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Shared residential gardens as regenerative social-ecological landscapes in the Netherlands

The social-ecological as an elusive shepherd

The lens through which we see the human-nature relationship has implications for landscape architecture practice and dialoguing disciplines. Embracing the impossibility of separating humans from nature, urban landscapes have increasingly been treated as social-ecological systems – in which social and ecological processes operate in complex interaction. To design with these social-ecological processes entails understanding how they affect the urban environment – which calls for novel takes to analyse and design urban landscapes.

Design and governance of shared residential gardens

This research acknowledges the interplay between design and governance and explores this pairing as a gateway to designing social-ecological urban landscapes. **How can a joint approach to design and governance in the context of shared residential gardens support designers and stakeholders in conceiving urban landscapes with social-ecological processes?** It adopts a qualitative approach guided by a combination of case study and constructivist grounded theory strategies, and takes gardens shared among residents in Dutch housing developments as objects of study.

An iterative interdisciplinary approach across time and scales

The methodology combines 1) design composition analysis (De Wit, 2014) and its changes throughout the years, 2) stakeholder analysis, considering human and non-human actors, and 3) decision-making analysis, focused on procedural and informal interactions on multiple levels. Data is collected in various rounds (per season) through interviews with key informants and (participant) observations, supplemented by plans, maps, and governing documents. Abductive coding of transcripts and reports enriches design and governance analysis methods and provides input for new iterations.

Shared residential gardens as innate landscape laboratories

Residential gardens are dynamic places subject to constant change. Those shared among residents are highly complex, housing many negotiation processes between (non-)human actors, becoming ideal laboratories. To address the scalar challenge, garden complexes of three different sizes are selected: Lanxmeer (L), a garden neighborhood, 2) Kersentuin (M), a set of private and public gardens amongst eight housing blocks, and 3) Wallisblok (S), where individual gardens from the 1930s gave way to a single shared garden in the 2000s.



Figure 1. Sandbox becomes a vegetable garden given life cycle influences

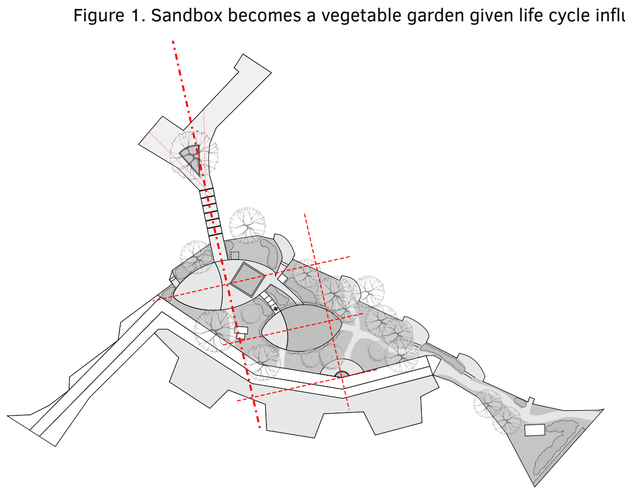


Figure 2. Recreation of garden design plans as built (top) and as found (bottom)

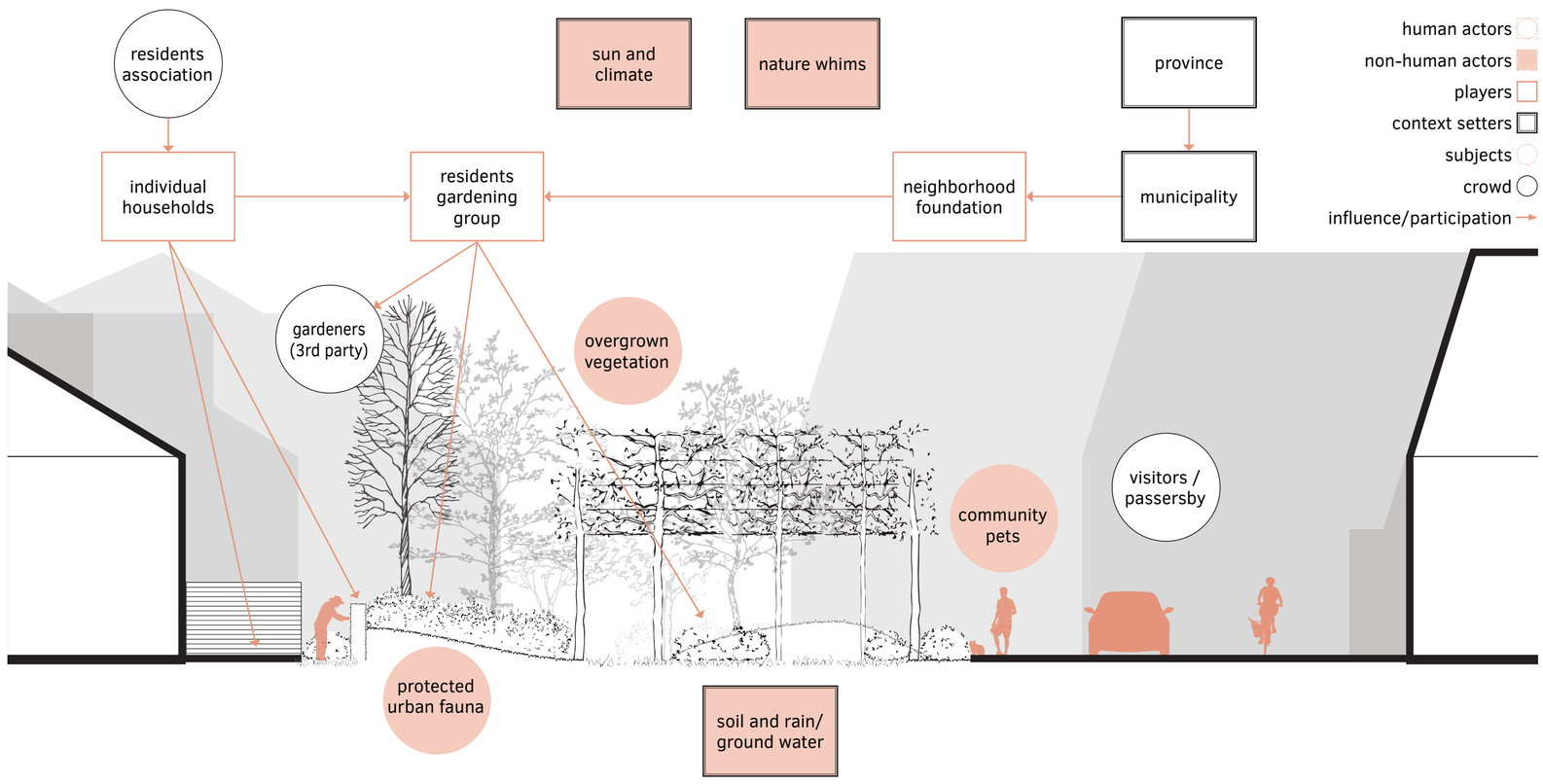


Figure 4. Stakeholder's participation and power x interest relationship

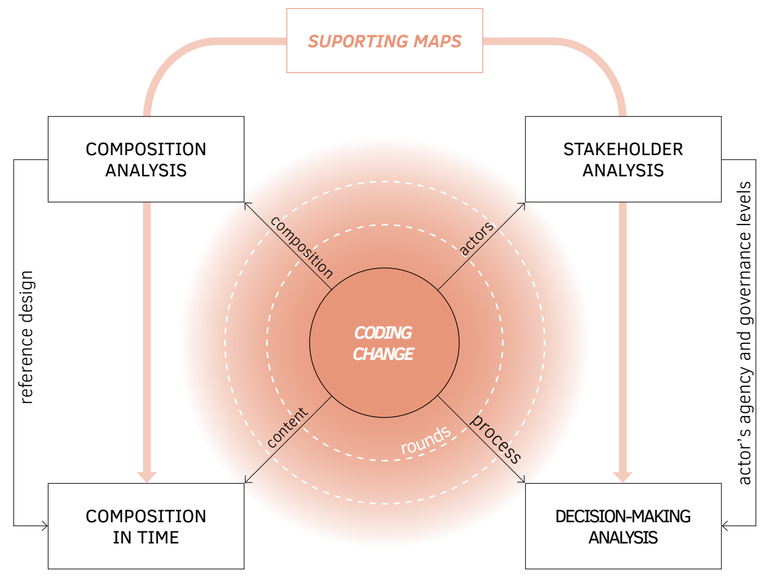


Figure 3. Interdisciplinary iterative methodology

Regenerative Landscapes
Designing the Transition
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