PRAGMATIC GOVERNANCE IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Exploring the potential of embedded pragmatism for addressing global biodiversity conservation

Background Report

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Pragmatic governance in a changing landscape. Exploring the potential of embedded pragmatism for addressing global biodiversity conservation.

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SUMMARY

Societal background: a changing governance landscape

Over the last few decades, various societal trends have put pressure on governments to reflect on and re-orient their position in society. Traditional boundaries between governments and other actors, as well as between governments at local, national and global scales, are being broken down. This is mainly because of globalisation of social issues, the increasing importance of information flows – for example for knowledge sharing and accountability mechanisms –, and the rise of societal networks. Complex issues cut across societal domains and governance levels. A governance approach that relies on strict demarcations is problematic and cannot sufficiently address the threefold crisis confronting governments, namely a decline of effectivity, decreasing legitimacy and a lack of learning capacity in public policymaking. This is particularly problematic in the face of urgent global environmental issues, for which current internationally agreed goals are often not achieved. At the same time, as recent studies conducted by *PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency* have shown, the changing societal landscape has become a breeding ground for non-state actors as 'new agents of change' who can contribute to dealing with global issues, such as biodiversity conservation, climate change and social equality. This calls for a reorientation in governance, which enables governments to meet the challenges encountered and to embrace the opportunities offered by new agents of change in addressing policy issues on a global scale.

Key elements of pragmatic governance

Against this background, this study explores a governance approach that is derived from the tradition of pragmatism. Pragmatism implies, in short, to start from the practical context in which issues arise. The practical experiences people have on a certain issue should, from this point of view, determine how a problem is defined and which solution strategy is selected and implemented. Given the urgency and insufficient effectiveness of addressing current global environmental issues, this approach was expected to be relevant for its focus on effectiveness and problem-solving.

Building on the insights of the philosopher John Dewey, three elements can be distinguished to further characterise a pragmatic governance approach. The first is *continuous experimentation* with policy strategies. These experiments need to be evaluated in terms of their practical consequences; that is, in terms of their capacity to tackle problems. The second element of pragmatic governance is *close cooperation* between governments and other parties in policymaking. This implies involving those actors – including citizens, companies and NGOs – who experience the practical consequences of societal problems and can contribute to addressing them. The third element is related to the other two elements

and entails a *focus on specific issues*, by accounting for the unique context in which an issue arises. Its practical context is the starting point for conducting experiments and involving actors. The unique characteristics of an issue are assumed to determine the contribution of actors and the effectivity of policy interventions.

These elements of pragmatic governance imply that governments and policymakers need to be flexible in fulfilling different roles to address societal issues. The traditional roles of governments – top-down interventions through regulation and performance management – can be complemented with strategies that start from the potential in society, by supporting societal initiatives and entering into partnerships with other actors. These different governance modes provide policymakers with a range of strategies and instruments to experiment with and promote the involvement of societal actors in addressing a specific issue. Thus pragmatic governance is distinguished from the governance philosophies that stress only one role for governments, such as network governance or bureaucratic governance. Pragmatic policymakers would develop a broad repertoire of policy options and aim to apply some of them where they see fit in a specific situation.

Applying pragmatic governance to biodiversity issues
This study applies a pragmatic governance approach to the issue of biodiversity loss and analyses five case studies about the role of non-state actors. The cases focus on new governance arrangements in the areas of marine litter, landscape restoration, sustainable trade, deforestation and biodiversity in cities. These case studies were executed as part of a project on rethinking global biodiversity governance. Non-state actors appear to perform different governance functions, such as providing directionality by setting private norms, developing voluntary standards and new instruments, organising monitoring and reporting to create accountability, and conducting experiments. The question is how governments and the multi-lateral system can make the best use of the efforts of non-state actors for the conservation of biodiversity and which challenges that poses to governmental steering in an international context. For practical reasons, this study specifically analyses the role of the Dutch Government in these governance arrangements, but it also positions the Dutch policy in an international context to provide international relevance.

The Dutch domestic governance approach to biodiversity conservation and the actors involved demonstrates a more explicit connection between nature and economic activities, as well as a shift from top-down regulation and public management to modes of governance that start from the bottom-up, for example through its 'Green Deals', which are also increasingly advocated at an international level. This approach was applied for different reasons, including the political context in which new regulation is less popular, the assumption that involving non-state actors is more efficient, and the limited juridical mandate of national governments in international policy making. A less directive, bottom-up approach facilitates initiatives and stimulates cooperation in various networks and platforms. By entering into partnerships, providing room for experimentation and stimulating information exchange, policymaking gets in line with the governance approach of non-state

actors. Key elements of and conditions for pragmatism can thus be recognised in the Dutch approach to biodiversity conservation.

Potentials and challenges of pragmatic governance

Together with a literature review, the analysis of the case studies provides insights into the potential of pragmatic governance and indicated challenges for governments. Pragmatism has potential to respond to the three deficits attributed to the traditional governance approach, mentioned above.

First, the effectivity of policies is expected to increase when a variety of experiments or policy strategies are implemented, evaluated and learned from. Case studies demonstrated interesting experiments (e.g. fishing for litter and organising green deals), but it also appeared that evaluation and substantial scale ups are often limited. By comparing strategies and examining the consequences in a specific context, policymakers can address issues more effectively. Furthermore, they can use the knowledge and resources of parties involved. For the case of deforestation, the Tropical Forest Alliance proved to be an important platform for knowledge sharing, stimulating private actors and effectively entering into diplomatic dialogue. Also for sustainable trade and biodiversity in cities, different platforms – respectively the ISEAL Alliance and ICLEI – demonstrated the relevance of cooperation and alignment instead of competition. This potential of cooperation for effectivity is closely related to a response to the second deficit of a lack of learning and creativity. Governments can increase their learning capacity by continuous experimentation and evaluation to gain insight into the relevant contextual aspects, key stakeholders, and effective instruments to address a certain issue. Thus policymakers learn why certain governance modes, as well as specific policy instruments, are insufficiently effective in specific situations. In the case of deforestation, for example, the limited legislative mandate of the Dutch Government and lengthy processes of multilateral coordination, imply that the participative and cooperative governance modes were considered to be additional. And third, more effective policies and closer cooperation with citizens are likely to turn the tide of a decreasing legitimacy. Governments can demonstrate their practical contribution to tackle problems encountered by citizens and acknowledge the interdependency of actors. Legitimacy thus relies stronger on the output and outcome of governmental interventions.

In other words, pragmatic steering can contribute to a government that is more reflexive, effective, legitimate and 'open-minded'. By doing so, pragmatism can help governments with insights to better adapt to the new societal landscape of globalisation, informatisation and the rise of networks. It takes these developments as a starting point for governments, by involving the relevant stakeholders in a specific situation, experimentally switching between societal levels and modes of governance, by using information and the exchange of it for continuous and mutual learning, and by working together within cross-border networks. To conclude, this approach may provide signposts for policymakers to navigate in a complex and dynamic global landscape.

Pragmatic governance does, however, not provide easy solutions: it also brings several problems or challenges. Firstly, applying pragmatism is highly demanding on governments and policymakers. For example, it requires policymakers to assess specific situations, conduct and evaluate experiments, fulfil different roles and be sensitive to the relevance of a range of societal actors. Secondly, pragmatic governance may create tension with established institutions. Whereas pragmatism is characterised by flexibility, openness and adaptiveness, institutions often aim to guarantee continuity, lawfulness and predictability. These 'logics' that both represent important values might be at odds with one another. Thirdly, experimentation requires evaluation and scale ups to be effective, but the case studies demonstrated that this is difficult to put into practice. Respondents argued that there is no sufficient room for experiments, because of a culture that avoids risks and failure. Furthermore, making full use of experiments requires effort and sound judgment to transfer insights to other levels and policy domains, without losing sight of the unicity of each policy domain. A final challenge for pragmatism is its normativity and directionality. Pragmatism promotes an attitude of experimentation and openness to the norms, perspectives and interests of non-state actors, but is barely explicit in the norms and values of the government itself. The case studies also demonstrated that merely responding to ad hoc initiatives runs the risk of disorientation, lobbyism and inconsistent policies. Consequently, if pragmatic governance is not substantiated by political ambitions and legitimised by democratic processes, it may not be resistant to lobbyism and managerialism and, ultimately, result in disorientation.

Implications for governments and policymakers

To harvest the potential of pragmatic governance and meet the challenges as discussed above, both in general and more specific in an international context, the following suggestions are made. Pragmatic governance requires policymakers to develop competences to fulfil different roles, including regulative, cooperative and facilitative skills. Furthermore, policymakers will need an experimental attitude, sound judgment and helmsmanship to assess and approach specific issues in their context. To support experimental policymaking, an organisation needs a learning culture that accepts failure and articulates substantive ambitions. In addition, organisational structures need to provide for teams of professionals who are complementary, leave room for professional discretion, and enable policymakers to spend time and efforts in creating new policy strategies and instruments. These are conditions for a prudent and promising application of pragmatism to policymaking.

This study has particularly explored the arguments for pragmatic policymaking at an international level. The dynamism and complexity of addressing cross-border issues may intensify the deficits and disorientation caused by traditional governance, and call for an approach that is more adaptive to a diverse and changing governance landscape. At the same time, the stronger regional differences and variety of perspectives and interests in an international context makes pragmatic governance challenging. This implies that policymakers, particularly those who operate in international policy domains, are in need of various competences, keen insight and sensitivity to contexts, as well as a supportive

organisational culture. When put in practice, pragmatic governance implies that the potential of new agents of change is acknowledged and utilised in government policies, while also providing direction and strong regulation when needed. Thus policymakers can simultaneously be involved in public-private partnerships or bottom-up alliances and participate in intergovernmental decision-making in traditional multi-lateral systems. This may result in coordinated and adjusted policy, jointly conducted experiments, and lessons shared across borders and between public and private actors.

This study concludes that pragmatic governance provides valuable insights. To take full advantage of this, governments need to provide direction, operate within institutional and legal frameworks, and acknowledge the competences and limitations of policymakers. Taken together, these conditions for pragmatic policymaking can be considered as a framework for 'embedded pragmatism', which means that pragmatic governance is embedded or integrated in democratic decision-making, organisational structures and individual professionality. To examine the practical relevance of pragmatism for specific issues, this study suggests that further research and insights on policymaking are needed.

CONTENTS

FULL RESULTS

1. INTRODUCTION

In current academic discussions, as well as within political decision-making and policy processes, there is an increasing awareness that many societal goals are not solely – and often not primarily – realised by governments. Other actors, such as civil society organisations, private companies, ad hoc movements and individual citizens, contribute to addressing societal issues and creating public value. In fact, initiatives regarding childcare, energy generation, sustainability, education or the maintenance of public spaces often emerge from the bottom-up (Van der Steen et al., 2014). This development and awareness of private participation in public issues is not new. Some argue, however, that only recently the effectiveness of bottom-up approaches has gained a convincing empirical basis, for example in addressing global climate change (Ostrom, 2010), and that there are signs of an increasing scale and willingness of non-state actors to act in the field of environmental governance (Ludwig, Kok and Hajer, forthcoming).[1]

These dynamics are not limited to issues and jurisdictions of national governments. Also for issues that play at international and global scales, the role of non-state actors – sometimes referred to as 'global civil society' – is often recognised. For example, in a report on global development policy, the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR, 2010: 252) states: 'The vacuum between weak international institutions and the growing need for global governance is filled by an assortment of informal institutions, public-private, government and NGO arrangements, and specialised organisations'. And for the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Hajer et al. (2015) call for governments that support and mobilise 'new agents of change' in international policymaking and implementation. It is clear that many issues society faces today, including security, biodiversity, climate change, and social justice, are cross-boundary. To adequately understand the changing governance arrangements, these different scales and levels need to be taken into account.

In this study we aimed to reflect on how governments could relate to societal initiatives and the energetic society (Hajer, 2011) in the context of current global issues. More specifically we have built on recent efforts that examine the potential of pragmatism as a governance philosophy. As the next chapter discusses, pragmatic governance starts from the practical

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[1] These observations are sometimes accompanied by a discussion on declining governmental and institutional stability, effectiveness and legitimacy of nation states (Hajer 2011; 't Hart 2014; Rosa 2003). Castells (2008: 83) argues even that 'the decreased ability of nationally based political systems to manage the world's problems on a global scale has induced the rise of a global civil society.'

consequences and experiences of societal issues, and aims to address them through experimental, cooperative and issue-oriented governance. In the Netherlands, several studies and policy reports have been published on the interaction between government and society in which pragmatic elements play a key role (e.g. Hajer, 2011; ROB, 2012; Dijstelbloem, 2007; Van der Steen et al. 2014). Whereas many of these studies are mainly focused on the national context, we have here explored the potential of pragmatic governance for international and global policy issues. In addition, we have analysed which challenges government organisations and their policymakers might encounter when applying this approach in addressing global issues. Thus an answer is formulated to the following research question:

> *How can a pragmatic approach for governments contribute to addressing global environmental issues in a changing governance landscape?*

Before clarifying, in the next chapters, what is understood as a 'pragmatic approach' and exploring its potentials and challenges when applied to policymaking, this introduction proceeds with a brief account of the 'changing governance landscape'.

1.1 SOCIETAL CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE

A changing societal context has always urged governments and policymakers to reflect on their position in society and reorient on shaping relations with other actors and on effectively designing and implementing policy. The challenges and possible solutions explored in this study are part of this ongoing search for a government and mode of governance that is aligned with the changing social context. Below we have sketched some important features of this context and the consequences for governmental actors. This demonstrates the relevance of an alternative governance approach for governments, providing them with a reorientation to shape policies.

1.1.1 Transformations in the global scene

Social trends can be discussed from many different perspectives. This section draws on the account of sociologist Manuel Castells (1996). In his analysis of modern society, he describes three mega trends: (1) 'globalisation', (2) the emergence of an 'information age' and (3) the rise of a 'network society' (also see 't Hart, 2014). Without providing a comprehensive account of modern society – this would be impossible, given the extensive reflection and debate on these trends within a range of disciplines, including sociology, political sciences, philosophy, and public administration – we venture to outline these trends below. These transitions contribute to an understanding of the global challenges governments encounter. We will conclude that the trends can be interpreted as a 'blurring of boundaries', understood in a geographical, social, and physical sense.

1) The first macro development by which modern society is often characterised, concerns the loss of significance of local, regional and national borders. Through the

process of 'globalisation' – which has been defined in a range of different ways and from different perspectives over the last decades (Osterhammel and Petersson, 2005) – people all over the world are increasingly interconnected and according to some even 'incorporated into a single world society' (Albrow and King, 1990: 45). Despite of the different visions on the impact and desirability of globalisation, it is widely acknowledged that actors and the issues they encounter are less and less defined by geographical boundaries. In western countries, we can currently also perceive a political counter-development that aims at maintaining or restoring the sovereignty of nation states, but to date this has not stopped the global intertwinement of social and economic activities.

2) Secondly, the demarcation between the responsibilities and activities of different societal institutions has weakened due to the rise of networks. Because of shared goals and diffused knowledge and power of actors within society, governments, civil society organisations, private companies and individuals or groups of citizens increasingly operate in networks to realise their goals (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004; Castells, 2008). Governments are often dependent on non-state actors in general, and global agents of change in particular, for pursuing their global goals. Therefore, governmental and inter-governmental organisations need to look beyond their own borders to avoid global risks, to deal with complex problems and to realise global goals through effective implementation.

3) Thirdly, there is an increasingly important role of information technology and knowledge as a crucial resource in societal power relations (Webster, 2006). New technologies enable the transcendence of physical and temporal limitations in the sharing of information, making interaction more dynamic and creating 'global communication networks'. This development can be seen as a condition of the two former trends: through the fast flows and exchange of information, networks can be formed across borders. As Castells (2008: 81) states: 'New information and communication technologies, including rapid long-distance transportation and computer networks, allow global networks to selectively connect anyone and anything throughout the world.' In short, although conceptually distinguished, in reality these trends are intertwined and mutually reinforcing.

Each of these developments – globalisation, the emergence of polycentric networks and the increase of information flows – has contributed to a complex and highly dynamic global 'landscape'. They indicate a disappearance or blurring of geographical borders (between nations and regions), societal boundaries (between social actors and institutions) and physical limitations becoming less significant due to technological possibilities. Boutellier (2011) uses the term 'unlimited world' to refer to the complexity caused by globalisation and institutional fragmentation. The following section discusses that this disappearance of clear boundaries has put challenges on the orientation of national governments.

1.1.2 Disorientation of traditional governance

Given the context in which institutional and geographical boundaries have become less significant, it seems logical that a governance philosophy that is strictly defined by those boundaries has become obsolete. Issues that emerge or become manifest at a global scale cannot be addressed effectively at a national level (Beck, 2006). And if governance arrangements are characterised by institutional interdependency, an approach that relies on strict institutional demarcations will not succeed. In this context, we can understand Castells' (2008: 83) statement that governments are faced with a 'decreased ability […] to manage the world's problems on a global scale'. It also fits in the call for governments to move beyond 'cockpit-ism': 'the illusion that top-down steering by governments and intergovernmental organisations alone can address global problems' (Hajer et al., 2015: 1652). But what exactly are the characteristics and limitations of a traditional approach of governments? Below we discuss three deficiencies or imperfections of governments – in as far as they hold on to this traditional approach – that can be understood by societal mega trends. These deficiencies are derived from the largely overlapping accounts of Castells (2008), Hajer (2011) and 't Hart (2014). This further clarifies the problems this study is focused on, and it provides the background for exploring an alternative, pragmatic approach.

The first problem is referred to as a *legitimacy* deficit. The 'crisis of legitimacy' indicates declining support for governments' interventions among the public and a growing distance and distrust between governments and the citizens to represent (Castells, 2008). According to Hajer (2011), this is the result of governments perceiving citizens as the object of political decisions and policies, thus neglecting their wish to be actively involved and deliberate about global problems and solutions. 't Hart (2014) uses here the distinction introduced by Habermas between 'system' and 'life world' to state that there is a growing gap between citizens and their institutions. According to Taylor (1991), this legitimacy gap may not only be due to a distanced, objectified perspective of modern institutions, but also to citizens taking a more articulate and autonomous stance.

The second deficiency that is widely acknowledged, concerns the government's *effectivity* in developing and, particularly, implementing policies. We have already seen that, in a network society, policies cannot be effectively implemented when the relation between government and society is unidirectional. This holds even more for issues that arise at a global level, because here coercive power is lacking: 'Within nations, the state often steps in and helps resolve problems of collective action or market failure. There is no full equivalent to the state at the international level, however.' (Kaul, 2013). Or, as Castells (2008: 82) puts it, there is 'a growing gap between the space where the issues arise (global) and the space where the issues are managed (the nation state)'. This is especially problematic for issues with great urgency, for example concerning climate change or other environmental issues (Bulkeley and Mol, 2003; United Nations Environment Programme, 2012; Kaul 2013). Therefore, at a global level, governments might be even more dependent on non-state actors to realise their goals.

Thirdly, a *learning* deficit can be distinguished, which is accompanied by a lack of creativity in developing new policies and, consequently, a lack of effectivity in dealing with complex policy issues. Hajer (2011) argues this is due to a too strong orientation on governments, while much knowledge and learning capacity is to be sought in society. Furthermore, policymaking is conceived too much as a linear process, from proposing to implementing policy, thus not making use of the dynamics and diffusion of knowledge and information in a network society. However, others have argued that a linear policy process is not an adequate representation of actual policymaking, which is often much more a coincidental and unordered process (e.g. Cohen, March and Olsen, 1972; Kingdon, 1984). Yet, we assume that a governance approach needs to make use of networks and information flows to learn from other actors and to develop smart and innovative policy strategies.

To summarise, the changing governance landscape has urged governments to rethink their governance philosophy, because the traditional approach – characterised by a strong governmental perspective and top-down unidirectional policymaking – may have serious shortcomings.[2] Or to put it more constructively, the societal mega-trends provide important conditions for realising global issues. This study explores an alternative governance philosophy that can better respond to the challenges that arise in this changing global context.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

Because of the explorative character of this study, different methods and perspectives have been combined. Thus this study aims to contribute to developing a broad – both theoretical and practical – governance approach that better fits in the societal landscape sketched above. First, a literature review was conducted concerning the characteristics, potentials and challenges of pragmatic approach for governments and policymakers. This draws on both philosophical and social-scientific insights. Second, several case studies on biodiversity are analysed, which serves as an illustration of pragmatic governance in practice. These case studies have been conducted by *PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency* and concern different biodiversity issues. Third, these cases – and more specifically: the role policymakers play in various biodiversity issues – are examined by taking semi-structured interviews. Nine respondents were selected according to different fields of expertise: scientists, organisation strategists and public policymakers, working in Dutch departments or in international organisations (for a list of respondents, see Appendix I). Together with the meta-analysis of the case studies, these interviews are designed to illustrate if and how pragmatic governance is applied in public policymaking. Insights on the applicability, benefits and possible problems of pragmatic governance are used as input for refining the theoretical approach and drawing lessons on its practical implementation. Finally, two workshops have

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[2] This does not imply that top-down steering is necessarily illegitimate or ineffective. Instead, it may sometimes be the most appropriate approach to solve urgent global issues. In the next chapter we will suggest, however, that such an approach needs to be complemented with other modes of governance that can contribute to legitimacy, effectivity and learning capacity.

been organised, in which policymakers and researchers provided input and reflected on preliminary results. In short, this study relies on several strategies, methods and disciplines to gain a broad perspective on pragmatic governance and to provide insights for governments and their policymakers. This comprehensive view and explorative character also has its limitations, namely that the theoretical presuppositions and discussions, as well as the practical lessons and consequences, are not discussed or substantiated in detail. Thus we hope the results will give rise to further theoretical and practical investigations.

1.3 STRUCTURE

In this chapter we have briefly discussed the 'changing governance landscape', as referred to in the research question. Chapter 2 elaborates on what is meant by a 'pragmatic approach for governments', by discussing its key characteristics. This theoretical framework clarifes the potential of pragmatic governance for responding to the governance challenges mentioned above. Particular attention is paid to the relevance of pragmatism in the global context of policy issues. Next, in Chapter 3, the case study results are presented. It is explored if and how the theoretical approach is currently applied by the Dutch Government in international biodiversity policies. This results in additional insights about the relevance, applicability and obstacles for effective pragmatic governance in addressing current global issues. In Chapter 4, these theoretical and empirical insights are combined, to consider how government organisations and policymakers can harvest the potentials and cope with the challenges provided by a pragmatic perspective. By combining theory and practice, pragmatic governance is enriched by additional insights for government organisations. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes that pragmatic governance, for effectively addressing global issues, needs to be 'embedded' in society, institutionalised organisations, individual professionality and in a normative framework, which implies that pragmatism is complemented with additional insights and conditions. This conclusion is accompanied by recommendations for further research and practice.

2.PRAGMATIC GOVERNANCE

This chapter develops a theoretical framework on pragmatism as a governance approach for governments. The key question to be answered, is what pragmatism has to offer for governments given the societal transformations and the need to address urgent and complex policy issues, as discussed in the introduction of this study. More specifically, we have explored how pragmatism could respond to the challenges of traditional governance and how it aims to realise the potentials of a changing social context.

This chapter starts with a clarification of pragmatic philosophy (Section 2.1). The understanding of pragmatism in this chapter is derived from the work of the prominent pragmatist John Dewey. As a result of the analysis provided in this paragraph, several key aspects of pragmatism are distinguished. Next, Section 2.2 explores how these aspects can together constitute a pragmatic governance approach. This framework is further positioned by discussing its relation to other governance philosophies (Section 2.3). Section 2.4 presents our theorisation of how pragmatic governance can respond to the three challenges or deficiencies ascribed to current governmental steering, in as far as traditional governance is applied. This results in an understanding of the potentials that pragmatic governance holds, as well as its possible challenges when applied by governments. Thus we have explored whether pragmatism can provide governments with a reorientation for their governance in a changing international context.

Section 2.5 concludes that pragmatism provides relevant insights for governmental steering, although it does not offer a blueprint. New questions and challenges arise, for example with respect to its practical implications for policymaking at different societal levels. This demonstrates the importance of examining pragmatic governance when concretely applied to policymaking, as we attempt to do in Chapter 3. Different case studies on policymaking for international biodiversity issues illustrate and refine the theoretical insights of this chapter. These theoretical and empirical analyses, together, yield lessons on the applicability and implications of pragmatic governance, as described in Chapter 4.

2.1 THE PHILOSOPHY OF DEWEYAN PRAGMATISM

The notion of 'pragmatism' is applied in a range of different contexts; in academic disciplines as well as in everyday speech. Pragmatism can, for example, be used to indicate a scientific school of thought, a political strategy or a personal attitude – each containing its own

emphasis and connotations. Yet, following Edenhofer and Kowarsch (2015: 58), one can state that '[the core idea of pragmatism is to trace and evaluate the practical consequences of hypotheses, be they scientific, ethical or just verbalised gut feelings in ordinary life.' Pragmatism focuses on practical experience. Hypotheses – not necessarily in a scientific sense, but also including 'ideas' and 'strategies' – are tested by examining their capacity to solve a problem. This functional and comprehensive understanding of 'inquiry' is contrasted to philosophical approaches that start from certain fundamental, *a priori* beliefs or actions (Solomon and Higgins, 1996). This section clarifies the idea of pragmatic inquiry by discussing some of its key elements. To do so, we have mainly built on the insights of classical pragmatist John Dewey.[3]

The first characteristic of pragmatism concerns the principle of *experimentation and evaluation*. As Bogason (2001: 175) argued: '[Pragmatism] may be understood as an attitude toward reality and human experience, meaning that one has to be open to continuous experimentation.' This experimentation implies that for a certain issue, the consequences of various hypotheses (as tools or means) are identified. Thus the practical, problem-solving capacity of experiments is tested. How this is performed more specifically, is elaborated by Dewey (1986[1938]) and further discussed by other authors. This pattern consists of five stages: (1) to notice a specific problem or issue that is experienced; (2) further define and analyse the causes of this problem; (3) form hypotheses that might solve the problem; (4) ex-ante reasoning about the probable consequences of these hypotheses; and (5) testing the hypothesis in practice (Miettinen, 2000; Edenhofer and Kowarsch, 2015). This pattern of experimental inquiry can be used in academic research, to test and develop new ideas and concepts, but is also applicable to societal problems and issues in everyday life or in policymaking. Key is that this approach does not stick to one problem-solving method or even to one objective or definition of solutions. Rather, it expands its strategy with a variety of possible means, to evaluate and compare their practical consequences and to revise objectives in light of these consequences. In short, experimentation and evaluation – both before and after implementation – are two sides of the same coin of a pragmatic method to solve problems.

The second key element of Deweyan pragmatism is that this experimental inquiry needs to be conducted and embedded in a *community of practice.* After all, the practical experience of a problem and the consequences of actions that are meant to solve it are, first of all, experienced by those who are practically involved in that problem. Dewey referred to those involved as 'publics' (in plural), defined as 'spontaneous groups of citizens who share the indirect effects of a particular action' (Dewey, 1927: 126). In other words, if the practical consequences of actions – their problem solving capacities – are determinative, then so is the experience of people concerning these problems and solutions. This implies that inquiry

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[3] Shields (2003) has stated that the idea of inquiry in community, as represented in this section, is also supported by other classical pragmatists, including Charles Sanders Pierce and William James. John Dewey, in particular is known for applying the idea of pragmatic inquiry to a range of practical issues that may arise in society, for example regarding education, politics and journalism (Dijstelbloem 2007; Marres 2007).

occurs in dialogue with others. Furthermore, this community or cooperation needs to be regulated by the principles of participatory democracy, such as equality and meaningful participation (Shields, 2003). For pragmatism, solving a problem through experimentation and evaluation is thus essentially a common, deliberative, project.

The third and final element, is that this common project of experimentation is focused on a *specific issue or problematic situation*. This issue-oriented perspective was already implied by the previous two elements. Defining a problem and evaluating actions, as well as the formation of a 'public' or community, depends on the practical experience of a certain problem (Shields, 2003). Specific issues and their contexts are the starting point for an inquiry or 'quest', meant to address that issue and to involve citizens and other stakeholders (also see Dewey, 1927; Marres, 2007). This focus on a particular problematic situation also draws on the assumption that experiments may work out differently in various contexts, because the problem conditions and effectiveness of actions depends on the specific characteristics of a context.

To conclude, above we have discussed three general elements that are key to a pragmatic framework that is inspired by Dewey. In short, pragmatism seeks to: (1) conduct and evaluate real-life and thought experiments; in (2) collaboration with a community of practice; to (3) address a specific issue or problematic situation. In all of this, the practical experience of those involved in an issue is the measure for success. These three elements are clearly interlinked, but each of them can provide distinctive insights for developing a pragmatic approach for governments. The next section explores how governments can take these aspects into account when addressing societal issues.

2.2   ELEMENTS OF PRAGMATIC GOVERNANCE

Over the past years, pragmatism has gained increased attention in the field of politics and public administration (e.g. Dijstelbloem, 2014; Clement et al., 2015; Edenhofer and Kowarsch, 2015). There is also a growing number of policy studies and advisory reports that build on pragmatic insights (for the Netherlands, e.g. see WRR, 2010; Van der Steen et al., 2015a; Hajer et al., 2015).[4] Before discussing the potentials of pragmatism as mentioned in this literature, we will first explore how pragmatic governance can be understood in an international setting, by applying the three key elements of Deweyan pragmatism.

2.2.1 Experimentation and evaluation

The 'spirit of experimentalism' as introduced by Dewey implies that a variety of hypotheses are being tested (Marres, 2007). This 'scientific attitude' can also be adopted by policymakers, which would mean that a number of divergent policy strategies (as an

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[4] These reports do not always explicitly refer to (Deweyan) pragmatic philosophy, but their insights demonstrate striking similarities, e.g. by advocating a 'learning-by-doing' approach (Van der Steen et al., 2015b). These insights – in as far as they fit in the pragmatic framework of Section 2.1 – will also be discussed in this section.

equivalent for 'hypotheses') will be developed. Consequently, according to the pattern of inquiry, these strategies need to be evaluated, both in advance (by reflecting on their expected consequences) and after implementation. This provides insight into the effectiveness of certain strategies and tools, as well as in the feasibility and desirability of policy objectives. In order to see how different policy strategies can be developed, we distinguish between different aspects of policymaking and the options they provide.[5] When combined, these aspects result in a great variability of policy strategies.

First, governments can experiment by trying out a range of different *policy instruments* they have at their disposal. Different groups of policy instruments can be distinguished, among which regulatory instruments, financial instruments and communicative instruments (De Bruijn and Ten Heuvelhof, 1997). Policymakers can address a certain societal problem by, for example, developing laws, providing financial incentives, entering into contracts, or raising awareness. In an international context, the applicability of these various strategies may depend on mandates and resources of national governments and multilateral organisations. Selecting different combinations of instruments, provides governments with alternative action strategies for experimentation, and prevents them from holding on to only one method or perspective. It also implies moving away from adhering to only one specific mode of governance, such as market-based steering or networks governance. This is further discussed in Section 2.3.

A second aspect for developing different alternative experiments, concerns the societal levels at which policy issues might be addressed. These levels of governance can be local, national, regional or global. Although these levels are not strictly demarcated or mutually excluding, governments can still choose to focus at the institutions and arrangements relevant at each specific level. Whereas some issues may call for a global strategy, others could be decentralised to local governments. This is of course depending on a range of different factors (e.g. issue characteristics, legislative mandate and institutional capacities).[6]
In a recent report on international development policy, the Dutch *Scientific Council for Government Policy* stated:

> 'When global coordination does prove necessary it can perhaps be organised,
> depending on the issue, through cooperation between regional institutions at
> different levels. If we also take account of the fact that providing regional public

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[5] The experimental element of pragmatic governance is not restricted to governments experimenting with policy strategies, but could also imply that governments conduct or stimulate very concrete thought experiments or field experiments (often referred to as pilots), for example by using certain technologies or different incentives to influence behaviour. However, as this chapter provides a theoretical account of pragmatic governance, these concrete experiments are not discussed here. The case studies presented in Chapter 3 further illustrates how more concrete experiments can be implemented by governments.
[6] Furthermore, although not inherent to pragmatism (see also 2.4.2), pragmatic governance will have to account for normative principles, such as the principle of subsidiarity that holds at European level, which can be defined as 'the principle that each social and political group should help smaller or more local ones accomplish their respective ends without, however, arrogating those tasks to itself.' (Carozza 2003: 38). This implies that institutions at higher governance levels are only justified to intervene when lower levels of government are unable to effectively take action. In other words, decisions must be taken at the lowest possible level, closest to citizens (European Union 2016).

goods often encounters specific problems it is clear that it is necessary to develop a new pragmatic vision on the relationship between the multilateral, regional and national levels.' (WRR, 2010: 254)

From a pragmatic approach, the levels at which a government could intervene is not predetermined. Instead, the fact that issues can often be addressed at multiple levels, implies that various options could be developed and tested to examine which scale (or combination of scales) is most appropriate for solving a specific policy issue.

Key to pragmatic governance is not only to develop different governance strategies, but also to reflect on their consequences, to learn after their implementation, and to transfer these lessons and experiences to other domains. Tracing the practical consequences of ideas and actions is essential to make experimentation effective in the longer term. Monitoring, reporting and accountability are thus important elements of any policy strategy. Furthermore, the effectivity of experiments is to be determined by the practical experience of the people who are involved, as the next section discusses.

2.2.2 Participation in communities of practice

A second constitutive element of a pragmatic steering philosophy, is the inherent importance of cooperation and partnerships between governments, scientists, other societal actors and citizens. For Dewey, as discussed in Section 2.1, experimental learning is essentially a social matter, a common project. Inquiry needs to be performed in a community, in order to be successful and to do justice to the variety of practical experiences. Over the past decades, the importance of cooperation between governments and societal actors has been widely acknowledged. This is demonstrated by the growing literature in public administration on network and stakeholder theories (e.g. see Rhodes, 1997; Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004). The assumptions and characteristics of pragmatism, however, give specific substance to this call for collaboration between societal actors. Some of its distinctive aspects are briefly discussed below.

First, the starting point for any cooperation or common inquiry, is a specific problem as experienced in practice by a group of people. For Dewey (1927: 126) this is even essential to democracy: 'Anyone affected by the indirect consequences of specific actions will automatically share a common interest in controlling those consequences, i.e., solving a common problem.' This implies that cooperation is not a side issue, but crucial for any governmental action, because the experience of 'people affected by the consequences' is determinative for effective policy strategies. Pragmatism is thus not mainly about governments and scientists involving actors in their policies, but also the opposite: citizens (or 'publics') involving governments and scientists in the issues they face in everyday life. In other words, it is about 'government participation' just as much as it is about the participation of citizens in solving problems (also see Hajer, 2011; Van der Steen et al.,

2015b).[7] Thus, one could argue that the primacy of bottom-up, practical experience is a guiding principle that calls for mutual involvement.

A second characteristic of these 'communities of practice' is also related to Dewey's account of democracy. Cooperation not only leads to a better understanding of issues and effectiveness of solutions, but it is also an expression of participatory democracy (Shields, 2003). As a consequence, these communities need to organise themselves according to democratic principles, which Dewey (in Seigfried, 1996: 92) describes as: 'mutual respect, mutual toleration, give and take, the pooling of experience'. This urges governments to watch out for the dominance of a certain actors at the expense of others. The involvement of actors should not primarily depend on their formal established power, resources or mandates (Allen, 2007). Rather, Deweyan pragmatism seeks to involve actors more 'spontaneously', focusing on those who actually experience the consequences of an issue and can contribute to solving it. This is related to the third element of a pragmatic governance approach.

2.2.3 Focusing on specific issues

Some of the consequences of departing from specific issues and their practical consequences are already described above. The problems people encounter in specific situations determine which experiments are possible and which actors need to be involved. Below we will zoom in on this pragmatic element of orienting on specific issues, by briefly discussing additional insights that are relevant for pragmatic governance.

The fact that pragmatism aims at a specification of issues means, first, that effects of actions are perceived in a specific context for a specific group of people. For governments this implies that their policies focus on the unique ways in which an issue occurs in different situations, addressing them according to their unique causes and characteristics. Contextual elements determine which policy strategies are effective in addressing issues. Scale ups or transferring solution strategies to other policy issues must always be accompanied by a reflection on the various contexts in which issues arise. The specification of issues also implies that attention is paid to the interrelatedness of issues. When an issue is not reduced to a scientific category or isolated policy area, but instead dealt with in a specific context, it is inevitable to also recognise and evaluate the spill-overs and trade-offs to other areas, goals and policies (also see Edenhofer and Kowarsch, 2015). For example, social-economic and environmental concerns are strongly related, and this interplay seriously affects people in specific geographical areas (Kok, Brons and Witmer, 2011; Hajer et al., 2015). It is therefore argued that an issue-focused approach results in addressing policy issues in a more

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[7] On a philosophical level, this emphasis on mutual involvement - an 'inter-subjective relation' with a common purpose among actors – can be understood as an alternative to a 'subject-object relation', in which governments create distance by perceiving other actors as 'objects' (that is, as problems, instruments or policy targets). A certain degree of objectification and instrumentality is inevitable in modern, bureaucratic organizations (see Weber 1946[1922]; Ricoeur 1965), but it is also argued that an isolation of this rationality will result in government and society drifting apart, resulting in tensions and mutual dissatisfaction (Taylor 1991). In short, a practice-based approach implies that, as Hajer (2011: 50) argues, 'the government can no longer think of citizens in terms of objects. The government needs to take on a new role, based on cooperation, comparison and creative competition.'

integrated way (Kaul, 2013). A pragmatic steering philosophy pursues to do justice to the multifaceted character of problems. This could result in a stronger sense of urgency and more effective policies that are adapted to the context.

In summary, in this section the three pragmatic elements are used to discuss principles of pragmatic governance. Practical experiences of specific societal issues are the starting point for developing experiments, evaluating their consequences, and entering into cooperation with different groups of actors. However, many of these elements are not exclusive for pragmatic philosophy: other governance approaches might also acknowledge that experimentation, evidence-based policies, collaboration and contextual awareness are important ingredients for policymaking. Therefore, the distinctive character of pragmatism is further clarified by positioning it in relation to other governance philosophies and the ways of government steering they propose.

2.3 PRAGMATISM IN RELATION TO OTHER APPROACHES

To compare different governance approaches, the concept of 'governance modes' is used. Governance modes can be defined as stereotypical compositions of methods and instruments for addressing policy issues that fit within a certain philosophical or theoretical approach. These modes clarify possible roles of governments in society and their relation to other societal actors. This section starts with explaining four different governance modes. Next it is described how pragmatic governance relates to these four governance modes and what its position is to other approaches. This framework provides a more structural understanding of the distinctive character of pragmatic governance.

2.3.1 Four modes of governance

In their report *Learning by Doing,* Van der Steen et al. (2015b) draw a distinction between four governance modes, which correspond to the four quadrants that can be recognised in the figure below. Each of them will be elucidated briefly.
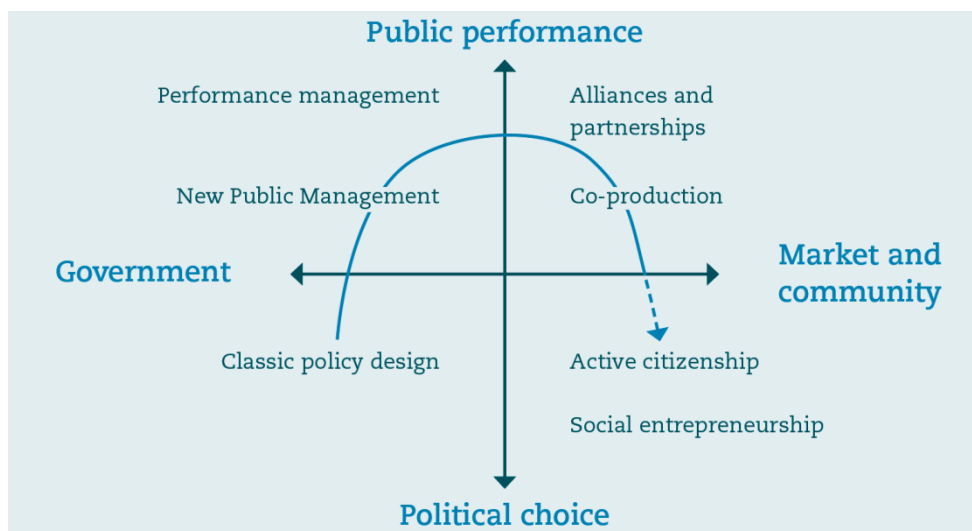

Figure 1. Four modes of governance (Van der Steen et al., 2015b). The arrow in this figure reflects a development in the theories of public administration and practice of policymaking.

The first mode of governance is referred to as *lawful government* (the bottom left quadrant of Figure 1). This mode applies a classical policy design, which is characterised by governments as central and hierarchical steering actors. Interventions take the form of laws, regulations, procedures and other regulatory instruments. The second governance mode, *performing government* (top left), emphasises the results or outcomes of public management. Governments enter into contracts with other actors – often privatised organisations – and make them accountable for the provided services and other delivered outcomes. Third, the *network government* (top right), relies on close cooperation with other societal actors, by participation in networks and partnerships. The objectives of government intervention and cooperation are determined together with other parties, thus building on more horizontal relationships. And fourth, as illustrated in the bottom right quadrant, the facilitative or *participatory/responsive government* takes the initiatives of societal actors or groups of citizens as a starting point (Van der Steen et al., 2015b). Governments stimulate and facilitate the participation of citizens in society and play a less directive role.

These different governance modes we have summarised with reference to Van der Steen et al. (2015b), are also recognised by many other authors (e.g. Hood, 1991; Benington, 2011; ROB, 2012; Arnouts and Arts, 2012). Each of these modes emphasises different values, such as impartiality, reliability, efficiency, responsiveness and servitude, and they put different demands on government organisations and civil servants (Steijn, 2009). It is therefore relevant to explore how pragmatic governance and other theories of governance relate to this variety of governance modes. This will further clarify the distinctive character of pragmatism as a governance approach.

2.3.2 The modes of governance in relation to theoretical approaches

Over the past decades, different philosophies or theories about governance have emerged, and each of them has been subject to extensive reflection and debates in public administration literature. Basically, these movements – as indicated by the arrow in Figure 1 – can be characterised by referring to the ideal-typical governance modes. Classical theories of bureaucracy, as advocated by Weber and Wilson, correspond to the lawful government mode: lawfulness, rationality and reliability constitute a traditional and robust government machinery (Weber, 2012[1922]; Frederickson et al., 2012). In the 1980s of the previous century, theories under the umbrella of New Public Management (NPM) provided an alternative paradigm. Instead of focusing on legal principles and procedures, the NPM aimed at the performance of government action by drawing lessons from business management (Hood, 1991). This is indicated above as the performing governance mode. The third mode, network government, is reflected by the subsequent rise of network theories in public administration, which demonstrated a shift from vertical to horizontal relations between governments and societal parties (O'Toole, 1997; Rhodes, 1997). And finally, it is clear that more recent theories on civic participation, self-governance and societal resilience corresponds to a participatory government that is stimulating societal initiatives (Hajer, 2011; ROB, 2012). In short, it is clear that different theoretical movements in public administration prefer and often closely correspond to one of the above-mentioned

governance modes. This raises the question which modes fit in the pragmatic governance approach and, consequently, how pragmatic governance relates to the other theoretical approaches.

2.3.3 Pragmatic governance modes

Pragmatic governance, as understood in this chapter, cannot be confined to only one of the modes of governance. We argue that pragmatic governance suggests to make use of, and flexibly combine, the various roles governments can play, depending on the problem analysis. This is, first, because the key elements of pragmatic governance – experimentation and evaluation, collaboration with citizens and societal parties, and specification of issues – are not exclusively and comprehensively combined in one of the governance modes. The element of experimentation and evaluation might fit best in performance government, because it focuses on the practical consequences or outcomes. However, cooperation in communities of practices to address specific issues is probably better in line with the network and participatory modes, because of its embeddedness in society. In other words, different elements of pragmatic governance seem to correspond to different governance modes. As a second argument, it seems reasonable that pragmatic governance would not exclude any of the four governance mode, because it cannot be determined *a priori* which governance mode leads to the desired practical effects in different contexts (Edenhofer and Kowarsch, 2015). It is key to pragmatism not to limit its interventions to only one method or strategy, but rather to examine the consequences of divergent strategies. The 'spirit of experimentalism' implies that governments use a wide range of instruments for developing alternative interventions. For this argument to proceed, it is necessary to view experimentation as part of a pragmatic approach, which also highlights the elements or conditions of cooperation in communities and an orientation on issue (Shields, 2003). This implies that laws and regulations, for example, should not be developed merely top-down, but needs to emerge from the interaction with other societal parties. As long as the three elements of pragmatic elements are taken into account, the instruments of the different governance modes could all be part of a pragmatic governance approach.

In summary, whereas many theoretical approaches give preference to a limited set of instruments and values that fit in that specific governance modes, pragmatic governance would take each governance mode, instrument and value into consideration. Others have also argued for governments that flexibly combine different governance roles (e.g. Verweij et al., 2006; Van der Steen et al., 2015a; Campbell, 2004; Clement et al., 2015).[8] The next section explores the possible advantages and limitations of this pragmatic governance approach that is responsive to the manifestation of specific problems.

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[8] These authors use different reasons and concepts, such as 'clumsiness', 'bricolage' and 'sedimentation' – metaphors that refer to combining different 'layers' of governance – to argue for more flexible and adjusted government organizations and interventions. Although some do not explicitly refer to pragmatism, their accounts demonstrate clear similarities with a pragmatic governance approach.

2.4 POTENTIALS AND CHALLENGES

The theoretical insights discussed so far in this study, can be comprised in two main storylines. On the one hand, as explored in the introduction, major global trends and a traditional top-down governance approach have confronted governments with decreasing legitimacy, effectivity and learning capacity. On the other hand, this chapter has explored the characteristics of pragmatic governance as an alternative approach. When combining both storylines, the question arises how pragmatic governance could respond to the challenges governments encounter. By answering this question, the potential of pragmatic governance in a changing societal landscape is examined. In addition, this section discusses the challenges and tensions that may arise from pragmatism itself. Finally, we will explore more specifically how governments could use this approach to relate to new agents of change in an international governance context. In short, and in line with pragmatism itself, this section explores how pragmatic governance can contribute to the issues governments face today.

2.4.1 Potentials for legitimacy, effectivity and learning

First, the legitimacy deficit was discussed as a consequence of the growing distance between government and society. This distance can be explained, as we saw, by an objectifying and bureaucratic stance of governments towards society, which relates to a traditional, hierarchical modes of governance. Hajer et al. (2015: 1653) state that, for environmental policy, 'the steering capacity of the intergovernmental system is increasingly out of sync with expectations and demands of citizens, civil society and business.' This points at the fact that the distance between government and society is not only caused by insufficient steering, but also by changing societal expectations and demands, as well as by new problems.[9] Many citizens and civil society organisations, as well as businesses, want to be involved in realising or protecting public goods, which is not always sufficiently recognised by governments. Pragmatic governance, instead, stresses the importance of communities of practice, in which governments, scientists, citizens and other social actors collaborate to address a problem. Pragmatism suggests that hierarchical steering through laws and regulations, though sometimes necessary, is not the only mode of governance available. Governments could – even for developing regulatory instruments – enter into partnerships, participate in communities and facilitate initiatives. This implies that government authority is no longer solely derived from their legislative mandate based on procedures of representative democracy. Rather, governments might need to be looking for new sources of authority (Hajer, 2011). From a pragmatic point of view, this authority might be found in more direct

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[9] The analysis that government and society have been growing apart can also be explained from changes in society itself, particularly the increased emphasis on authenticity, assertiveness and subjectivity of individuals, is widely acknowledged. Charles Taylor (1989) uses the term 'subjective expressivism' to point at the individual pursuit of 'self-expression, self-realization, self-fulfilment, discovering authenticity' (506-507). These demands of individuality can hardly be fulfilled by governments (or any other institution), which are intrinsically impersonal (see also Ricoeur 1974). Hajer (2011) also emphasizes that modern, 'energetic society' consists of 'articulate, autonomous citizens', who no longer automatically identify themselves with their public authorities. However legitimate and desirable these individual demands may be, it is clear that they also constitute the *experience* of a decreasing legitimacy.

interaction with actors in society, by demonstrating the practical consequences of effective government action in a specific context. In this sense, pragmatic steering theoretically holds the potential to address the legitimacy deficit that has emerged in the relation between society and government.

Secondly, it was discussed that governments are faced with decreasing effectivity when implementing complex issues. This can be partly explained by the – currently widely acknowledged – idea in public administration and political philosophy that society cannot be 'controlled' or 'socially engineered' by governments.[10] This is due to the complex, dynamic and 'unlimited' character of the societal landscape in which issues arise. Many of these issues can be referred to as 'wicked problems', which entails a lack of sufficient knowledge about the problem and effectivity of policy, as well as a lack of consensus about values among those involved (Hoppe, 1989; Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004). Some have argued that pragmatism – in avoiding the ideas of both social engineering and, as the opposite extreme, fatalism and passivity of governments – proposes a more incremental perspective on government action.[11] Pragmatic governance recognises the limits of top-down interventions to solve complex problems, while also looking for new ways to address issues society faces (Shields, 2003; Hajer, 2011; Clement et al., 2015). Through experimentation, pragmatic governance seeks to increase effectivity by examining the practical consequences in a certain context. Experimentation also implies that some strategies will prove to be ineffective or result in undesirable consequences (Edenhofer and Kowarsch, 2015), but precisely these insights could contribute to learning and more effective policies in the future. In addition, by better relating to other societal parties and by facilitating new agents of change, governments can better take advantage of the potential of societal initiative (also see Section 2.4.3).

A pragmatic response to the third challenge, the insufficient learning capacity of governments, consists of a combination of the above-mentioned elements. First, through ongoing experimentation it will gradually turn out which strategy – more specifically: which combination of policy instruments, level of intervention or type of cooperation – is more effective. Governments can thus learn continuously and are stimulated to develop creative alternatives. Second, through cooperation with citizens, scientists and other societal actors, governments can facilitate a diffusion of knowledge, ideas, and insights in the practical consequences of actions. This could result in mutual learning processes within a community of inquiry (Shields, 2003). And third, by focusing on specific issues and experiences, the

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[10] The failure of social engineering has raised different political, theoretical and philosophical responses (Van Putten 2015). One advocates an intensification of social engineering: attempting even harder to control society, with more stringent interventions. This interventionism' or 'greediness' is criticized for denying the complexity and dynamism of society (Frissen 2013; Trommel 2009). As a radical alternative, Frissen (2013) advocates 'fatalism' as a perspective for governments, implying that governments should often not intervene at all. This denies, however, the fundamental predisposition of human beings and institutions to invent and create new things, and the great achievements they often made (Arendt 2009[1958]; Van Putten 2015). Thus both extremes, it could be argued, fail to do justice to human and social reality.
[11] This fits in the idea of incremental pragmatism, which means to consequently take small steps in a certain direction (Hajer 2011).

characteristics of a situation that determines the success or failure of strategies can be identified. This enables governments to transfer learned lessons (best practices) to other policy issues or scales, as long as the unique conditions and characteristics of these other domains are taken into account. In short, by taking a scientific approach inspired by pragmatism, governments and policymakers actively search for alternative 'hypotheses' or strategies and keep learning.

To conclude, a pragmatic steering philosophy can contribute to a government that is more reflexive, effective, legitimate and 'open-minded'. By doing so, pragmatism can help governments with insights to better adapt to the new societal landscape of globalisation, informatisation and the rise of networks and deal with global environmental challenges as a prime example of wicked problems governments are confronted with. Pragmatism takes these developments as a starting point for governments, by involving the relevant stakeholders (the 'publics') in a specific problem situation, experimentally switching between societal levels and modes of governance and the way they are operationalised, by using the exchange of information for continuous and mutual learning, and by working together within cross-border networks based on specific issues.

2.4.2 Challenges for pragmatic governance

Although the above mentioned potential indicate that pragmatic governance is a promising perspective, one should also take into account its criticisms and limitations. As discussed below, they result in serious challenges for the assumptions and implementation of pragmatic governance. This will demonstrate that, to harvest the benefits of pragmatic governance, complementary efforts are required.

First, pragmatism has been criticised for an insufficient recognition of values and norms that are derived from democratic procedures. This is based on an understanding of pragmatism that is merely focused on effective strategies and instruments, rather than on the ultimate purposes and visions of governmental action. Ringeling (2007: 15), for example, states that 'pragmatism is the movement which takes as an assumption the meaninglessness of normative judgments' [transl. BK]. Pragmatism is here associated with instrumentalism, managerialism and depoliticisation, and is criticised for denying the political primacy and the visions of citizens and communities. Pragmatic governance is thus perceived as a tool to roll out a neoliberal agenda. The understanding of pragmatism to which this criticism applies, is comparable to the illusion of social engineering as discussed earlier. However, it seems to differ from a more comprehensive account of pragmatic governance, as derived from Deweyan philosophy. After all, it was argued that a Deweyan account holds the potential to provide an alternative to managerialism and social engineering. Insights inspired by bottom-up governance often emphasise the importance of 'directionality', 'ambition' and 'vision building' (Clement et al., 2015; Van der Steen et al., 2015; Ludwig, Kok and Hajer,

forthcoming).[12] Governments can search for common ground and shared purposes among parties that are involved in specific issues. In many policy domains, governments can connect with national and international agreed goals and targets that already exist. Pragmatic governance should not obscure values and norms by a one-sided focus on effective instruments, but continuously reflect on the goals they are meant to realise (Edenhofer and Kowarsch, 2015). In short, although the criticism of lacking normativity does not necessarily apply to pragmatism, it makes aware that pragmatic governance – just like any other governance approach – is inevitably normative and must be embedded in democratic principles.

A second tension within pragmatism concerns its difficult relationship to existing institutions and structures. In the philosophy of John Dewey, the importance of local communities and joint practices are discussed extensively, but an analysis of existing institutions and their contributions to democracy and problem-solving gained less attention (Dijstelbloem, 2006). Bureaucratic institutions rely on clear hierarchies, division of responsibilities and established procedures, which pragmatism often interprets as barriers for effective and experimental policymaking. This relates to another tension, between a focus on the short term or on the long term. Whereas pragmatic steering seeks the best solution in a specific situation, thus being adaptive to different contexts, institutions are based on long term continuity, equality and predictability (Biermann, 2014; Ludwig, Kok and Hajer, forthcoming). This is not to say that pragmatic governance and guaranteeing institutional stability are two separate projects. Pragmatic steering also strongly depends on the reliability and resources of institutional structures, and should also be bound to the juridical and constitutional restrictions imposed upon governmental institutions (Clement et al., 2015). This calls for a mutual adjustment between flexible pragmatic governance and stable institutions.

A third challenge concerns the demands pragmatic governance puts on policymaking when addressing complex issues. For example, the question which governance level is most appropriate, is not easily answered. Pragmatic governance takes specific situations and practical experience as a starting point, but many complex issues are interrelated and arise at a global level (e.g. climate change, security). Addressing these issues will therefore require a comprehensive, integral policy strategy and scale up. This raises the question how strategies can be scaled up without neglecting the unique aspects and conditions in specific situations. An additional aspect of this challenge relates to the experimental, learning-by-doing approach of pragmatic governance. In the long term, this is expected to result in more effective policies, but it could be at odds with the political demands for short-term success. After all, when developing experiments, trial will result in error just as much as it leads to effective, innovative solutions. Van der Steen et al. (2015b) argue that risk aversion is a main obstacle for adapting a governance approach characterised by learning and flexibility. A political blame culture is hardly reconciled with an administrative culture of experimentation

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[12] Although pragmatism has gained popularity mainly after the loss of an explicitly shared morality in modern society (Boutellier, 2015) and seeks to deal with ethical pluralism (Verweij et al., 2006; Robinson, 2011), it is not necessarily indifferent to normative beliefs and visions.

and learning. Thus, pragmatic governance requires professional competences and insights, as well as a culture that is supportive of experimental policymaking.

These challenges demonstrate that pragmatic governance is not a panacea for more effectively addressing policy issues. Chapter 4 further discusses the challenges, implications and suggestions for government organisations and individual policymakers.

2.5 A PRAGMATIC RESPONSE TO INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

In this chapter so far, the elements of pragmatic governance, its relation to different modes of governance, and its potentials and challenges have been explored from a rather general, theoretical perspective. Below it is discussed, more specifically, how pragmatic governance can help governments to operate in the context that was sketched in the introduction of Chapter 1. This context can be characterised by the global scale at which many complex issues arise and by non-state actors taking initiative, as new agents of change in this global space. For exploring the relevance of pragmatic governance in this context, it will first be discussed in what sense the international or global level makes a difference for applying pragmatic governance and, second, how governments can use this approach to relate to new agents of change in global governance.

A main argument here is that the difference between national and international policymaking, is that the complexity of issues and the amount of policy options is greater in an international context. This is the result of a greater cultural and regional diversity, which, according to a pragmatic perspective, governments must take into account when dealing with an issue. Addressing global issues, while considering the variety of contexts in which these issues arise, urges governments to reflect even more on the level of governance that is most appropriate. Second, it could be argued that the governance deficits hold even stronger for international governance than it does for national or local governance. The lack of legitimacy is expected to be greater, because the distance between citizens and governments becomes larger. Citizens are less aware of how governments operate in international context and citizens often have no option vote directly for international organisations. As Hajer (2011: 25) states: 'The government wants to take action based on a global sense of urgency, whereas citizens lack sufficient insight into the problem, the objective and the solution strategy.' In addition, the lack of effectivity would be stronger, because of decreased coordination and mandate at international levels and because the implementation requires to span multiple levels. The time before the results of efforts become visible will also be much longer. International laws and agreements often appear to be less strong and implementation is often less effective, which might be due to, among others, the absence of an executive branch. In short, the 'institutional vacuum' and 'implementation gap' apply reasonably stronger for international policymaking (Hajer, 2003; Castells, 2008). Consequently, whereas the deficits hold stronger for international governance, so does the

relevance of pragmatic responses to these deficits. It is even more urgent to involve citizens and societal actors and, thus, to strengthen the bridge between global and local levels and to take the specific contexts of issues into account. Furthermore, because the regulatory mode of governance is less applicable to international governance due to a less direct legislative mandate, governments stronger depend on the other governance modes pragmatic governance can apply and would require them to be more reflexive about what roles to apply in what situation. To conclude, this brief discussion suggests that both the governance deficits and the pragmatic governance options that can respond to them, apply stronger in an international governance context.

An additional argument in favour of pragmatic governance on can be found in the emergence of 'new agents of change' who have potential to fill institutional voids on the international level. In the introduction of Chapter 1 it was argued that there is an increasingly important role for non-state actors in international policymaking. Insights into the workings of these new agents of change' can be gained by several governance characteristics or 'building blocks', as identified by Ludwig, Kok and Hajer (forthcoming). The governance characteristics identified in a literature review are: new partnerships and collaborations through co-benefits; disclosure for broader accountability; clumsiness and room for experiments; governance capabilities as enabling conditions; scaling up potential and entrenchment; and providing directionality. An understanding of the workings of these new arrangements is an important pre-condition – in accordance with the pragmatic elements that stress cooperation, problem-orientation and a proper understanding of specific issues and actors involved – to make better use of their potential.

It is furthermore evident that most of these building blocks are in line with a pragmatic governance approach. New partnerships are also characterised by the pragmatic element of collaboration, while accountability and room for experiments are similar to the element of 'experimentation and evaluation'. Furthermore, pragmatic governance allows for scale ups, as long as the unicity of different context are acknowledged. In short, it seems that governments, by taking a pragmatic approach, can align with an approach that is currently emerging in international governance arrangements. The elements that are likely to make international governance arrangements more effective, may also be promising for the internal organisation of governments and policymakers (also see Chapter 4) and for the relation between governments and non-state actors. The next chapter further explores this relation between governments and new agents of change, by focusing on specific issues in the field of international biodiversity policies.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a framework of governance based on a pragmatic philosophy. Pragmatic governance calls for governments that are reflexive with respect to their governance modes and the way they are applied and take into account the workings of new

non-state, public-private governance arrangements that are emerging to deal with specific issue areas. Furthermore, from this perspective, governments need to be open to experimentation and learning, base their policies on the experience of practical consequences, and are involved in communities of practice with relevant societal actors, including the less powerful, to develop consistent ad complementary solution strategies. In the current societal landscape that confronts governments with lacking legitimacy, effectivity and learning, pragmatic governance can provide them with reorientation. At the same time, pragmatism entails several challenges that require further attention, particularly the challenges on providing directionality, institutional embeddedness and the high demands put on policymakers. In the next chapter it is explored how pragmatic governance would work out and can be applied to international biodiversity policy. Five emerging biodiversity governance arrangements are selected to explore the contribution of non-state actors and the approaches of the Dutch Government in international context. This provides additional, more practical insights in the possibilities and limitations of pragmatic governance. Together, these theoretical and practical insights were used in Chapter 4, to reflect on the implications of pragmatic governance for government organisations and policymakers.

3. A PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVE TO NEW GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

In the introduction of this study, it was stated that the transformation of the societal landscape consists of, among others, a rise of articulate citizens and a flourishing of new initiatives and change agents. Furthermore, it was argued that the emergence of new governance arrangements demands a new governance approach by governments, for which pragmatism may provide important elements. This chapter explores the role and responses of the Dutch Government and the multilateral system to new agents of change and new governance arrangements that address international biodiversity issues. By looking at the Netherlands, the role of the national government as well as the multilateral response to new governance arrangements is analysed from a pragmatic perspective. It is interesting to focus on the Dutch Government, because, historically, it has positioned itself as an enabling government with a strong role for civil society (Burger and Veldheer, 2001). Also internationally, at EU and UN levels, the Netherlands advocates cooperation in multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Essential to pragmatic governance is that researchers and policymakers focus on specific issues and situations, and learn from those who are practically involved. The analysis of this chapter is based on previously conducted case studies and additional interviews taken with practitioners, that is, as policymakers who are involved in one of these specific biodiversity issues. For each of the cases we discuss which pragmatic elements can be recognised, and how they appear when implemented in a concrete context. This serves as an illustration and contribute to a better understanding of pragmatic governance. In addition, these analyses may result in new insights concerning the practical implications for government organisations, which is presented in the next chapter. As this is only a first analysis of five case studies, the results have to be understood as explorative.

The biodiversity cases discussed below, concern: (1) marine litter, (2) landscape restoration, (3) sustainable trade, (4) deforestation and (5) biodiversity in cities[13]. Each case study starts with a brief description of the governance function of specific new change agents. This section identifies which 'building blocks' – as mentioned in the previous chapter – are characteristic in the workings of the new agents of change, and key to understand their performance. Next, we have examined how the Dutch Government responds to these new governance arrangements. This was analysed by using the conceptual framework of governance modes, as presented in the previous chapter and discusses how government responses relate to the building block framework used to analyse the case studies. This chapter concludes with some overall observations that are relevant for governmental responses in the new governance landscape.

3.1 MARINE LITTER

Litter at sea is currently conceived as a serious problem for biodiversity. Recently, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) stated that 'marine debris is a key environmental issue at the global level and a major threat to marine and coastal biodiversity, having impact on a wide range of marine fauna' (CBD, 2016: 1). The pollution of the marine environment is partly due to the strongly increasing use (and waste) of plastics. Intergovernmental responses to this issue seem not sufficient or fast enough and are hampered by a lack of governance of the open oceans. In this context, new initiatives have emerged to deal with marine litter. These new change agents fulfil different roles. For example, The Ocean Cleanup – an organisation developing new technology to remove plastic litter in oceans – has strongly contributed to raising awareness about plastic soup issues. This actor particularly demonstrates the building block of 'experimentation', by trying out new technologies (Midavaine, 2016). Another initiative, the Plastic Soup Foundation – a societal organisation that has set up various campaigns against marine litter – and the Global Partnership on

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[13] For each of these cases, the role of specific new agents of change has been discussed in, respectively, the following case studies: Midavaine (2016), Wentink (2015), (Kok, Toonen and Van Oorschot, forthcoming), (Ludwig, forthcoming) and (Frantzeskaki et al., forthcoming). In this chapter we focus on Dutch government's responses to these new agents change, except for the case about 'biodiversity in cities', for which we will focus on the role of an international organization: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) secretariat.

Marine Litter (GPML), which is part of the UNEP Global Program of Action, much more provide a platform for networking, sharing knowledge, and holding partners accountable (ibid.). This initiative reflects the governance characteristic of developing new partnerships and collaboration through co-benefits. In short, various new societal initiatives are emerging and demonstrate various governance functions, with a particular focus on experimentation and co-benefits.

Although the strategy of the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (IenM) is written down in strategic documents (e.g. Rijksoverheid, 2014), according to respondents much of the current policy is determined by ad hoc developments, issues of the day and input from society. Policymakers look for openings to realise their ambitions, by participating in different platforms and by taking different roles. This can be related to the four roles or modes governments can take in addressing societal issues: lawful/regulative, performance, cooperative and facilitating governance. When it comes to reducing litter, each of these governance modes is applied to some extent. Yet, although the regulating governance mode (steering through laws and regulations) has not disappeared, it has fallen out of favour among many managers and policy advisors. One government respondent argued that they are reluctant to develop new laws and regulations, being afraid of hindering innovation. An exception in this regard, is the obligation for retailers to provide free plastic bags for customers, which was recently implemented by the Dutch Government.[14] The cooperative mode of governance, in contrast, is taken as the primary role by the Dutch ministry. Policymakers actively enter into alliances and public-private partnerships with multiple stakeholders and at multiple levels. At national level, this concerns the *Ketenakkoord Kunststofkringloop* (an agreement with a range of different actors in the chain of plastics), at regional level, the Dutch Government participates in the OSPAR Commission (established for protecting and conserving the North-East Atlantic and its resources), and, at international level, the Netherlands is a committee member of the GPML. In many of these platforms, NGOs, businesses and other private initiatives are also invited to participate. Depending on the level at which issues must be addressed, policymakers can choose to cooperate in these different platforms and partnerships.

These governance roles can be applied in a pragmatic way. This can be clarified by looking at the three elements of pragmatism as identified in the previous chapter: participation in communities of practice, experimentation with policy alternatives, and a focus on specific issues. The participatory element is evident from the different partnerships the Dutch Government is involved in. An example of how this turns out in practice – and this also illustrates the pragmatic element of experimentation – concerns 'fishing for litter', which means that fishermen, when unintentionally fishing plastics, can put this in bags and deposit the bags at the shore for free. The Dutch Government, which partly initiated this idea, now aims to scale this up through the international cooperation platforms. This is an example of a successful joint experiment, not only with new forms of regulation and cooperation, but also

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[14] This legislation was not initiated by the Dutch government, but rather the implementation of a directive of the European Union (European Union 2015).

with concrete solutions.[15] Another example is provided the Ocean Cleanup, which conducts an experiment on using technology to remove plastics from the oceans. However, opinions differ about the expected results and this experiment would need careful monitoring, reporting and evaluation to be able to decide upon follow up steps by governments. A final observation is related to the other element of pragmatic steering: the focus on specific issues. The Dutch Government pays specific attention to the problem of marine litter and how this issue appears in specific regional areas. At the same time, one respondent explained that the issue of marine litter cannot be isolated. Litter in the sea is inseparable from waste on the land. Consequently, it was argued that a solution strategy, to be effective, needs to take into account how plastics are consumed and produced. The circular economy (e.g. recycling plastics) is seen as essential for a large-scale and long-term solution strategy. This clarifies that focusing on a specific issue will often automatically demonstrate the interrelatedness with other issues, which, in turn, makes way for alternative framings of the issue. According to one respondent a pragmatic approach that focuses on single issues is at odds with the need to develop integrated approaches.

To conclude, in the Dutch approach to marine litter different pragmatic elements and modes of governance can be recognised. It is also evident that the marine litter issue is far from being solved and cannot be isolated from other environmental issues. This demonstrates the challenge for pragmatism to develop integrated approaches.

3.2   LANDSCAPE RESTORATION

The degradation of landscape quality has a great impact on ecosystem services and, therefore, on human wellbeing (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification [UNCCD], 2013). The initiatives developed to restore landscapes are diverse. Landscapes for People Food and Nature (LPFN), together with public and non-governmental actors, pursues the restoration of social, economic and ecological values in a specific landscape (known as the 'landscape approach'). This initiative is described as a 'global network of more than 70 conservation, development, and agriculture organisations who champion integrated landscape management at landscape, national and international levels' (LPFN, 2015: 2). Another example is the Verified Conservation Area (VCA) Registry, which was initiated by the Dutch Government to register and publish voluntary international pledges to address biodiversity loss, including the restoration of ecosystems. This platform relies on new disclosure mechanisms to become an effective instrument. In 2011 the Bonn Challenge was launched by the IUCN, hosted by Germany, and driven by the Global Partnership for Forest and Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) (Bundesministerium fur Umwelt, Naturschutz, Bau und Reaktorsicherheit [BMUB], 2015). This challenge or target was formulated as restoring one hundred and fifty million hectares by 2020 (Wentink, 2015). Many parties have committed to this challenge and together they significantly contribute to the restoration target (BMUB,

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[15] Another concrete initiative was to provide Marine Awareness Courses, to share knowledge and raise awareness among professionals such as fisherman about the marine environment. This was initiated by an NGO named Prosea.

2015). The success of the Bonn Challenge so far, can be explained by various aspects: the GPFLR providing an informally structured partnership, the commitment to a common approach and agenda, and the voluntary character of the pledges (Wentink, 2015). In 2014, The New York Declaration on Forests referred to the Bonn Challenge and formulated an even more ambitious target (UN Climate Summit 2014). This target was endorsed by many NGOs, companies and governments, including the Netherlands. The Bonn Challenge thus provides directionality for the parties involved, as Wentink (2015: 42) concludes in his case study: 'Thought leadership and cross-sectoral targets by the GPFLR and the Bonn Challenge have contributed to a common direction for the international playing field around restoration to operate in.' Below it is explored how the Dutch Government relates to these new arrangements and how its governance can be characterised.

Comparable to the governance modes applied to marine litter, the way in which the Dutch Government addresses land restoration demonstrates a shift from top-down steering to taking societal initiative as a starting point. At a global governance level, regulation and agreements in multilateral institutions are still important, but within the Dutch ministries the regulative mode has become less dominant in policymaking. Laws and regulations serve as a lower limit, but the modalities of developing new regulations or binding covenants are replaced by other governance modes, such as entering into partnerships, setting up pilots, and promoting bottom-up initiatives (e.g. the Green Deals). This is based on the view that businesses are ready to make improvements, but that they are also often hindered by existing legislation. The supposed role of governments is to remove those obstacles through deregulation. One respondent argued that this approach might have problematic consequences. Many businesses and especially front-running companies are still in need of laws and governmental (hierarchical) steering, which provides them with stability, predictability, directionality or a level-playing field. This networking and facilitating approach could also be in danger of neglecting the juridical and results-oriented expertise within the government organisations. Furthermore, pilots often have limited impact and follow-up. Efforts to really learn from those pilots and to scale them up are currently insufficient. This scale up is key for realising national and international ambitions and for turning from agenda setting to implementation. It is a challenge for the government to establish a framework that provides stability, while also giving room for flexibility and innovation.

When looking at this case from a pragmatic point of view, different aspects can be recognised. First, it is clear that the Dutch ministries (EZ and IenM) facilitate and participates in communities of practice. For example, by initiating and supporting the VCA registry, the government seeks to showcase and connect conservation pilots. The Netherlands is also, as a co-organiser, involved in the earlier mentioned 'Landscapes for People, Food and Nature' initiative (LPFN, 2015). This initiative is an example of a community of practice, but also points at another pragmatic element: the focus on specific situations. By focusing on specific landscapes – a strategy known as the 'landscape approach' or 'integrated landscape management' – this initiative takes into account different aspects: social, economic and ecological. This approach is thus an interesting example of how focusing on specific issue

implies the recognition of interrelatedness of social, ecological and economical aspects (also see Van der Horn and Meijer, 2015). This indicates that pragmatism needs to reconcile complexity with an integrated approached, for which suggestions are provided in the next chapter. A third element of pragmatism, the method of experimentation to increase effectiveness and creativity, can be recognised in the variety of pilots that are developed. At the same time, to make experiments really effective, a follow-up in terms of scale up, transparency and performance management is required, as well as a culture that accepts failure and focuses on long-term learning.

3.3   SUSTAINABLE TRADE

In recent years, the development and implementation of Voluntary Sustainable Standards (VSS), such as Fairtrade, FSC and UTZ to mention only a few, have become mainstream for improving social, economic and environmental circumstances in the production of commodities. These VSS, however, face some serious issues, for example regarding the impact and legitimacy of VSS and the confusion they may raise among consumers (Kok, Toonen and Van Oorschot, forthcoming). From a governance perspective, these issues can be interpreted as the consequences of a fragmentation of private governance arrangements. Against this background the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance (ISEAL) was founded. ISEAL can be characterised as a private meta-governance actor, which seeks to orchestrate the many self-regulating VSS initiatives. By providing a platform for members (VSS) and encourage cooperation, ISAEL seeks to improve the impact of standards, develop credibility principles, increase the uptake of standards, and improve their effectiveness (ref. ISEAL website). Kok, Toonen and Van Oorschot (forthcoming) state that various building blocks are characteristic for ISEAL: collaboration and co-benefits, accountability through new disclosure mechanisms, scale ups and providing directionality. By using this logic of change, the private meta-governance of ISEAL can contribute to more sustainable trade.

Navigating towards sustainable trade takes place in a complex, international and multipolar field. In this context, the Dutch Government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BuZa)) advocates a multifaceted approach, both in terms of the stakeholders involved and the roles/strategies taken by policymakers. Each of the four roles or modes of governance are integrated in its strategy. Yet, the relevance of each role depends on the specific context of stakeholders in which the ministry operates (BuZa, 2015). With respect to frontrunners policy seeks primarily to support and facilitate. The 'middle group' is approached according to the governance mode of cooperation, for example by creating alliances or drafting a covenant that is supported by a range of public and private actors. The roles of facilitation and cooperation are, however, mixed with mode of performance management. Support in the form of providing subsidies needs to yield results, for which transparency and monitoring of performance are key, and actors need to comply to the agreements they voluntarily made, which also requires transparency and compliance with mechanisms. The third type of

stakeholders concern those companies that are less ambitious in making supply chains sustainable. For this group, the lawful mode of governance that steers top-down by using financial and juridical incentives is most effective. Policy thus seeks to support promising societal initiatives, while also intervening when companies lag behind (BuZa, 2015). Of course, this requires insight into whether actors move fast enough and in the right direction – and reflection on how a 'right direction' or upward trend is actually understood. Generally, Dutch policy on sustainable trade most strongly adopts the governance modes of 'cooperation' and 'facilitation'. This has several reasons: the financial resources are increasingly limited, which forces policymakers to seek new ways of support and regulation; strict top-down steering runs the risk of frustrating new and existing initiatives; politically negotiating standards and turning them into legislative measures is a very time consuming process, while private actors operate faster and are more adaptive; and, finally, it is hard for governments to satisfy all societal actors (e.g. NGOs and businesses), while acceptance of private initiatives is often wider. The relation of the Dutch Government to ISEAL illustrates the tendency to closer cooperation. Through sharing knowledge and participating as a partner in the platform and dialogues of ISEAL, policymakers aim to support, provide input and directionality, and also gather insights for the further development of their policy strategies.

The approach of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs to sustainable trade in general, and the relation between policymakers and ISEAL in particular, can be characterised as pragmatic. It seeks to flexibly combine the four modes of governance and translate them into concrete measures, depending on regional differences, the ambitions and initiatives of other stakeholders, and the specific issues, mandates and resources that are available (also see BuZa, 2015). Thus, although VSS have passed the experimental stage – there are now plenty of standards with approved strategies and institutional interests (Kok, Toonen and Van Oorschot, forthcoming) –, the way policymakers approach these governance arrangements is nevertheless experimental, in the sense that a range of roles, strategies and measures are developed. Furthermore, the specific relation to ISEAL shows the government's emphasis on close cooperation and knowledge sharing. By participating in a 'community' – platforms, networks and partnerships, such as ISEAL – policymakers strive for continuous learning and realising co-benefits. At the same time, this pragmatic approach demonstrates the importance of it being embedded in a normative framework; of developing a vision and providing direction. This serves as a frame of reference for interpreting societal developments as upward trends and to assess the impact of private initiatives, which, in turn, determines the strategy policymakers should use.

3.4 DEFORESTATION

Another issue in the field of biodiversity concerns the conservation of forests. At the international level, governments have not yet developed – let alone implemented – a legal framework that is sufficiently capable of addressing deforestation and forest degradation

(Ludwig, forthcoming). The main intergovernmental process on forests is the United Nations Forum on Forests. In 2014, the New York Declaration on Forests was signed by governments, businesses and civil society groups, with the aim to halve natural forest loss by 2020, and strive to end it by 2030. Private actors demonstrate increasing willingness and have taken steps to counter deforestation. In the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 (TFA), which was initiated by the Consumer Goods Forum in close cooperation with several countries, a range of members (including businesses, governments and NGOs) form an alliance to achieve zero net deforestation. In the TFA, private members set a voluntary target to reduce deforestation and closely cooperate with public actors. Furthermore, through the Forest Disclosure Project, parties are encouraged to disclose and account for their efforts to counter deforestation. The TFA serves as a 'broker', as a respondent put it, by bringing together a range of parties, and it facilitates a diplomatic approach by governments. As a consequence, this alliance contributes to a better coping with the tensions that are present in this field. For example, tensions between front running companies and those who lag behind, and between different governance approaches, both within and between national governments. Therefore, providing partnerships and collaboration is an important building block of this new governance arrangement. Accountability and disclosure and, potentially, directionality and scale ups can be recognised as important functions (Ludwig, forthcoming). Thus, in the context of the complexity and tensions in countering deforestation, this multi-stakeholder alliance enables parties to move forward and learn together. The TFA uses the voluntary standards and guidance for sustainable palm oil, soy and forests discussed in the previous sections, showing the way in which different governance arrangements are related and how individual actors use different governance arrangements to get to results.

The approach of the Dutch Government and its relation to alliances such as TFA, can again be characterised by various governance modes. The classic mode of regulative or lawful governance is reflected by different national and international laws and regulations, such as the EU action plan called 'Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade' (FLEGT), which contains several measures to counter deforestation (Commission of the European Communities, 2003). However, currently this governance mode does not seem dominant in the Dutch strategy, for different reasons . First, mandates for the relevant regulations (e.g. concerning agriculture or trade policy) to a large extent are at a European level, thus requiring increased coordination, negotiation and effort. Besides, the Netherlands is not a producing country for several drivers of deforestation (e.g. soya and palm oil production). In addition, one could argue that the basic juridical framework has already been developed, which makes the Dutch Government look for additional ways to counter deforestation.
The mode of performing governance can be recognised in controlling the results of agreements that were made, for example at UNFCCC conferences such as COP21 or in the Green Deal on 'promoting sustainable forest management' (Doornebosch, Kalter and Hiel, 2015). Through clear objectives and assessment mechanisms, governments seek to ensure that pledges and agreements are implemented. Also in the Netherlands, the Dutch Government seeks to steer on results through, among others, evaluation studies and certification of wood suppliers (Green Deal, 2013; IenM, 2015).

The governance modes that most clearly appear in the Dutch governance strategy, are the modes of cooperation and facilitation. Policymakers actively participate in platforms and alliances, such as the TFA, which enables the Dutch Government to engage in various partnerships and diplomatic dialogues. In addition, the government facilitates new initiatives (e.g. through financial contributions) and encourages companies to turn commitments into concrete implementation. This indicates that the modes of facilitation and steering on performance often go together: monitoring and follow-up of new initiatives is necessary to ensure their progress. This monitoring is often carried out by private parties or alliances (Ludwig, forthcoming), in which the Dutch Government's role is often limited (Van Benthem and Winterink, 2015). This might indicate the importance for governments to insist on independent, third party verification to be able to check on progress.

The case of deforestation demonstrates that the characteristics of a specific issues influence the governance modes that are applied. In this case, the geographical and jurisdictional factors appear to be crucial. At national level, developing laws and regulations is less relevant, since forests cover a relatively small part of the terrestrial surface of the Netherlands. At international level, laws and regulations exist to counter deforestation, but the Dutch mandate at this level is limited. Its legislative instruments often need to be coordinated at European level. This explains that, although legislation and directionality are not absent, current governmental efforts are relatively stronger focused on cooperation and facilitation. The cooperative governance mode is reflected in an active involvement in TFA, as one of the partnerships and platforms on forests. By bringing parties together, this platform also facilitates further ways of collaboration, for example bilaterally, between member states. In addition, the Netherlands support new societal initiatives, while also monitoring their progress, such as the Green Deal on 'Promoting sustainable forest management', which was signed and is now monitored by 27 organisations, including the Dutch Government. This combination of governance modes provides the Dutch Government with various instruments to counter deforestation and forest degradation.

3.5 BIODIVERSITY IN CITIES[16]

The majority of the global population lives in urban areas and a great proportion of the economic activities take place in cities (United Nations, 2014). Therefore, cities can be seen as crucial players for the development and implementing of national and global policies on biodiversity. Cities also have their own policies to preserve or increase liveability (Frantzeskaki et al., forthcoming). To bridge these levels between local and global, a range of city networks have evolved. Mayors, mainly of large cities across the world, coordinate their mutual policy agendas and integrate them with other global agendas. One of these networks – Local Governments for Sustainability, formerly known as the International

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[16] The analysis of this case differs from the previous cases. First, because this case focuses not on a new agent of change that addresses a specific issue, but rather on a group of actors – a network of cities – that aim to cover a range of different biodiversity issues. Second, this section does not explore the Dutch governance in this case, but instead focuses on how an international organization – the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity – approaches city networks.

Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) – is particularly focused on sustainable issues, including urban biodiversity. Frantzeskaki et al. (forthcoming) have studied governance functions ICLEI fulfils. They distinguish four different roles played by this network in bridging the gap between local and global: (1) knowledge roles (e.g. integration and translation of knowledge to policy), (2) game-changing roles (stimulating co-creation and experimentation), and (3) relational roles (connecting and mediating between cities). In terms of the building blocks mentioned in Chapter 2, ICLEI is argued to set up partnerships and provide directionality and experimentation space (ibid.). By participating in this network, cities can thus put their biodiversity issues on a global agenda and contribute to the experimentation with and implementation of global policy agendas.

In this section we briefly discuss how the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) relates to city networks such as ICLEI. The CBD is a convention among 196 parties (nation states) about the preservation of biodiversity, and is supported by Subsidiary Bodies and Working groups. As such, the governance of the CBD body cannot be analysed according to the four governance modes, because it has no legislative mandate or independent authority. Yet we mention some interesting observations on how the CBD and its parties relate to city networks such as ICLEI, as well as to non-state actors in general. First, the importance of ICLEI is recognised by the CBD. A respondent stated that the willingness and effectiveness are crucial for implementing the decisions. Since 2008, cities are closely involved in the agreements of the COP, which has led to an Advisory Committee on Cities and Biodiversity and a 'Plan of Action on Sub-National Governments, Cities and other Local Authorities' (CBD, 2010). ICLEI is of particular importance of this respect, because it represents the cities that are frontrunners on biodiversity issues. Currently, decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties (COP) more often demonstrate the involvement of cities.

Besides, the CBD also closely cooperates with other non-state actors, at the request of several parties. Different actors, such as knowledge institutes and businesses are seen as key players for the implementation of policies. The way this cooperation with non-state actors is organised depends on the specific groups of actors (e.g. young people, scientists) following the UN Major Groups system. For businesses, for example, the CBD has launched a Global Platform on Business and Biodiversity, which provides input for the decisions made by the parties. However, involving non-state actors also has its risks or limitations. It may for example provide ground for lobbyism and negotiations – particularly by NGOs and businesses – that can hinder the implementation of decisions. In addition, not every government provides the same level of transparency on, for example, which actors can or must be involved.

To conclude, the approach and decisions of the CBD towards non-state actors – and city networks in particular – are a combination of top-down and bottom-up governance and, as such, reflects the governance modes that dominate at the different parties or governments. Some governments apply a top-down approach, while others – including the Netherlands, according to a respondent – propose a bottom-up, more democratic, but sometimes less

effective approach to implementing decisions. Yet, within the CBD there appeared to be an increased willingness to involve non-state actors, which have the power either to make decisions effective or to hinder their implementation.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that a variety of non-state actors make efforts to address international biodiversity issues. Their logic of change is most clearly characterised by: setting partnerships based on co-benefits, promoting disclosure and accountability of parties, and providing room for experiments and directionality. For pragmatic governance, assuming that these actors indeed contribute to solving specific issues, this implies that the strategies of governments have to link up with this logic. Thus governments can take advantage of new governance arrangements and societal initiatives for realising their policy objectives. More specifically, as appeared to be part of the Dutch strategy, governments can participate in public-private partnerships and stimulate experiments and accountability. In addition, governments need to provide direction and, consequently, assess whether the directionality of non-state actors is heading to the same objectives.

Another insight of this chapter relates to key element of pragmatic governance, namely the notion that specific issues or societal elements should be the starting point for developing a governance strategy. The case studies and interviews have raised new insights on how this can be applied or, in other words, which concrete issue characteristics are potentially relevant for deciding which governance modes can be applied. Various relevant characteristics can be recognised:

- In some cases, the strategy or governance mode depends on the differentiation of specific *target groups* in a certain context. These groups can be drivers behind biodiversity developments, such as businesses. This applies to the case of sustainable trade, in which a distinction is made between frontrunner companies and companies that lag behind when it comes to sustainable production and trade. Whereas frontrunners are primarily facilitated in realising their ambitions, lagging companies are approached in a more coercive, regulatory way.

- In addition, *the regional, cultural and jurisdictional characteristics* of countries can influence the role their national government play. In the case of deforestation, for example, the limited mandate of the Dutch Government, as well as the fact that forests cover a small part of the Dutch territory, provide possible explanations for its facilitating and cooperating strategy. The fact that different national cultures prefer different governance modes, was also recognised by respondents working in international organisations.

- The *policy process* for a certain issue could be another relevant factor for the selection of governance modes and instruments. For landscape restoration, the

developed legislation was perceived as a 'lower limit' or 'initial framework', which now required further governance efforts in terms facilitation and cooperation to realise ambitious objectives.

- The *political context* in which a government operates may also determine the mode of governance it applies. Although this does not directly follow from the case studies, it seems reasonable that some political movements may prefer responsive and cooperating government action, while others might propose a more directive, regulative, or performance oriented approach.

Some of the above mentioned aspects seemed to influence the governance strategy adopted by the Dutch Government in relation to the various biodiversity issues in an international context. This is displayed in Table 1:

Table 1: Dutch governance modes in biodiversity issues

BIODIVERSITY ISSUE	RELATIVELY DOMINANT GOVERNANCE MODES	RELEVANT CONTEXTUAL FACTORS
Marine litter	Responsive, cooperative	Jurisdiction, organisational culture, political context
Landscape restoration	Responsive, cooperative	Policy process, jurisdictional characteristics
Sustainable trade	Lawful, performing, responsive, cooperative	Ambitions of target groups, jurisdictional characteristics
Deforestation	Lawful, performing, responsive, cooperative	Regional and jurisdictional characteristics
General (perceptions within UNEP and CBD)	Responsive, cooperative	Cultural and political differences, ambitions of target groups

In general, the Dutch strategy is characterised by actively responding to actors and initiatives that already contribute to biodiversity, through cooperation and facilitation in platforms such as the Tropical Forest Alliance. This seems to fit in a pragmatic approach and the cases have demonstrated various benefits of being involved in societal initiatives, such as platforms for dialogue and diplomacy that are provided and the opportunity to put new issues on private agendas (e.g. integrating living wages in voluntary sustainable trade standards) (Kok, Toonen and Van Oorschot, forthcoming). These benefits were acknowledged by several respondents. This governance strategy also raised concerns, which largely correspond to the challenges and considerations mentioned in Chapter 2.

- First, it appeared that the Dutch Government sometimes provide limited directionality, as mentioned in the cases on deforestation and marine litter. Merely responding to ad hoc networks and rapid developments and facilitating new initiatives and experiments, may result in a lack of coordination and prevent governments from effectively heading for their long term policy objectives. Furthermore, ad hoc initiatives in society may not always be in line with actual policy objectives or priorities of governments.

- Second, closely involving stakeholders may run the risk of lobbyism of, and debates between, for example businesses and NGOs, which my hinder an effective development and implementation of integrated policies. The challenge to counter lobbyism holds particularly when governments lack a clear vision and direction.

- Third, the effectiveness of experiments is not always clear, and learning and scale ups are hardly achieved. Several respondents stated that, current policymaking, is insufficiently occupied with evaluating pilots and drawing lessons. Although pilots and experiments fit in pragmatic governance, they can only result in increased effectivity and learning when accompanied by evaluation. In short, pilots and experiments should not replace more generic policies.

- And finally, some respondents involved in the case studies stated that there is a need for a stronger and more coherent science-policy interface, because of decreasing substantive, in-depth knowledge within departments. If governments take a more facilitating approach and do not merely rely on the expertise of policymakers, it is of particular importance to establish a strong interaction between science and policy. This is also key to pragmatic governance, for example to gain insights on the practical consequences of issues and actions.

To conclude, the case studies provided insights into the approaches by new agents of change, into how governments can relate to these new actors and initiatives, and into the opportunities and challenges that may arise when pragmatic governance demands that governments facilitate and cooperate. Together with the theoretical exploration of Chapter 2, these findings served as input for the following chapter, which provides insights that may help government organisations and policymakers to apply pragmatic governance and relate to new societal initiatives.

4. SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAGMATIC POLICY-MAKING

This chapter combines the theoretical and empirical insights of previous chapter, to explore what pragmatic governance implies for public policymaking. First, we have investigated what the findings of the biodiversity case studies mean for the elements of pragmatic governance. This review results in nuances, challenges and refinements of pragmatic governance, which provide important insights for public policymaking in the current dynamic international context. Next, the implications of a pragmatically inspired governance approach for governments are discussed. This does not constitute a blueprint for policymaking. From a pragmatic perspective blueprints inherently fall short, because they cannot account for the diversity of issues of contexts. Rather, the suggestions presented in this chapter can serve as starting points for a customised, situational and adaptive policy approach. To put this approach in practice, we conclude that pragmatic governance needs to be 'embedded'. This means that it has to account for the societal context and institutional structures of government organisations, as well as for the capabilities and limitations of individual policymakers.

4.1 PRAGMATIC ELEMENTS RECONSIDERED: INSIGHTS FOR PUBLIC POLICYMAKING

In Chapter 2, three key elements of pragmatic governance were identified: (1) learning through experimentation and evaluation, (2) collaboration with spontaneous groups of actors in communities of practice, and (3) an orientation on specific issues or problems. As an underlying framework, the distinction between four governance modes was used to argue that governments, when taking a pragmatic approach, can apply and combine various roles, requiring them to be reflexive about which roles to choose and providing further ideas on how to apply different modes of governance. In Chapter 3, these theoretical aspects served as tools to analyse a range of biodiversity cases, which provided additional insights in, for example, relevant contextual elements and institutional conditions for pragmatic governance,

including the progress of policies and the ambitions of other societal actors. Below the results of both chapters are combined, to reconsider the relevance, applicability and challenges of pragmatic governance when applied to public policymaking.

4.1.1   Scaling up experiments through evaluation and follow-up

Experimentation belongs to the core of a pragmatic governance philosophy. Both thought experiments and real-life experiments can be conducted to investigate the practical consequences of different strategies and actions. This stimulates creativity and innovation, because it urges governments to constantly invent new strategies, instruments and policies. It is also key that experiments are accompanied by a thorough evaluation of the practical, real-life consequences of the different alternatives. Thus governments can learn about the conditions for success or failure of certain policies and transfer these lessons to other levels or domains.

Both experimentation and evaluation, however, are not easily performed. First, some of the respondents stated that the current organisational culture does not sufficiently enable employees to set up experiments, because the culture leaves little room for failure. Policymakers are often prevented from experimenting by an administrative and political culture that looks for short term success. Van der Steen et al. (2015b: 60) state: 'Experiments require time, which is at odds with a political system that wants certainty, control over governance and wishes to see *quick and demonstrable results.*' This tension was indeed experienced by policymakers interviewed for this study. Second, the evaluative aspect also requires attention. Respondents argued that 'pilots' and 'experiments' are currently very popular concepts within departments, but also that the actual learning effect is limited. This is because a thorough evaluation of the results is lacking and, consequently, insights for the scale up of pilots are absent. The challenge for government organisations is, therefore, to critically examine the results of experiments, to accept failure, and to translate insights to address other issues and operating at other governance levels. This also requires that governments closely cooperate with scientists and other actors involved in a particular issue, to trace the practical consequences and experiences. This is emphasised by the second element of pragmatic governance.

4.1.2   Involvement of science and the public

For Deweyan pragmatism, collaboration between societal actors – including spontaneous publics defined by a specific issue – is key to democracy, as a common project to solve problems. This interaction should also reflect democratic values, such as deliberation and fair participation. A context in which new actors appear to be effective in realising change, implies for pragmatic governance that governments align with the logic of these actors, including their different problem perceptions, because they have the potential of solving problems. More concretely, this could mean that policymakers participate in platforms, to support private meta-governance, or to stimulate experiments and new disclosure mechanisms (Ludwig, Kok and Hajer, forthcoming). This fits in the current Dutch approach to various biodiversity issues, which is most clearly characterised by the facilitating and

cooperating governance modes. Besides the potential for problem-solving, the case studies have also pointed at possible pitfalls when applying these governance modes.

First, governments should be aware of the danger of lobbyism when involving parties. Businesses, NGOs, and other actors, often have divergent perspectives and interests. This can lead to co-benefits, mutual understanding and broad support, but it can also result in negotiated agreements that lack ambition or impede implementation. Particularly the role of businesses, relative to other actors, seemed to be predominant in the decision-making within some cases. From a pragmatic and democratic point of view, governments should not primarily focus on the vested interests and established power, but rather involve those who bear the consequences of a problem and can practically help to solve it. Furthermore, governments should explicate their vision and ambition – take a guiding narrative – from which the relevant actors are involved and which provides a measure and direction.

Secondly, when it comes to the evaluation of policies and actions, it is of particular importance to also involve scientists and to strengthen the science-policy interface. In Chapter 2 it was discussed that in a pragmatist view science and policy are closely linked. Policymakers and researchers need to cooperate in order to identify the practical consequences of policy means and objectives. A scientific assessment of the effects of policy may result in a continuing review of means and objectives, thus stimulating creativity and learning. Yet pragmatism does not only argue for cooperation between policy and research, but also between science and public. Edenhofer and Kowarsch (2015: 58) state:

> 'A crucial precondition for a successful Deweyan inquiry into complex social issues is some kind of dialogue between researchers and the public. This essential cooperative aspect of knowledge production is mainly because researchers alone can hardly be aware of all socially and politically relevant objectives and means-consequences, or of all possible means.'

In the practice of Dutch policymaking, as analysed in the case studies, this interaction between policy, science and public was not always obvious. In addition, various respondents stated that government organisations, by facilitating societal initiatives, compromised on the internal preservation and acquisition of knowledge. When the governance modes of facilitation and cooperation are dominant, the role of policymakers may be understood as mainly 'procedural', as entrepreneurs or networking agents, being in danger of lacking substantive knowledge and good judgment about an issue. It is thus necessary to invest in an internal knowledge base, while also pursuing a congruent translation of research to policymaking.

4.1.3 Focusing on specific issues to select governance modes

The third element of pragmatic governance, is that policies are adjusted to a specific societal issue. In the previous chapter, several contextual factors of biodiversity issues appeared to be relevant, such as regional characteristics, legislative mandates and the ambitions of other

societal actors. Although these aspects do not provide definitive answers, they can serve as guidelines for selecting that governance modes and instruments that fit best for addressing a certain issue. With respect to choosing and combining governance modes, different challenges can be recognised.

First, in addition to the fact that it requires a lot of insight and experience to *select* the most appropriate governance instruments, it also means that policymakers need to have the capabilities to *implement* the various available modes. They need to acquire legislative, performance, cooperative and facilitation competences, depending on the issue at stake. Second, as already concluded in the previous chapter, governments that strongly rely on cooperating with societal actors and facilitating initiatives, might be in danger of neglecting the more traditional governance modes. Whereas cooperation and facilitation have great potential and fit well in pragmatic governance, the legitimacy and effectivity of other 'top-down' approaches must also be recognised. Particularly in the face of urgent global issues, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, it can be argued that a top-down approach is sometimes an effective way to turn the tide.

4.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNMENTS AND POLICYMAKERS

Pragmatism can hardly be translated into generally applicable, very concrete policy recommendations for any policy issue. Each situation has its own characteristics that determine a successful approach and how it can be implemented, for example, which experiments can be conducted and which type of actors need to be involved. From this view, policies should not be developed from an a-priori theoretical perspective, but by reflection on their practical consequences. It is illustrative that much literature that advocates a pragmatic or adaptive policy approach, concludes with the importance of experimentation, vision and ambition, collaboration, flexibility, balancing, and individual competencies. Often these results are very relevant and insightful, but also have a general character that requires further practical efforts (e.g. Steijn, 2009; 't Hart, 2014; Van der Steen et al., 2015b). This can be understood by the fact that pragmatism, like many other steering philosophies, does not advocate easy, one-size-fits-all solutions. Pragmatic governance is not as much a theoretical issue as it is a practical quest and attitude. Nevertheless, this section aims to explore several implications and additional lines of thought that can be helpful for applying pragmatic governance to policymaking. The suggestions are meant to assist organisations and individuals in their practical quest for the best policy strategy in specific situations, and may also be relevant for further research on pragmatic governance.

4.2.1 Individual competences, virtues and craftsmanship

A government that experiments and enters into collaborations when addressing specific issues, places high demands on policymakers. Chapter 2 also states that more individual competences are required as there are more modes of governance available. Multiple options

for policy experimentation call for multiple capabilities. Steijn (2009) argues that the traditional, bureaucratic, Weberian model emphasised the competences of, among others, loyalty, expertise, and objectivity, whereas the New Public Management and collaborative models rely on the political sensitivity, flexibility, and cooperative competences of individual policymakers. Thus, expanding the governance philosophy with new modes of steering implies a more extensive repertoire of competences that policymakers need to obtain. Steijn (2009) mentions 8 of such competences, and 't Hart (2014) mentions 10 (partly overlapping) qualities of individual professionals and managers to cope with current societal complexity and dynamism.

On the basis of the theoretical and empirical insights of this study it can be argued that a focus on acquiring and deploying a variety of single competencies might not be sufficient for applying pragmatic governance. This is because, as mentioned above, policymakers may encounter various challenges when applying the different governance modes and pragmatic elements. To recapitulate some of the challenges or problems that emerged throughout this study:

> How to combine hierarchy and accountability with professional discretion and voluntary participation, at both organisational and societal level?

> How to scale up experiments to other levels and domains without neglecting the unique characteristics of specific policy issues?

> How to involve and facilitate actors without opening the door for lobbyism?

> How to be flexible and adaptive without losing continuity and reliability?

> Which contextual characteristics should determine the governance mode that can or should be applied?

> How to steer on performance and results while accepting failure?

> How to take into account the various normative perspectives in society while developing and maintaining a clear vision?

The tensions that these questions bring to light cannot simply be 'solved' by single skills and competences. Instead, this requires insight into how competences must be applied and how different values, possibilities and interests must be weighed. It also asks for a continuous reflection on the effectiveness and appropriateness of policy interventions in specific situations.

This deeper dispositional level can be approached by the notion of personal 'virtues'. In the field of public administration, the idea of virtues and virtue ethics has gained increased attention over the past years (e.g. Cooper, 1987; Lynch, 2001; Becker and Tholen, 2009). It is frequently argued that practical rationality, sound judgment, sensitivity and integrity are

necessary elements for policymaking and ethical decision making in concrete societal contexts. From a virtue-ethical perspective, these character traits are essentially acquired by participation in a community (MacIntyre, 1981; Sison and Fontrodona, 2013). Both aspects – the practical issue-orientation and focus on communality – closely correspond to the elements of pragmatic governance. To specify its relevance for pragmatic governance, we refer to the Aristotelean notion of virtues. This theory of virtue ethics implies to always seek a mean or balance between the deficiency and excess of some virtue. For example, creativity – as an important potential of pragmatism – is the virtuous mean between 'unoriginality' (a lack of creativity) and 'impracticality' (and excess of creativity); and bravery – for example in conducting experiments – is a mean between cowardice and recklessness; and, finally, leadership is a mean between having a lack of confidence and dictatorship (Crossan et al., 2013). These virtues are argued to be particularly important in the face of situational and internal pressures (ibid.). We suggest that, in addition to the professional competences, virtues – and their condition of practical rationality and judgment – are valuable in coping with the challenges mentioned above, such as tensions between values and interests. It can thus help to assess specific situations, determine the possibility of scale ups, to be aware of lobbyism, and to be open to various normative perspectives, without losing one's own vision and ambition. In short, the correspondence between virtues ethics for pragmatism, as well as the relevance of specific virtues for pragmatic policymakers, seems promising, although it requires further research and reflection.

Another notion that has gained popularity and fits well in pragmatic governance, is 'civil craftsmanship'. In the face of an increasingly complex society, some have suggested to view policymaking as a craft (e.g. Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007; 't Hart, 2014; Trommel, 2014). Craftsmanship is acquired by continuous practicing and education over a long period a time. The distinctive character of a craft consists of: creativity, dedication, building something new, and a strong awareness of interdependency in a practical context. Thus, policymaking is not primarily understood as making or implementing decisions, but rather as a continuous search and common effort for crafting or 'building' something good or addressing some specific problem. This may result in a range of 'crafting communities' that cut across different institutional and societal levels and structures (Trommel, 2009). It also resembles virtue ethics in accepting uncertainty and complexity and stressing the necessity of long-term commitment. Together with pragmatic governance, these perspectives can help policymakers to develop practical rationality and sound judgment, and to practice learning and collaboration. An important condition for this to succeed, is an organisation that facilitates professional development and pragmatic policymaking.

4.2.2 Organisational learning, acceptance of failure and narrativity
The organisational conditions for pragmatic policymaking can be subdivided into the structure and the culture of organisations. For both some aspects are mentioned below, which can contribute to the application of governance modes, experimentation and learning, and the personal and professional development of policymakers.

With respect to the organisational structure, pragmatic governance first urges not to rely strongly on hierarchical relations and chains of command. Hierarchy and accountability are indispensable in bureaucratic organisations, but can also become restrictive by preventing its employees to be flexible and creative, to quickly switch between roles and to take risks. From a pragmatic perspective, the role of managers is not just to reduce uncertainty and to assess the performance of their subordinates in terms of success and failure, but also to accept uncertainty and to promote joint learning. Second, applying pragmatism implies a structure that is to a certain extent porous, i.e., that reduces 'walls' or silos within the organisation as well as government organisations and other societal actors ('t Hart, 2014). For organisational learning it is key to have easy access to the knowledge and expertise of others. Within organisations, because this promotes organisational learning and setting up teams more spontaneously, according to the required expertise for the issue that is at stake. Also between organisations and other actors, because information sharing is key for making communities of practice work in a network and information society. As argued above, this holds particularly for the relation between science and policy. At the same time, the interaction with and intertwinement of actors must be embedded within the limits of confidentiality and the unique responsibility and mandate of governments. A third suggestions concerning the organisational structure, is to aim at an internal differentiation of teams or divisions. Because policymakers can hardly obtain all the different competences required for policymaking, they need to be part of team of colleagues who are complementary. Some may have expertise in applying the legislative mode of governance, while others might prefer the collaborative or facilitative modes. A varied composition of teams and departments could reduce the demanding consequences of pragmatic policymaking, while stimulating cooperation and increasing the quality of policymaking.

At least as important as the structure of government organisations is their internal culture. It was already argued that, as a condition for experimental policymaking, organisations need a culture that accepts uncertainty and failure. This openness must be accompanied by a culture uses both failure and success to learn and improve organisational performance. These lessons must be shared within the organisation and transferred to other policy domains and to higher governance levels. In addition to these aspects, which were already discussed throughout this study, we argue for an organisational culture in which policymaking is characterised by *narratives.* Narratives can be developed to define the rationale, key aspects and purposes of policy strategies. A story about the importance and aim of policies can provide orientation, inspiration and commitment for organisations (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006). Narratives also provide an evaluative measure, for example to determine which actors – the main characters in a policy narrative – need to be involved and what roles they play (Somers, 1994; Pijnenburg and Gordijn, 2005). This can serve as a guarantee against involving too many parties – giving everyone a say, which may hinder decision-making and implementation – and it can also prevent the dominance of only a few powerful actors. Besides this internal function, as a guidance to policymaking, narrative policymaking may also be effective for the external relations. Framing policies as narratives and presenting them to the 'publics' or other specific stakeholders may create support and commitment.

Furthermore, it can help to keep the own policy ambition in mind amid the variety of norms and perspectives among stakeholders and within the policy issue. The cases in Chapter 3 demonstrated an interrelatedness between a variety of aspects within a specific issue, such as social and environmental aspects. By combining narrative policymaking with the 'integrated landscape approach' or 'integrated assessments framework', which is already used within Dutch ministries, policymakers can take various aspects into account. In short, a culture in which norms, visions, stakeholders, strategies and lessons are explicated and integrated in narratives, may contribute to a considered, well-balanced dealing with the challenges of pragmatic governance.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has used theoretical and empirical insights for discussing the implications of pragmatic governance for policymaking. Each of the three pragmatic elements demonstrates potential, but they also result in various practical challenges. Experimentation is hindered by risk avoidance and requires much effort and insight for evaluation and scale ups. According to respondents, learning and transferring lessons to other policy levels and domains is currently insufficient in Dutch strategies to address biodiversity issues. With respect to cooperating and involving societal parties, governments must avoid the risk of lobbyism, normative disorientation and underrepresentation of certain groups. An additional challenge concerns the demands put on organisations and their employees to select and apply different modes of governance. These challenges may explain why pragmatic governance, although it can contribute to the effectivity, legitimacy and learning capacity of governments, is not a common practice among governments or has not yet harvested its full potential. This chapter has also explored additional theoretical and practical insights that are relevant for applying pragmatic governance. These insights are integrated in the conclusion of this study, by arguing for pragmatic governance that is 'embedded', that is, enriched by additional insights and conditions. This embedded pragmatism, we will argue, is of particular importance for policymaking in a global context.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to explore the contribution of a pragmatic approach for governments to be able to deal with global environmental problems, such as biodiversity loss, in a dynamic context. In the introduction, Chapter 1, it was argued that the combination of developments of globalisation, informatisation and the rise of networks and new change agents, as well as the insufficient effectiveness in dealing with global issues, result in a need for reorientation by governments. A traditional way of governance, merely characterised by regulative interventions and strict demarcations between actors and societal levels, appeared to be insufficient to improve effectivity, legitimacy and creativity. Against this background, we discussed in Chapter 2 a pragmatic governance approach and argued that, theoretically, this approach has potentials for more effective, legitimate and learning-oriented governmental steering. Through continuous experimentation and reflection on the consequences, flexible cooperation and problem-orientation, governments are better capable of addressing global issues and relating to new agents of change. At the same time, they may encounter new challenges, for example in relating to established institutions and their logic of continuity and reliability, or in providing directionality and accounting for norms and values. In Chapter 3, these potentials and challenges of pragmatic governance were enriched by an analysis of case studies on international biodiversity issues. This provided insights in how different pragmatic elements and governance modes could work out in practice. Chapter 4 built on these findings and provided suggestions for governments and policymakers to apply the various pragmatic elements and cope with the related challenges and tensions.

5.1   TOWARDS AN EMBEDDED PRAGMATISM

The insights developed in this study can now be used to answer to the research question, which was formulated as: *How can a pragmatic approach for governments contribute to a more effective realisation of global goals in a changing governance landscape?* We conclude that the findings, as drawn together in Chapter 4, call for a pragmatic approach that is *embedded,* which means that pragmatism is integrated in a framework of additional conditions at different levels. We suggest four conditions for pragmatism that helps governments and policymakers to realise their ambitions in a global context.

- First, and this is already emphasised by pragmatism itself, pragmatic governance must be embedded in *society*. That is, policies are always shaped together with societal actors targeting at specific societal issues. It takes these issues – and the relevant contextual elements and practically contributing actors – as a starting point for policymaking. This social, issue-oriented approach can be captured and further explored by the notion of 'crafting communities', implying that policymaking is perceived as a craft characterised by co-creation among those involved in a community.

- Second, pragmatic governance, when applied by governments, needs to be embedded in the *institutional context* from which policies emerge, including the juridical and organisational framework. Pragmatism cannot be seen as an independent path or as an 'alternative' to institutions and their logic. Rather, we argue that institutions provide necessary conditions for making pragmatic governance effective, such as continuity, scale ups and knowledge management (Kärreman, 2010). In other words, the adaptiveness and flexible orientation on practical problems and solutions can only flow in the bed of institutional stability, mandates and resources, in order to be legitimate and effective in the long term and at a large scale. At the same time, this poses challenges to governmental institutions, such as providing room for failure and professional discretion and allowing for adaptive policymaking.

- Third, pragmatism must be embedded in the capacities and basic attitude of policymakers, and take account of their competences, norms and limitations. As we have seen the notions of virtues and craftsmanship, for which patience, commitment and learning are crucial conditions, might be promising to acquire sensitivity in policymaking. This requires from organisations to be supportive of the personal and professional developments of its employees.

- Finally, pragmatism needs to be embedded in a narrative or normative framework that provides direction, ambition and commitment. This calls for governments to acknowledge and seek an alignment between the different values, normative perspectives and interests among parties (including nationally and internationally agreed goals), while avoiding relativism, lobbyism and a lack of direction. Explicating the objectives of policymaking is thus essential for the reorientation of governments.

These elements provide conditions for a fruitful, well-balanced application of embedded pragmatic governance. On the other hand, if these conditions are neglected, pragmatism could ultimately degenerate into illegitimate managerialism, disorientation, lobbyism, a lack of meaning and a mere accumulation of individual, isolated pilots. Because, in this study, we have only touched upon certain additional insights that seem relevant, further theoretical

and practical research is needed to examine the potentials, challenges and conditions of pragmatic governance.

A question that remains when it comes to applying pragmatic governance, is how it relates to different developments and views across the political spectrum. As we already argued, recent political developments characterised by pursuing short term success and risk avoidance, is an obstacle to pragmatic governance that promotes experimentation and learning in the long term. At the same time, we state that this approach is not limited to one specific category of political views. First, because each constructive political party, be it Socialist, Christian Democratic, or Liberal, advocates a government that legitimately and effectively realises its ambitions. Of course, the priority of issues, ambitions and available resources will depend on political preferences, but given the available means and objectives, pragmatic governance provides insights in how they can be aligned effectively. Second, different parties may build on various arguments to advocate a pragmatic approach. Whereas some may stress the importance of involving the publics, others would emphasise the communal character of policymaking or call for an effective and responsible deployment of government resources. The fact that these political preferences and developments are not discussed in this chapter, does not imply that pragmatism should be applied indifferent to democratic principles and political views. As we argued, a depoliticisation of pragmatism would lead to managerialism and a lack of democratic legitimacy. Rather, governments need to develop a vision and ambition to avoid disorientation and lobbyism, which holds particularly for applying pragmatic governance. These values and ambitions must follow from legitimate, democratic principles.

5.2 PRAGMATIC GOVERNANCE IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Throughout this study, we have referred to the relevance of pragmatic governance in the context of global issues, and how this is different from national or local policymaking. This study indicates, however, that pragmatic policymaking is not only relevant for complex issues that arise at global level, but also at national and local. Yet it can be concluded that the arguments for and embedded pragmatic governance particularly apply in an international context. The several reasons for this, which are discussed below, correspond with the line of argument of this study.

- Pragmatic governance has greater potential for international policymaking, because the disorientation of governments applies in particular for issues that need to be addressed at a global level. The crises of legitimacy and effectivity were argued to be stronger when a larger distance between societal levels needed to be bridged. This might be due to a lack of coordination between governance levels and a lack of consensus among the great variety of state and non-state actors.

- Consequently, the relevance of pragmatism – its responses to these governance deficits – also holds stronger in this international context. Great uncertainties, significant regional differences, and a larger distance between international or multilateral institutions and their 'publics', urge governments even more to be open to learning, to allow for specific contexts and to involve citizens and other important actors. Thus, particularly in the international context described in Chapter 1, pragmatic governance can contribute to effectivity, legitimacy and learning.

- Although more relevant, the application of pragmatic governance is also more challenging in an international context. First, because more policy options will be available in many cases. Governments need not only select the instruments to experiment with, but also more levels of governance – regional and global – that need to be considered. This demands from policymakers that they possess advanced skills and experience. Furthermore, it is harder to focus on specific issues and contexts, because international policymaking is often characterised by abstract, comprehensive approaches to address cross-border issues. This also implies that involving publics – understood as a group of people in a specific context – is more difficult to achieve. The actors involved are often internationally operating NGOs and businesses.

- In line with this argumentation, the importance of pragmatic governance being embedded is also greater. As there is a greater diversity of actors, regions, and cultures, there is also a greater variety of normative perspectives and interests, both between states and between state and non-state actors. This urges governments and intergovernmental organisations to formulate clear norms and objectives and thus to provide direction. Finally, pragmatic governance needs to be embedded in the framework of international institutions and account for individual competences and limitations, to incrementally improve policy development and implementation.

In short, a pragmatic governance that is embedded in a societal, institutional, individual and normative framework, is better capable of responding to the general governance deficits and the particular challenges of pragmatic governance. Or taking a more positive perspective, embedded pragmatism can better take advantage of the potential of new agents of change that operate with increased willingness and at a global scale. This may contribute to a more effective, as well as a more legitimate and creative realisation of global goals in a changing governance landscape.

5.3 DISCUSSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study thus aimed to contribute to an ongoing search for government orientation in a changing, dynamic, and multifaceted landscape. It must be stressed, however, that the conclusions and suggestions developed here are tentative. This is due to both the explorative

character of this study and the pragmatic approach it focused on. The main lines of various governance aspects were discussed, but this comprehensive did not allow for detailed descriptions and criticisms or providing thorough argumentations. In addition, as mentioned in the previous chapter, a theoretical discussion of pragmatic governance can hardly be translated into very specific policy recommendations that hold in different contexts. In its very nature, pragmatism implies an in-depth analyses of the context in which specific issues arise, to explore and evaluate which policy strategy is most promising. This study has demonstrated the potentials, challenge and conditions of such an approach, and suggested tools to put pragmatic governance into practice. However, the limitations of this study call for further practical and theoretical inquiry.

The suggestions provided in the previous chapter can be read as recommendations for public policymaking and conducting further research. To recapitulate, pragmatic governance would require policymakers to assess the contexts in which specific issues arise, to employ the necessary competences for addressing that issue, to experiment with various roles and instruments, and to involve the relevant actors. Because this requires a lot of effort and experience from individuals, the organisational structure and culture needs to be supportive of experiments, accept failure and encourage learning. This does not call for drastic measures, but rather for a gradual expansion of the repertoire of instruments and strategies. For example, policymakers can be exempted to spend a part of their time to inventing new ideas, exchange lessons, conduct experiments or further develop their professional skills. Governments might also consider to set up a small team of professionals that are devoted to explore new instruments, initiate experiments, and collect and spread lessons among policymakers.[17] These measures could stimulate innovative policymaking, without being disruptive or obstruct institutional continuity and reliability. Finally, research is needed to further explore pragmatic governance in relation to other theoretical notions, such as public craftsmanship, virtue ethics, design thinking, and narrative policymaking. Furthermore, it would be relevant for researchers to examine in more detail, and together with policymakers, what pragmatic governance would mean for specific global issues, such as climate change. By taking a more practical focus, the relevance and applicability of pragmatic governance can be further evaluated.

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[17] These functions are sometimes fulfilled by Behavioural Insights Teams (BITs) that are established within several Dutch departments.

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APPENDIX A

Organisation	Respondent	Relevant expertise	Location
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	Philip Drost	Relation between UNEP, the Netherlands and non-state actors	Telephone interview
Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment	Hermien Busschbach	Marine litter and circular economy	The Hague
Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment	Arthur Eijs	Degradation of landscapes	The Hague
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	Oliver Hillel	Biodiversity in cities and the relation between the CBD and non-state actors	Telephone interview
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Paul Schoenmakers	Sustainable trade and deforestation	The Hague
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Hans van Nieuwkerk	Deforestation	The Hague
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Roel van der Veen	(Dutch approach in) Global Environmental Governance	The Hague
Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change (MCC) Berlin	Martin Kowarsch	Pragmatic governance and the relation between research and policy-making	Telephone interview
Ministry of Economic Affairs	Thomas Dirkmaat	Experimental policymaking and behaviour	The Hague