].

Both Schiermonnikoog and Drentsche Aa set up new ambitious plans to develop a national park "new style" [116,117]. Both parks are also involved in the so-called Region Deal nature-inclusive agriculture, a plan to stimulate the uptake of nature-inclusive agriculture in the northern provinces of The Netherlands [118]. In the Drentsche Aa, different stakeholders are working together to implement nature-inclusive agriculture in the Farmer, Citizen, Nature Drenthe program. In this program the Drentsche Aa is a testing ground in which farmers experiment with new cultivation methods in grassland as well as in arable farming. For this, some farmers experiment, for example, with mixed cultivation of grains and legumes like wheat and field beans or corn with pole beans [119]. These new mixed cultivation methods ask for new knowledge and technology, as the different crops need different harvest techniques that must be combined in such a mixed field. Part of the experiments is also looking into new, more local markets for agricultural products.

On Schiermonnikoog, the seven dairy farmers together implemented nature-inclusive agriculture by reducing the number of cows on the island by almost 40% and setting up a small cheese factory that should process 50% of the milk production to high-quality cheeses [81]. With this, they try to address the (new) market of locally produced agricultural products in a nature-inclusive way. This initiative is a cooperation of a large number of stakeholders, including the most important farmers' bank (Rabobank), different governmental levels, industry partners (FrieslandCampina), and the nature-conservation organization on Schiermonnikoog (Natuurmonumenten) [120]. The changes demand a large shift of the agricultural regime because, along with the cheese factory, the market (other income sources from new products), the technology needed for the cheese production, the culture of the farmers (from intensive production to extensive production) and science dimension (new knowledge about cheese production) also changed. The transition on Schiermonnikoog is seen as an important example of how nature conservation and agriculture could be integrated into other areas in The Netherlands.

4. Discussion

Our first main question was how the Dutch national parks developed and implemented land-sparing and land-sharing. Our results show that although agriculture and nature conservation were (strictly) separated (land-sparing) in The Netherlands about a century ago, on a local scale, there were already attempts to implement sharing options. Over the years, the Dutch government tried to implement land-sharing on a bigger scale with the proposal for national landscapes next to the national parks, which followed a land-sparing approach. In theory the national landscapes could have been the start of a hybrid agricultural nature-conservation regime, back in 1980 already or later on. However, the proposed forms aligned more with the nature-conservation regime than with the agricultural regime. Moreover, because the agricultural regime was much more coherent and powerful, the proposed national landscapes were not successful. At the same time, without

the connotation of a "park" with restrictions, the Relation note areas were implemented, although on a much smaller scale than planned.

The lack of data about the effective protective outcome of the different land-sharing options is one of the limitations of this study. These data are too fragmented on a time and geographical scale to be able to provide a good overall image of the influence of the different land-sharing options. The monitoring of the protective outcome has just started [121].

To answer our second question—when and how did the Dutch national parks align with the nature-conservation and agricultural contexts?—we see that after the national landscapes, the national parks "new style" is a new attempt to implement land-sharing in the Dutch national parks. In some national parks, this implementation is in the starting phase, and the national parks are potentially the ideal areas for this due to the already existing broad governance network. Although the current sustainability challenges might demand an integration of nature and agriculture, only some regime dimensions of the nature-conservation and agricultural regimes are currently starting to align. For example, where, for a long time, the market dimension of both regimes differed significantly (agricultural production increase versus extensive recreation), the growth of the recreational sector could align with the search for alternative income sources in the agricultural regime. With this, the trade-off between agriculture and nature conservation could also be reduced. An example of this is agricultural nature and landscape management, in which farmers receive compensation for nature and landscape management activities. However, to what extent an integral implementation of land-sharing in all Dutch national parks will take place, remains to be seen. This would require a hybrid agriculture nature-conservation regime.

However, a full transformation towards extensive agriculture means that almost all regime dimensions of the agricultural regime should change. Although we see this in some promising pilot projects, this also remains on a small, local scale, as the extension of the national parks is only influencing the farmers in the immediate vicinity of the national park. The nature-conservation regime is more susceptible to taking up land-sharing. The most important Dutch nature-conservation organizations are also involved in the national parks, and the broader perspective on nature reserves, beyond the old borders of the national parks, is creating shifts in almost all regime dimensions of the nature-conservation regime. An example of this is the new program on nature-inclusive farming of the State Forestry Service, in which they work together with farmers who can rent the land of the State Forestry Service for a long period if they implement nature-inclusive measurements on their whole farm [122].

A further study limitation is the ongoing nature of this development. Whether the transition in The Netherlands towards the national parks "new style" will actually lead to a hybrid agricultural nature-conservation regime is still unsure. It is too early to say to what extent the new policy is causing a minor regime shift on a local level or a completely new (hybrid) regime. In addition, this article does not provide the data to conclude how the process towards such a new hybrid regime exactly works and how this would also affect the niche and landscape levels. However, from the Danish situation we can see this requires an integral approach on several regime dimensions [123].

The MLP enabled us to look into several dimensions of the developments in the Dutch national parks. While other studies usually focus on a subset of the regime (see Section 2.2), our choice to include and conceptualize all regime dimensions provided an effective tool to analyze the alignment with the regimes. Although we did not specifically focus on the factors that "cracked" the regime, our research confirms that the different regime dimensions are related, making it harder to "crack" the regime. Our analysis shows that shifts in one or more regime dimensions can trigger the shift of other regime dimensions within the same regime or even in another regime. Therefore, our recommendation to

policymakers is to explicitly include a wide range of regime dimensions to support the integration of nature conservation and agriculture.

In addition, only the alignment with one or more regime dimensions of a current regime is not enough to trigger a regime shift or regime hybridization. The coherence and strength of the regime(s) also play a role. Moreover, hybridization between two uneven regimes seems to be difficult. Although the nature-conservation regime is much more coherent and stronger presently than almost a century ago, the vested interests, especially the industry in the agricultural regime, are not comparable with the influence of industry partners in the nature-conservation regime. Another problem is the scale. Although it seems regime hybridization is possible at a local scale, like in the example of Schiermonnikoog, this does not trigger regime hybridization on a larger scale (yet). This brings up the question of to what extent we can speak of local regime hybridization or (only) niche development. Although the MLP consists of three analytical levels, we mainly focused on the regime level. To obtain more insight into the influence of the niche level on the different dimensions of the regime, more detailed research into the mechanisms of niche development and niche-regime alignment is needed. Such research can provide more insight into the conditions under which niche development and niche-regime alignment in an agricultural nature-conservation context can be successful or not.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, J.Z.; methodology, J.Z.; formal analysis, J.Z.; investigation, J.Z. and H.J.v.d.W.; resources, J.Z. and H.J.v.d.W.; data curation, J.Z.; writing—original draft preparation, J.Z.; writing—review and editing, J.Z. and H.J.v.d.W.; visualization, J.Z.; supervision, H.J.v.d.W. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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