Parks, People and Places

Place-based governance in urban green space maintenance
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<td>Responsible under the press law</td>
<td>Gertrud Jørgensen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>978-87-7903-676-5 (internet)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lay-out</td>
<td>Inger Grønkjæer Ulrich</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printed by</td>
<td>Novagraf A/S</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number printet</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td>Single issues are available from Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management. Also published at <a href="http://www.ign.ku.dk">www.ign.ku.dk</a>.</td>
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Preface

In the application I did for this PhD, I highlighted by inspiration from a user participations process I had the privilege to follow some years ago. In 2008 I did my master thesis project with the main purpose of developing a ‘green structure plan’ for a village in the Southern part of Denmark. In the beginning of the project we (Karen Traberg Larsen and I) were given the opportunity to co-arrange a public meeting with the local municipality. This specific public meeting became the first step in a longer process in which the local citizens were engaged in planning, design, construction and finally maintenance of a local green space. I experienced how different citizens were attracted to different tasks and how the local community gathered their energy around a common goal. I also saw how the municipality let go, as soon as they could. They had no incentive for facilitating the process over time. A pity, since the citizens, for different reasons, also lost momentum after a while.

A year later I had the chance to attend a scientific conference and heard a presentation about user participation in green space maintenance in Belgium. Here it was common for users to contribute to maintenance of green space; something which I had not come across in Denmark back then. This awaked my curiosity about the potentials of including users in green space maintenance tasks as a means to create mutual understanding, raise interest and sense of responsibility with regard to green spaces - and with green spaces of high quality as a common goal.

Recently I watched a talk on TED.com by Kirby Ferguson called ‘embrace the remix’. Here, Ferguson states that ‘everything is a remix’. Being creative is about copying, transforming and combining. I like to see my PhD process as such; a process, in which the works of others has provided me with inspiration and a base for creating my contribution to science. My hope is that this thesis, as the manifestation of where this process has taken me, will inspire others in the future.

Having said this, it is not until lately that I have been able to put the process of my PhD into this wider perspective. To be honest I thought I had to ‘go’ somewhere specific and would have the ‘great overview’ from the beginning. What I know now is that no one in my position would have managed this. Coming from a landscape architecture background, theoretical concepts such as governance and public involvement were new to me.

I have struggled to find my professional role in this project and been longing for bringing in the aspects of landscape architecture that are close to my heart. In the beginning of my theoretical ‘journey’ I focused on concepts such as public involvement and governance, but something was missing. I felt I was detaching the processes of interaction between people from the context they concern. I needed to acknowledge the importance of peoples’ connections to urban green spaces. Working with the Place-keeping concept, and ultimately also the concept of Place-based governance has ensured that this thesis reflects the mechanisms that originally led me to become a landscape architect: the bonds between humans and nature.

While I have acknowledged sources of my scientific ‘remix’ in references throughout this thesis, I would like to thank all the people who have been a personal inspiration and support - and have believed in me no matter what.
First of all thanks for my principal supervisor, Cecil Konijnendijk van den Bosch. You have been open, understanding and supportive both professionally and as a friend. You saw my potentials and never doubted them. I admire you for your ability to ‘be yourself’ and embrace the possibilities of life. These talents have taken you many new places the previous five years. Despite this I have always felt you were ‘present’ and available for my questions and concerns.

Also thanks to Tove Enggrob Boon for always asking the right questions that helped me proceed. I am very grateful that you have included me in your PhD-team, even though our daily contact has been limited. Through this I have met some fantastic persons and have got new perspectives on shared challenges. Especially, I want to thank Betinna for long deep talks about theory – and life; and Marie for your energy and drive to help facing the challenges of the written language.

I would also like to thank my fellow PhD students in my research group for support, sparring and fun times.

All my co-authors also deserve a special recognition. Thanks for letting me be part of your processes and for sparring and intensive discussions. Without your contributions this thesis would not have landed where it has.

Important contributors are also all the Danish and English interviewees who have shared their time, knowledge and personal experience.

Privately I have been privileged with a lot of support as well.

Thanks to Annett for teaching be to breathe and keep grounded when the thoughts became too many. Thanks to Henriette for showing me that I can trust my intuition and have unexpected resources to mobilise when needed.

Finally, from the bottom of my heart I would like to thanks my family and Friends for being who you are. Special thanks to Rie for always being there the way you are.

This dissertation is for my two supermen – Ole and Buster. You know why ♥
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English abstract

The benefits of urban green spaces to the well-being of urban residents and sustainability of cities are manifold. Often these sites are publically owned and traditionally they have been managed by public organisations such as municipalities. However, urban green space management has been influenced by trends of marketization and emerging policy visions to include local residents in the decisions concerning their local environments. This has resulted in management becoming increasingly complex.

Previous studies indicate that there are many (potential) advantages associated with user participation in green space governance. This thesis suggests, by applying a ‘place’ perspective, that involving users in operational management of green spaces holds potentials for enhancing ‘place attachment’ of urban inhabitants. As this can also build their commitment to decision making on their local living environment, green space maintenance becomes a potentially important setting for governance processes.

Through a number of qualitative case studies, based on semi-structured interviews with municipal and community actors in Denmark and England, this dissertation explores the status and potentials of applying a place-based governance approach to green space maintenance. To guide the exploration a theoretical framework was developed inductively, structured around concepts of environmental governance in combination with strategic approaches to green space management. The framework is operationalised by analyses of the governance dimensions ‘actors’, ‘resources’ and ‘rules’. Moreover, the impacts of place-based governance processes on green space quality are examined via a review of previous scientific articles.

Findings indicate that place-based governance does occur in connection to green space maintenance. Additionally the case studies provide insight to how such processes are approached by Danish green space managers - and in the English context; in partnerships between managers and local Friends groups.

In the study of the Danish context a potential shift towards governance with users was found. Here managers in general had a technical focus, but in many cases also took an *ad hoc* approach to user participation. Yet no strategies, collegial sparring or professional training occurred. The extent of user participation and delegation of power was very much up to the individual managers. Also, the interviews revealed that manual staffs potentially have a crucial role to play in place-based governance.

In the English studies, Friends were found to have limited capacity and interest in carrying out on-site maintenance. From a governance perspective this can be explained by a high dependency in green space management on funding accessible to community groups. This requires a formal set up of Friends together with a focus on e.g., events, publicity and lobbying. Moreover, the Friends in most cases had a considerable time commitment, which could explain that the vast majority of
members were retired (and thus often elderly). This again limited the capacity to do physical up-
keep. With an increasing push towards ‘localism’ in England resulting in decreasing local authority 
support, the homogeneous demography of Friends groups might hold a risk for the future quality of 
green spaces. In relation to overall green space management it was found that Friends with exten-
sive networks had a higher capacity to take over enhanced responsibility.

The thesis concludes that place-based governance offers potential for bringing users and managers 
closer together, through mutual understanding and knowledge exchange. These processes could 
lead to more ‘place attachment’ of users and thereby higher environmental awareness and less van-
dalism. However, for this to happen mutual commitment should be in place and place-based gov-
ernance processes should be seen as an aspect of municipal governance to ensure that all relevant 
actors (and their resources) are included. This requires political and strategic prioritisation and 
changes in ‘rules’ about onsite maintenance being a municipal matter. It also requires continuing 
evolution of the roles of green space managers.

Keywords
Friends groups; governance arrangements; green space managers; parks; place attachment, 
Place-keeping; semi-structured interviews; strategic green space management; user participation
Dansk resumé (Danish Abstract)

Urbane grønne områder påvirkende både indbyggeres velbefindende og byers bæredygtighed positivt. Disse områder er ofte offentligt ejede og er traditionelt også blevet forvaltet af offentlige organisationer som for eksempel kommuner. Dog er forvaltning af grønne områder blevet påvirket af markedsorientering og nye politiske visioner om inkludering af lokale beboere i beslutninger, der vedrører deres lokalmiljø. Dette har medført at forvaltningen er blevet mere og mere kompleks.

Tidligere forskning peger på, at der er mange potentielle fordele i forbindelse med brugerdeltagelse i beslutningsprocesser omkring grønne områder. Denne afhandling tager udgangspunkt i konceptet ’place’ og foreslår at involvering af brugere i drift af de grønne områder, potentielt kan styrke byboeres stedstilknytning (’place attachment’), som så kan øge brugernes engagement vedrørende beslutninger om deres lokalmiljøer. Derfor ses forvaltning af grønne områder på dette operationelle niveau som en potentielt vigtig platform for beslutningsprocesser mellem kommuner og brugere.


Resultaterne af disse undersøgelser indikerer at stedsbaserede styringsprocesser finder sted i forbindelse med drift af grønne områder. Desuden giver casestudierne indsigts i hvordan disse processer bliver grebet an af danske parkforvaltere – og i den engelske sammenhæng; i partnerskaber mellem forvaltere og lokale venskabsgrupper.

Undersøgelsen af den danske kontekst viste et potentielt skift i styringsform henimod styring, der også inkluderer brugerne. Forvalterne havde generelt et udbredt teknisk fokus, hvorimod brugerdeltagelse blev håndteret ad hoc og der blev ikke fundet eksempler på strategier, kollegialt samarbejde eller faglig uddannelse vedrørende håndtering af disse processer. Omfanget af brugerdeltagelse og uddelegering af beslutninger var i høj grad op til den enkelte forvalter. Interviewene afslørede ydermere, at gartnere og andet personale, der arbejder ude i de grønne områder, potentielt har en vigtig rolle i forbindelse med disse stedsbaserede styringsprocesser.

De engelske undersøgelser viste, at venskabsgrupperne havde begrænset kapacitet og interesse i at udføre driftsopgaver. Fra et styringsperspektiv kan dette forklares med, at den engelske parkforvaltning i høj grad er afhængig af fondsmidler, som er tilgængelige for lokale borgere. Dette kræver, at venskabsgrupperne er formelt organiserede og at de fokuserer på for eksempel events, offentlig omtale og lobby arbejde. Desuden havde medlemmerne i de fleste tilfælde en omfattende tidsmæssig
forpligtelse, hvilket kan forklare hvorfor langt størstedelen var pensionister – og derfor ofte også oppe i årene. Dette var igen med til at påvirke kapaciteten til at udføre fysiske driftsopgaver. Den homogene sammensætning af venskabsgrupperne udgør muligvis en risiko for den fremtidige kvalitet af de grønne områder, idet der i England er et stigende fokus på at overdrage ansvar til lokalsamfund med resulterende forringelser af kommunernes muligheder for at bidrage til partnerskaber med brugere. I forbindelse med parkforvaltning generelt, viste studierne, at venskabsgrupper med et stort netværk udenfor kommunen, havde bedst kapacitet til at overtage mere ansvar.

Desuden blev der kun fundet begrænset bevis i gennemgangen af tidligere forskning, vedrørende effekten af stedsbaserede beslutningsprocesser på grønne områders kvalitet. Derimod afslørede litteratur gennemgangen lovende belæg for positive udbytter af disse processer, der er tættere forbundet med de menneskelige og sociale aspekter af ’place’.

Konklusionerne på denne afhandling er, at stedsbaserede beslutningsprocesser har potentiale til at bringe brugere og forvaltere tættere sammen, igennem gensidig forståelse og vidensudveksling. Processerne kan føre til, at brugere bliver stærkere knyttet til steder og dermed får en højere forståelse for miljømæssige problematikker og passer bedre på de grønne områder.

For at dette skal kunne lade sig gøre er gensidigt engagement nødvendigt. Desuden skal de stedsbaserede beslutningsprocesser ses i sammenhæng af andre kommunale styringsprocesser, for på den måde at sikre, at alle relevante aktører (og deres ressourcer) bliver inkluderet. Her kræves politisk og strategisk prioritering, såvel som en ændring i de uformelle regler om, at drift af grønne områder er et kommunalt anliggende. Ydermere skal der også ske en fortsat udvikling af parkforvalternes professionelle roller.

Keywords
Venskabsgrupper; styringsprocesser; parkforvaltere; parker; stedstilknytning; Place-keeping; semi-strukturerede interviews; strategisk parkforvaltning; brugerdeltagelse
Introduction

Since the 1980s many Western countries have seen a change within public administration from public authorities holding the power over decisions and the responsibility for service delivery to a larger role for other actors, including communities and businesses (Kjær, 2004; Swyngedouw, 2005). This can be seen as a shift in perspective from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ (Kjær, 2004) – the latter being a concept which has been defined in multiple ways within a continuum from ‘governance by government’ over ‘governance with government’ to ‘governance without government’ (Kleinschmit et al., 2009). This move towards governance has been enhanced by major reforms such as the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) policies and its related marketization of traditionally public service provision (Lindholst, 2008; Nuppenau, 2009) as well as a number of international policies and agreements including the Aarhus Convention (Reid, 2004), UNCED’s Local Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992) and the European Landscape Convention (Jones, 2007). The latter policy initiatives have all promoted a larger role of community involvement in decision-making concerning their own, local living environment, apart from advocating a more overall push for environmental and landscape governance at different levels, from the international to the local. In line with this, the present study focuses on the community involvement component of governance, in connection to the government / public authority component. The third component of governance, comprising the private sector/businesses, is not the focus of this work.

Most people in the Western world now live in urban areas - something which stresses the importance of local environmental governance. In cities and towns, urban green spaces are an area of special interest, for example as they provide the main access to nature and recreation for large number of urban residents – people who often do not have a garden of their own. England alone hosts an estimated 2.5 billion visits to urban green spaces per year (in areas with a population of 10,000 inhabitants or more) (Dunnett et al., 2002). High quality green spaces, responsive to community needs, are of great importance to urban environments. Their positive contribution to e.g. urban biodiversity (Nielsen et al., 2013), human health (Townsend, 2006) and development of local identity (Roy et al., 2012) has been widely documented (Konijnendijk van den Bosch et al., 2013). Urban green spaces are often in public ownership and are traditionally also managed by the public sector, most often by municipalities (Dempsey and Smith, 2014). However, similar to other parts of public administration, municipal green space management has experienced thorough modifications during recent decades. Planning and management of urban green spaces has become a matter of complicated systems of governance that also include civic and private actors. They are no longer solely the remit of the ‘expert’ solving specific technical tasks (de Magalhães and Carmona, 2008; Smith et al., 2014).

Green space management and maintenance as local, site-based activities are impacted by decisions and policies at a regional, national or even international level (Dempsey et al., 2014). This is reflected in Randrup and Persson’s (2009) ‘Strategic Park Management model’ which divides the local authority level into three interconnected stages of activities: (1) those at a political, or policy level (e.g. general green space policies); which link to 2) overall plans of the green resource made at
the tactical level; which in their turn tie into the (3) operational level, including for example organisation of physical up-keep based on quality descriptions.

Involvement of non-governmental actors in governance at a local level, i.e. in (and about) the specific green spaces, has specific potentials. Previous studies have for example pointed to numerous societal benefits that can be gained through participation by local communities in green space planning and management. These relate to involvement processes as well as their output, namely the urban green space itself. In relation to process-oriented benefits, it has been found that involvement in local green space activities acts as a means to increase wider awareness of comprehensive global environmental problems (Van Herzele and Denutte, 2003; Speller and Ravenscroft, 2005; Van Herzele et al., 2005b; Bhatt et al., 2008; Ohmer et al., 2009). In addition, where green space decision-making is seen as an inclusive and transparent process, an increase in feelings of site ownership by the community can occur, which in turn can lead to a reduction in vandalism and anti-social behaviour (Van Herzele and Denutte, 2003; Ohmer et al., 2009). Related to this, being physically engaged in activities such as tree plantings is said to also enhance ownership and satisfaction about the greenery (Sommer et al., 1994). Furthermore, sense of community can increase by physical participation due to an increase in positive social interactions (Speller and Ravenscroft, 2005; Ohmer et al., 2009). Two other benefits identified, closer related to the output of involvement processes, are the opportunity to offset or accommodate public funding cuts through the involvement of volunteers (Jones, 2002b; Moskell, 2010), together with obvious improvements to the physical green space (Jones, 2002b; Van Herzele and Denutte, 2003).

Place-based governance – a different perspective on green space management and maintenance

The present study starts from the assumption that (environmental) governance approaches are relevant not only at ‘higher’ or more strategic levels, but especially also at the local level where people interact with their surrounding environment. However, ways will have to be found to adapt the governance concept to the ‘site level’ and to the specific context of individual urban green spaces and their management and onsite maintenance.

One promising concept that can help connect governance to the site maintenance level is that of ‘Place’. The concept of place can be used to understand the dynamics of people’s interaction with spaces and has been addressed in research fields such as human geography (e.g. Cresswell, 2004; Foote and Azaryahu, 2009), environmental psychology (e.g. Halpenny, 2010; Zhang and Zheng, 2011) and landscape architecture and planning (e.g. Ellis, 2005; Walker and Ryan, 2008).

Place can be defined as physical space imbued with meaning, or as social constructs with a unique history among its users. Having a ‘sense of place’ links to a person having developed psychological and emotional bonds with well-known spaces (Cheng et al., 2003); something which led Tuan (1977 pp. 73) to write “when space feels thoroughly familiar to us, it has become place”. Cheng et al. (2003) describe place as consisting of not only biophysical attributes and processes, but also social and political processes; as well as social and cultural meanings: “Biophysical attributes may be
the most obvious features of places; however, those attributes are constantly altered by social and political processes (e.g., personal, experiences, community uses, regional economic production, national conservation policies) and vary greatly in their social and cultural significance. When people articulate their concerns for and interest in the environment, they are expressing meanings that extend beyond the value of the biophysical resources. They are conveying their values for the legitimacy of social and political processes that shape and are influenced by specific places, and for the viability of significant social and cultural meanings” (ibid. pp. 96). Occasional visitors, national interest groups, the media, or policy-makers may craft their own meanings by using certain images or focusing on a narrow set of biophysical attributes. Therefore “taking a place-based approach holds the opportunity of bringing forward the diverse ways in which values and meanings are articulated and negotiated, but are typically excluded in natural resource decision making” (ibid. pp. 101).

Access to ‘meaningful places’ is crucial for the lives of urban inhabitants (Beatley, 2005). In contrast to space, place can be characterised as enclosed and humanised space and as the ‘calm centre’ of established values. In brief, place represents security and home, and space stands for freedom and the unknown. Referring to Tuan’s work, Konijnendijk writes that humans require both place and space, as we are attached to the one (place) and long for the other (space), moving between shelter and venture, between attachment and freedom (Konijnendijk, 2008 pp. 11). Beatley (2005) stresses that connecting people and local landscapes has become more important than ever. Increasing globalisation has resulted in uniformity and anonymous consumption leading to lost responsibility for the environmental consequences of our choices. Urban residents often lack knowledge about the ecosystems and landscapes in which they live and this can have a negative influence on their ‘sense of place’. Studies have shown that urban residents have an interest in learning about trees and that related education and outreach can potentially serve as means to raise awareness and engage residents in maintenance of urban vegetation (Moskell and Allred, 2013). Therefore a close connection between people and local places should be encouraged and from this, larger scale environmental and sustainability problems can be solved (Beatley, 2005). This emotional ‘bonding’ between users and places is often conceptualised as ‘place attachment’. When people are attached to a place they may be more willing to donate time on its behalf and this can be manifested in the way they care for their physical environments (Mohapatra and Mohamed, 2013). Further, from a practical perspective, local users, through close proximity to green spaces can contribute with daily maintenance tasks which are not possible for municipalities to perform (Moskell and Allred, 2013).

Taking a place-based, onsite approach to governance in green space management could potentially build on people’s commitment and close ties to their environments, while also integrating the human dimensions connected to ‘place’ with the physical management of a green space. Moreover, being engaged in governance at a place-level could increase the place knowledge of local users leading to greater environmental awareness.

This thesis focuses on a (seemingly less common) site-specific perspective of governance at the level of individual green spaces and their maintenance; by applying a place-based approach to green
space management (and maintenance in particular) that recognises the importance of close links between local communities and ‘their’ green spaces.

This is illustrated in figure 1, which is based on the so-called ‘park-organisation-user model’ by Randrup and Persson (2009). The original framework demonstrated a more instrumental or liberal democratic view on green space management, where managers on behalf of elected politicians manage and maintain green spaces with the aim of provision of services to the users/citizens. This is shown through one way arrow from green spaces to users (seeing green spaces as a service provided for users). For the purpose of this thesis the model has been adapted by adding another arrow from users to green spaces, to recognise that users connect with spaces and make these into places through an interrelated process where meaning and attachment is created. Through the interaction (or governance processes), shown as two-way arrows between managers and users, these human dimensions of space can be included in green space management through user involvement in maintenance, and subsequently lead to delivery of green spaces that meet the wishes of citizens, either by green space managers or directly by the involved users. In other words, place-based governance is seen both as a means to increase the quality of green spaces and as an end in itself.

![Fig. 1. Conceptual frame illustrating place-based governance in green space management. Inspired by Randrup and Persson (2009).](image)

**Place-based governance**

The importance of embracing a very local, site-related approach to governance is also stressed in the concept of place-based governance as introduced in the context of biosphere reserves in Canada (Pollock, 2004; Edge and McAllister, 2009). In this context, governance with users is also an emerging phenomenon and the place-based approach is an attempt to integrate concepts of governance and integrated management in order to promote local sense of place as well as sustainable community and regional development (Edge and McAllister, 2009) (see figure 2). While the underlying assumptions behind this site-focused version of the governance concept correspond with the thoughts behind this dissertation, place-based governance in the Canadian biosphere context still
operates at a higher scale (due to the large extent of these reserves), namely that of municipal and regional levels, rather than on individual green areas.

Fig. 2. The Place-based governance approach as described by Edge and McAllister (2009), showing an evolvement from institutional ‘silos’ to governance approaches for sustainability.

While an intrinsic place-based approach to governance is well-known in connection to e.g. communicative planning (Mannberg and Wihlborg, 2008) and collaborative planning (Healey, 1997, 2003), there are only limited studies related to green space governance, especially when looking at a ‘place’ level of the management and maintenance activities. This gap has been pointed at by Lawrence et al. (2013) who call for reflection on the balance between technical expert knowledge and lay and local knowledge within research of governance in urban forests. Also, James et al. (2009) in their research framework for the development of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research on urban green space, call for knowledge about how changing social values and behaviours will guide the provision and maintenance of urban green spaces. Moreover, in relation to the concept of ‘management’ of urban landscapes and green spaces, Jansson and Lindgren (2012) identify in-depth qualitative studies and case studies as needed in order to gain insight to how inclusive participatory methods can be developed in connection to management and maintenance activities.
The concept of place-keeping also encompasses a place-based approach to sustainable long-term management of open spaces – a process which includes governance as a crucial dimension (Smith et al., 2014). However, while governance is only seen as one component of place-keeping, the present study takes a different perspective, rather placing governance in focus and specifically applying a place-based governance approach that connects governance and place. Both place-keeping and place-based governance reserve a central role for direct involvement of users or even local communities at large.

Public participation in management of urban green spaces has been studied from several perspectives. These include; process facilitation (Jones, 2002c, b; Speller and Ravenscroft, 2005), enticement (Jones, 2002a), volunteer motivation and possible recruitment strategies (Moskell et al., 2010), as well as the impact of public participation on attachment to urban parks (Shu-Chun, 2010) and the role of place attachment on willingness to participate in management of neighbourhood green spaces (Mohapatra and Mohamed, 2013). Furthermore, Delshammar (2005), based on his study in Swedish municipalities, is one of the scholars who has pointed at the need to acknowledge user participation in green space maintenance rather than only at more ‘strategic’ levels.

Among the few studies that have taken a distinct governance perspective on management of green spaces at a site-specific level are those by Rosol (2010) on citizen participation in the governance of existing urban green space, based on the case of community gardens in Berlin, and the work by Moskell and Allred (2013) identifying potentials for integrating education and outreach with tree planting programmes and thereby increase engagement of residents in day to day maintenance.

In order to gain insight in place-based governance at the level of individual urban green spaces, this dissertation looks at place-based governance in two countries with very different traditions regarding public involvement at large and green space management in particular, namely Denmark and the UK (and England in particular).

**The Danish situation**

During recent years, Denmark has seen a redefinition of how citizens should contribute to the Danish welfare society (as also described by e.g. Center for frivilligt socialt arbejde (2010) and Aarup (2010)). The latest local government reform of 2007 resulted in larger municipal units and new areas of responsibility which has increased the workload of local politicians (Tortzen, 2008). City councils have to focus on more overall concerns and are now more dependent on public officials for implementation. This has created a larger distance to citizens and an increasing call for development of local democracy – including more direct involvement of the public (Tortzen, 2008; Agger et al., 2010). The enhanced focus on public involvement is also reflected in the present government’s platform from 2011; ‘A Denmark that stands together’. Collaborations between the public and the volunteer sectors are stressed and less bureaucracy is promised (Regeringen, 2011). Further, the Danish government together with local authorities and regions, as well as volunteer organisations, published a ‘Charter for interaction between the volunteer world and the public sector’ in
2013 with the aims to “strengthen the possibilities of active citizenship in binding communities and promote the interaction between the volunteer world and the public sector” (Frivilligrådet, 2013). Specifically in the context of municipal green space management there seems to be an increasing focus on this. The municipality of Copenhagen, for example, has someone employed to facilitate involvement of volunteers in green spaces. Other municipalities are working on specific volunteer strategies for their green areas. In 2013, ‘citizenship and volunteerism’ was a theme on the annual conference for Danish municipal park and nature managers (Kommunale Park- og Naturforvaltere, 2013).

In Denmark, volunteering (defined as organised, unpaid work for the benefit of others than yourself, which can be left freely) is an important component of the wider governance agenda. Approximately one third of all Danes are involved in some kind of volunteering activity (Center for frivilligt socialt arbejde, 2011). However, when it comes to activities relating to nature and environment, only approximately four per cent of the population is active (Jørgensen, 2012b). Most of the relevant involvement activities relate to nature and landscape management outside urban areas, where involvement of volunteers has a long history. Anglers, bird watchers and nature conservationists have been organised in associations for approximately one hundred years and have played a considerable role - mostly in e.g. registration and promotion tasks. In the last decades these organisations have also become increasingly engaged in practical tasks (Hjortsø et al., 2006). An example of this is the Danish Society for Nature Conservation, which involves people in the maintenance of different nature areas through the project ‘Give Nature a Hand’ as well as in annual litter picking events (Danmarks Naturfredningsforening, 2013). A report on volunteer work in nature conservation (Hjortsø et al., 2006) compared the Danish environmental and nature sector with the social sector, an area where volunteerism has become very common since the 1980s. Both within social work and in practical nature management focus is typically on the task that has to be solved, rather than on development of personal interests (as in e.g. the leisure sector). When it comes to voluntary social work a specific legislation imposes the Danish municipal councils to cooperate with voluntary social organisations and associations and to support their activities financially (Ankestyrelsen, 2010). In this connection 75 percent of the Danish municipalities have adopted a specific policy for voluntary work within the social area (Center for frivilligt socialt arbejde, 2011). This is in sharp contrast to the focus on voluntary work within urban green space maintenance, where only few municipalities seem to have taken strategic initiatives, such as the ‘inspiration catalogue’ for green space volunteering developed by the municipality of Copenhagen (Center for Park og Natur, 2010). This relatively low level of activity at a strategic level could very well be rooted in Danish traditions of the state being ‘the sovereign’ within this field (Arts et al., 2006); public authorities are expected to manage public nature areas and green spaces with tax payers’ money. However, public sector funding has been scrutinised and studies show declining budgets for municipal green space management (Randrup and Persson, 2009). With the increased call for creating new forms of local democracy, resulting from the local government reform in 2007 (Tortzen, 2008), opening up to involvement of volunteers could be an obvious outcome. A survey among chief executives of Danish municipalities shows that the extent of involvement of volunteers increased in most municipalities from 2007 to
Moreover, 49 percent of municipalities collaborate with volunteers within the technical and environmental sector (Jørgensen, 2012a).

Moving to the context of comprehensive urban planning, in contrast to the informal approach taken in association to management and maintenance of green spaces, there is an extensive tradition of public involvement (Sehested, 2009). At this strategic level, mandatory hearings have been imposed by the Danish Planning Act since 1970. The planning system is based on a principle of frame-steering and accordance between plans on different levels (ibid.). At the municipal level, in focus in this thesis, municipal plans are formulated by the 98 municipalities every 12th year and revised according to the latest municipal planning strategy every fourth year (Naturstyrelsen, 2014). In this process public hearings are obligatory (Retsinformation.dk, 2013). This has led to a system where professional actors such as interest organizations are now an institutionalised part of the corporate political system in Denmark – and, sometimes, focus on a narrow involvement of specific (professional) actors in the planning processes, even though today, wider involvement is promoted by the Planning Act (Sehested, 2009).

In connection to management and maintenance of urban green spaces, public involvement is not a requirement, something which could help explain why no established tradition exists within this field. Also, processes in connection to planning - of yet to be established sites - could differ from participation in green space up-keep of established areas, as also pointed at by Delshammar (2005). Yet, given the current political discourse and with the potential benefits connected to the latter, there is a need for enhanced knowledge about how user participation is approached and perceived by Danish green space managers at the operational level. This will help to better understand the barriers and potentials for enhancing this type of governance in the future.

The English situation
In the UK and in England in particular, on the other hand, as a significant area of non-statutory service provision, the design, development and long-term management of parks and green spaces has a historic, and integral, relationship with community involvement programmes (Jones, 2002). A number of national open space programmes have sought to encourage community involvement through planning and design and more infrequently management including the Pocket Parks initiated in 1980 (Little, 2011); Millennium Greens in 1996 (Natural England, 2014b); Doorstep Greens in 2001 (Natural England, 2014a) and Community Spaces introduced in 2009 (Community Spaces, 2014). These schemes have demonstrated high willingness of communities to contribute to the making and keeping of local green spaces. Within the last years, political support for community involvement in public decision-making and service provision has become visible on the agenda of the main political parties in the UK (Labour and the Conservatives). In 2008, the then Labour government published the White Paper Communities in Control that called for “ownership and control” by communities, whereby “people can own and run services for themselves either by serving on local boards and committees, or through social enterprises and cooperatives” (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008). Reflecting this perspective, the 2010 Conservative Big
Society manifesto announced that power should be devolved to local governments (or beyond that) in order for people to be able to do more and take more power (Gov.uk, 2011). Big Society has three key principles: Opening up public services by enabling voluntary organisations, charities, social enterprises, and employee-owned co-operatives to compete to offer public services; Social action: encouraging and enabling people to play a more active part in society; and Community empowerment: giving local councils and neighbourhoods more power to take decisions and shape their area (Woodhouse, 2013). Devolution of control from governmental to non-governmental bodies has altered emphasis on governance and reduced local authority access to funds (NAO, 2013), to be replaced by community and private interest grants. In sum, community engagement has become more important than ever to keep up service-delivery standards in times of decreasing budgets.

A widespread approach by local authorities to user involvement in green spaces is collaboration with local communities through Friends groups (Dunnett et al., 2002; Jones, 2002b). Friends groups are constituted community groups whose voluntary commitment to funding, development and/or management of green spaces is officially recognised by the local authority. Once a Friends group is constituted, the local authority would traditionally enter into a community-public partnership with the group to support their activities and development (Dunnett et al., 2002). Facilitation of Friends groups by local authorities has become a condition for accessing grant aid from various funding bodies, just as involvement of local communities in management and decisions-making, often through a Friends group, is now a criteria for achieving the Green Flag Award from the Civic Trust (Speller and Ravenscroft, 2005). Hence, local authorities rely on such groups to contribute to the management of green spaces.

The importance of local authorities’ support in partnerships with such community groups has been stressed in previous studies of green space management. Adequate support from local authorities is needed to ensure that green space quality is kept, despite the capacity of the individual group to engage in maintenance activities (de Magalhães and Carmona, 2008) as well as to facilitate long-term motivation of group members (Jones, 2002b; Speller and Ravenscroft, 2005).

Yet, in the light of the political situation in England, with the enhanced position of communities in decision making (manifested by an increased role of area based bodies, such as Community Assemblies, as the lowest tier of local government) (Kisby, 2010), there is a risk of reduced levels of support available for Friends groups. These area-based bodies are aimed at enabling the general public to have a greater say regarding priorities for public spending within their area. Within the remit of such bodies, budgetary allocation can be decided for expenditure on services such as parks, libraries and street cleaning (ibid.). At the same time local authorities struggle with reduced public funding (NAO, 2013) and it can be assumed that there is a need for Friends groups to support management of green spaces. Therefore, while these groups could become even more crucial in ensuring quality of green spaces they would also have to adjust to limited support from local authorities. Hence, knowledge about the capacity of such partnerships and how much responsibility Friends are able to take on is needed in order to make place-based governance work.
The influence of place-based governance on green space quality

With green spaces being crucial for the life quality of urban inhabitants (Konijnendijk van den Bosch et al., 2013), it is important to keep in mind the effects of place-based governance processes on the quality of green spaces. As reflected in figure 1 above, a place-based governance perspective means that more perspectives and inputs from users (and non-users) need to be taken into consideration in the process of green space management and maintenance. As early as the 1960s, Sherry Arnstein (1969) warned that participatory processes applied blindly become ‘empty rituals’ if they neglect to provide citizens actual effects on process outputs. Green space management and maintenance have become more complex and holds dimensions related to both processes and output. Amidst this complexity, an oversight of research on participation’s outputs in relation to green space quality is needed to benchmark and assess knowledge, trends and gaps to date.

When investigating how green spaces function properly to meet the demands of local users for recreational and other services, their planning, design, establishment and management all must focus on delivering ‘quality’. Lindholst et al. (in press) stress the complexity and subjectivity of the green space quality concept. Attempts have been made to more objectively assess green space quality, as for example under the British Green Flag and Nordic Green Space Award programmes, which both score spaces based on comprehensive criteria sets. The functionality of the green space (does it meet user needs?; is it used accordingly?) is an important aspect of this. Other initiatives have judged green spaces based on the environmental services they provide, applying criteria such as tree cover or biodiversity (Conway et al., 2011). Carmona et al. (2008) note that the ‘delivery of space quality’ in public spaces is vital to holding them from deterioration and not functioning towards their economic, social, and environmental potentials. In the work of Dempsey and Burton (2012) on place-keeping, a central role is reserved for the aim of high quality spaces being those that the users want to ‘visit again and again’. However, more knowledge is needed on how more complex governance and quality provision interact at the level of the individual green space.
Hypothesis and overall aims

The central hypothesis of this dissertation is that a place-based approach can improve green space governance at the site and operational management level, by building on and developing users’ ‘place attachment’, which again can lead to higher quality of green spaces.

The dissertation has two overall aims. The first is to add to the theoretical understanding of the concept of place-based governance in the context of operational green space management (here mostly referred to as green space maintenance), while the second is to derive lessons for the strengthening and development of governance in municipal green space management organisations.

Specific research questions

The study’s research questions set out to elucidate different aspects of the above. In order to obtain insight into place-based governance status and potentials in green space maintenance, they address different dimensions of the ‘park-user-organisation model’ (figure 1 above) and different governance modes in connection to the Danish and English context:

1) To what extent does user participation exist in green space maintenance and how can it be characterised in terms of actors and their coalitions and partnerships?

2) What resources do actors bring into the governance processes and how do they contribute to the capacity of partnerships in terms of providing green space maintenance?

3) What rules, formal as well as informal, shape the interaction between actors? How is this manifested in terms of division of responsibility between actors?

4) What are the potentials and pitfalls of place-based governance as an integrative framework for user participation in green space maintenance in terms of quality of green spaces?

List of manuscripts


D. Fors, H.; Molin, J.F.; Murphy, M.A. & Konijnendijk van den Bosch, C.C.. User participation in urban green space planning and management - for the people or the parks? Under 2nd review after revision by *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*.

Elsevier, the publisher of *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening* has kindly permitted the printing of the accepted paper (A).
The process of this PhD-study

This PhD study started in January 2010. Most of the first year was spent on the overall project plan, literature study and PhD courses. During fall I decided, inspired by a case study course, to ‘go to the field’ and embrace the explorative/inductive nature of my project. I had the chance to do some pilot interviews with contacts in the municipality of Copenhagen and during winter 2010/11 I carried out ten longer, semi-focused interviews with green space managers in ten Danish municipalities. This data became the basis of paper A. In spring 2011 I was given the opportunity for an 8-week study stay in Sheffield, England; working together with local researchers from the University of Sheffield affiliated to the EU funded project ‘MP4: Making Places Profitable, Public and Private Open Spaces’ (2008-13) concerning sustainable long-term management of green spaces (or *Place-keeping*). I also participated in this project, as a member of the Danish team. This stay resulted in data from a number of interviews with managers and Friends groups in three English municipalities: Sheffield (paper B + C), Stockton on Tees (paper C) and Hackney, London (paper C). The processes of getting the two ‘English’ papers to the form they have now, have been long due to e.g. maternity leaves held alternately by the authors. In spring 2013 I was invited to co-author a review paper (paper D) together with colleagues from Sweden and Norway. This paper, which enabled me to take a wider, international perspective on some of the central topics of my study, is now undergoing a second round of peer review. This introductory part of the PhD is a result of a few months intensive process of working with the concept of place-based governance in the context of green space management and maintenance as an overall and unifying frame for the work of the previous four years. Figure 3 illustrates where in the process the different studies and papers have been executed.

Fig. 3. Schematic presentation of the present PhD-process. Dotted lines refer to data collection via interviews.
Definition of concepts

As mentioned, the overall aim of this thesis is to provide a greater understanding of how place-based governance is in the context of urban green space management and maintenance. Focus is put on publicly accessible urban green spaces and the included empirical cases in Denmark and England are all of governance processes in connection to municipally-owned and managed sites. In this section the key concepts and terminology of the thesis, relating to governance between public and community actors and urban green spaces will be explained. The section starts with a general introduction to the concept of governance as well as governance through public involvement. Then green space management is addressed through a thorough introduction to each of the dimensions of the ‘park-organisation-user model’, namely the managers and their organisation, green space users and finally the urban green spaces themselves.

Governance

The definitions of governance are many (Kjær, 2004). In this thesis governance refers to decision-making processes between municipal actors at the operational level (green space managers) and users of the green spaces, which directly or indirectly lead to delivery of a service, namely the physical up-keep if publically accessible urban green spaces. In other words these governance processes happen at the interface between the public sector and the local community.

Governance in the cross-field between principles of social interaction

In explorations of the (welfare) society, it is common to distinguish between three main ‘principles’: state, market and community (e.g. in Klausen, 1990; Evers and Laville, 2004). These are different ideal typological principles for social interaction that are part of the total construction of society. The Third Sector encompasses organisations situated in a ‘tension field’ between the three other principles (Alcock, 2010). The State and other public organisations are those that traditionally have had bureaucracy as their main principle and are recognised by hierarchic control, regulations and professional norms. The Market is characterised by people exchanging goods and competing – often by use of money and by setting prices. Finally, The Community which is based on social relations between individuals, grounded in solidarity, mutual understandings and values, such as households, families and other informal relations (Frotholm and Majgaard, 2002). In between these three principles there are a number of contested borders: between public and private, between non-profit and profit-oriented enterprises and between formal and informal organisations. Every organisation is a complex mix of the three principals of structuring according to the specific historical and cultural context (Frotholm and Majgaard, 2002; Alcock, 2010). Figure 4 provides an overview of the three principles of interaction, referred to as ‘the welfare mix’ by Evers and Laville (2004).
Fig. 4. Three principles of interaction, Based on Evers and Laville (2004).

As described above green space management, although traditionally being a public service, has been influenced by market-based principles as well as ideals of greater community involvement. Thereby the sector has moved into the cross-fields between different principles. In this thesis figure 4 is used as a way of illustrating the resulting complexity within the green space management field. This thesis is specifically focusing on public/community interactions through user participation, both including members of the community, either as individuals (paper A) or through volunteer associations (paper A, B, C), all working non-profit and with varying level of formality in their organisation. To understand possible levels of this formalisation the following figure 5 can be used; it shows how voluntary work can range from completely random and informal - a ‘random gathering’ – over temporary and permanent networks - to actual associations (Based on Klausen (1990)).
Fig. 5. Organisation of volunteers according to level of formalisation, extent and predictableness of actions (from Klausen, 1990).

**Governance through public involvement**

Processes of governance in which community actors take part in decision-making and service-delivery (of what was traditionally only a public matter) are often referred to as public involvement or participation, or civic engagement. The terms *public participation* and *public involvement* are often used interchangeably (Väntänen and Marttunen, 2005). However, the World Bank defines *public involvement* as a process that involves the public in the decision-making procedures of an organisation for example a municipality. *Participation*, on the other hand, should be seen as a type of involvement where the public get direct access to a decision-making process in contrast to e.g. consultation where inputs by the citizen are not necessarily influencing the decisions (World Bank, 1993). Further, The World Bank (2013) defines *civic engagement* as: “the participation of private actors in the public sphere, conducted through direct and indirect interactions of civil society organizations and citizens-at-large with government, multilateral institutions and business establishments to influence decision making or pursue common goals”. The definition also stresses the engagement of citizens and citizen organisations in e.g. delivering public services and the management of public goods. This perspective indicates that civic engagement has potential overlaps with the two previous, by using participation as a synonym. This is in line with a review of existing definitions of civic engagement which concludes that there is no single, widely agreed-upon meaning for the term (Adler and Goggin, 2005).

Titter and McCallum (2006) describe a continuum between democratic and consumerist models in connection to user involvement in public service provision, typically relating to the distinctions be-
between rights inherent in citizenship versus individual choice in the marketplace. Hence, expressions relating to the actor being involved in public decision-making vary accordingly. If used consciously, users, customers and consumers could refer to neo-liberal approaches of rationalising, with user involvement being the feedback mechanism ensuring responsiveness to expressed needs of users - whereas terms such as citizens and residents could imply a democratic approach.

The influential definition of *citizen participation* in “A ladder of Citizen Participation” by Arnstein (1969 pp. 216) claims that “citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic process, to be included in the future”. It is conceptualised as a ladder with eight rungs ranging from levels of non-participation over degrees of tokenism to degrees of citizen power, or (real) participation, where citizens have delegated or full control over the process. Arnstein’s definition of participation from 1969 can be seen as an argumentation for more participatory democracy in times where representative democracy and pure technical (or scientific expertise) were prevailing (Taylor, 1998). Arnstein’s approach has been central to research on participation, but has also been criticised for being outdated and too focused on outputs and for not taking into consideration the process of participation and potentials for collaboration and shared decision-making (Titter and McCallum, 2006).

This has parallels to some of the underlying thoughts behind newer concepts that have emerged in a governance context, such as *network governance*. In network governance, public and private actors form more or less stable linkages and contribute to governance through interactions based on negotiations and discussions (Sørensen and Torting, 2005). These *governance networks* are dominated by horizontal relations in contrast to the vertical approach depicted in connection to the ‘Ladder of Participation’ above. Another relevant concept is that of *co-production*, which has as its main premise that public services are delivered in equal relationships between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours (Boyle and Harris, 2009).

To sum up, the terms involvement, participation and engagement are often used interchangeably and have various definitions, often overlapping each other. Depending on the perspective, processes can relate to approaches inspired by either democratic or marked-oriented models. Engagement and participation can be seen as processes of involvement where users get direct access to decision-making; however this should not necessarily be seen as an ideal in itself.

**Terminology used in the papers**

During the course of this study, different terms have been used to refer to rather similar processes, as can be seen from the use of the terms *public involvement* (paper A), *community involvement* (Paper B and C) and *user participation* (paper D) in the different articles. These terms all refer to situations of (place-based) governance where community actors take part in municipal green space management and maintenance. In the papers B and C, the term partnership is additionally used to refer to the specific nature of the relationship between Friends groups and local authorities in England.
In this dissertation’s introductory part the term ‘user participation’ will be used throughout the text. This is chosen to imply that participants in governance are actively engaged in the up-keep of green spaces – and hence are users.

**Green space management**

The life of an urban green space includes the phases of planning, design, construction and management (based on ‘The urban forestry model’ by Randrup et al. (2005)) – and their possible reoccurrence, for example when a green space has to be redesigned to meet changing user needs. While comprehensive urban planning takes place at a city scale (e.g. Sehested, 2009), detailed local planning of existing green spaces can be seen as a part of the management phase also including activities such as marketing, tree plans, park policy making, environmental education work, Agenda 21 related work, etc. (Randrup and Persson, 2009). As described in the introduction, green space management should from a strategic green space management perspective take place at several interconnected levels (political, tactical or operational) (ibid.). However, with the site-specific perspective of this dissertation, the main focus is put on the operational level. Jansson and Lindgren (2012 pp. 142) suggest that at this level of organisation, management “deals with all types of maintenance, upkeep and development of urban, mainly green, open spaces (for example cleaning, installing and maintaining equipment), and not only maintenance of vegetation”. In other words maintenance is seen as a part of the activities carried out at the operational level of management. According to Gustavsson et al. (2005), maintenance is limited to technical activities at the operational level and can be seen as less dynamic and creative than management which is influenced by the tactical and strategic level (ibid.), which in turn, brings in e.g. human relations and organizational aspects (communication and collaboration) (Jansson and Lindgren, 2012). However, in practice green space governance and management are often divided between different departments (Johnston, 2012). In line with the place-based approach of this dissertation, management at the operational level is seen as optimal for including users in daily onsite activities and in this way (potentially) create governance in and around specific sites. This can include technical maintenance operations, which have been described as ‘the day-to-day manifestation of place-keeping’ (or sustainable long-term management) (Burton et al., 2014).

In approaching the challenges of managing public urban green spaces, the ‘park-organisation-user model’ (see figure 1 above; based on Randrup and Persson, 2009) provides a framework of three dimensions which can be used to introduce the different roles around management and potential governance processes. The public and community actors here are named the municipal green space managers (and their organisation) and the users of the green spaces. The third entity refers to the actual public urban green spaces. In the subsequent sections each of the three entities of the model will be defined and variations in terminology across the papers will be clarified.
Managers and their organisation

In green space management, the leading actors within the municipal organisation have been defined as the formal decision makers (the politicians) and their administrative staff (Randrup and Persson, 2009). This thesis only addresses the administrative level and in particular green space managers being those responsible for delivering the management and maintenance of green spaces in a municipality. The latter can involve aspects of user participation (depending on the mode of governance present). The specific work tasks of managers vary due to great differences in municipal green space administrations across municipalities.

Terminology used in the papers

In paper A green space managers refers to the members of staff responsible for planning the physical maintenance of green spaces. This paper addresses green space managers’ perspectives on public involvement in maintenance in a number of Danish municipalities; hence the operational level is in focus. However, attention is given to the tactical and political level as well as cross-sector collaborations to provide the best understanding of how governance through public involvement is integrated (or not) in the public system.

In paper B, in line with terminology used more commonly in the UK, the term local authority refers to a municipal department dealing with long term green space management. In connection to the specific empirical case, SCC (Sheffield City Council) was used as a reference to staff with responsibility over delivery of green space projects in partnership with community groups. In paper C, which deals with several local authorities, interviewed local authority representatives are referred to as green space managers. Paper B and C are concentrating on the English context, where user participation has a long tradition and is an integral part of green space management departments. Community engagement is often linked to projects (to which e.g. Friends have raised funding). This work is related to specific green spaces; hence focus is again put on the operational level. However, the tactical level is also represented by one interview with the community projects manager.

In the review paper (paper D), a broader terminology was necessary. For simplification purposes, all actors potentially receiving input from participation processes are referred to as administration or administrative actors – relating most often to municipal entities (and affiliated staff) planning, managing, or maintaining green spaces. Most of the included articles were focusing on the operational level e.g. in connection to physical participation in forest management (Townsend, 2006) or Friends’ engagement in management of local parks (Jones, 2002a). However, part of the research articles concentrate on cases of user participation at a tactical and political level, for example in connection to tree inventories at a city scale (Bloniarz and Ryan III, 1996) or by addressing how green space strategies are implemented across counties (Konijnendijk, 1999).

Green space users

In this thesis the terms citizens, residents, volunteers, community and users are used as a reference to community actors (potentially) participating in management of publically accessible urban green
spaces. The terms are used neutrally to keep an explorative approach to what public involvement (as an important component of place-based governance) can be. The variation in use of terms reflects the process towards theoretical clarification, as well as the specific scope, context and perspective of each paper. However, theoretically the terms citizen and user can be loaded in terms of democracy view and governance approach. As referred to earlier, Tritter and McCallum (2006) describe a continuum between democratic and consumerist models in connection to user involvement in public services, typically relating to the distinctions between rights inherent in citizenship versus individual choice in the market. If used consciously, users, customer and consumer could refer to neo-liberal approaches of rationalising with user involvement being the feedback mechanism ensuring responsiveness to the expressed needs of users; whereas terms such as citizens and residents could imply a democratic approach. Agger and Lund (2011), in connection to collaborative innovation in the public sector, describe how the citizen concept has changed in the previous decades when it comes to the role local communities are expected to have in governance processes. The perspective of the citizen as a ‘client’ was prevalent until the 1980s and is closely linked to the liberal democracy conception where citizen mainly participate in government matters in relation to elections and public debate. The client is electing political representatives, but otherwise has a passive role. During the 1980s, with the rise if the New Public Management-paradigm (NPM), a more active role was introduced. ‘The customer’ was here regarded as a user of public services who contributes to governance through their choices, which are expressed via e.g., quality evaluation procedures and user boards. In the mid-1990s the active role of the ‘co-producer’ occurred. The public sector was facing more complicated tasks (‘wicked problems’) and with this an introduction of governance processes arose in which citizens can contribute with their resources and experience-based knowledge. This role is more collectively oriented and based on mutual dialogue. Further, Agger and Lund (ibid.) point at an emerging role, namely that of ‘the public innovator’ which is a user contributing to the development of public services and policies through creative processes. Although the four citizen roles have been introduced in different decades, they are still all in use in the public sector.

Another term used is volunteers, which (as briefly introduced earlier) refers to individuals doing voluntary work that can be defined as unpaid work, which can be left freely, and without any sanctions. The work is formally organised – often on a specific cause and with a carrying idea. Volunteers are doing the work entirely on behalf of engagement, motivation and passion (Ibsen and Habermann, 2002). Volunteering can be seen as a part of the Third Sector and is located in the tension field between the public, community and market principles as also illustrated in figure 4 above. In this thesis volunteering is seen as one way in which community actors can be participate in green space management.

**Terminology used in the papers**

In paper A the expressions citizens, residents and volunteers are used interchangeably. However, citizens is used as a general notion referring to members of the community – formally organised as well as unorganised, whereas volunteers are organised individuals working for a common cause. Finally, residents indicate that the individuals have local relation to the green space because of its location close to where they live.
The term *community* is used in **paper B** and **C** dealing with the English context. Community involvement/engagement is a widespread term in connection to involvement of civil actors in green space management (for example used in Dunnett et al., 2002; Jones, 2002b; Jones, 2002a; Speller and Ravenscroft, 2005) and is also reflected in the interviewed staff members’ titles being e.g., ‘community projects officer’. In paper C the term also refers to community actors having a community associated to the particular green spaces, most often because they are local inhabitants, but the community concept is not treated as such. Paper B and C focus on ‘Friends’ as one way for community members to be organised (which due to their formal set-up also can be seen as a part of the third sector).

*Users*, in **paper D**, refer to community members contributing to management of municipal urban green spaces. This term was chosen to imply that, in connection to onsite management activities, the contributing individuals need to be present and hence **use** the relevant green space - as opposed to participation in the initial planning of new sites, where involved civil actors could be seen as potential **users** of future green spaces.

**Urban green spaces**
The final component (and third corner of the triangle) of the ‘park-organisation-user model’ is representing the sites forming the context of user participation in urban green space management. *Urban green spaces, parks and urban forests* are terms that are often used to refer to the urban green resource. They are all situated in an *urban* context, which here is defined broadly as being in and nearby build-up areas (as in Randrup et al., 2005) as opposed to rural areas.

In this dissertation *urban green spaces* are defined as individual trees, smaller designed areas and larger nature-like sites in connection to build up areas. This perspective is based on the definition by Randrup and Persson (2009) in connection to municipal green space management in the Scandinavian countries. The term has also been used in a report on improvement of urban green spaces in Great Britain to emphasize that the urban green environments are about more than parks, gardens and playgrounds, as well as to highlight the distinction between ‘green spaces’ (that consists predominantly of unsealed, permeable, ‘soft’ surfaces such as soil, grass, shrubs and trees) and ‘grey spaces’ (that consists predominantly of sealed, impermeable, ‘hard’ surfaces such as concrete, paving or tarmac). It is the predominant character of the site that determines if a space is grey or green and hence green spaces can include grey elements and vice versa (Dunnett et al., 2002).

*Park* is another term, often used in relation to green spaces in urban areas. In a typology by Dunnett et al. (2022 pp. 30) parks are seen as one type of recreation green space and are defined as: “areas of green space specifically designed for public access and enjoyment and combining a variety of landscape and horticultural elements (sometimes including semi-natural habitats) and facilities for the public (including buildings) and in some cases incorporating sports facilities and/or play areas”.

30
Urban Forestry (and Urban Forest as the green space it deals with) is another concept, often used in connection to green spaces in build-up environments and has, since it was introduced during the 1960s, been defined in various ways (Konijnendijk et al., 2006). In an analysis of selected urban forestry terminologies in Europe and North America, Konijnendijk et al. (ibid.) found that urban forestry (and thereby Urban Forests) "has gradually become accepted in its broad, comprehensive form as referring to all woods and trees in and around urban centres" (pp. 99). The inclusion of all woody elements is in line with ‘The Urban Forestry Matrix’ - the framework which forms a base for a European definition of urban forestry. The matrix includes urban woods and woodlands as well as individual and groups of trees in paved areas (e.g. street trees, trees on squares, lines of trees) and in other spaces (such as parks gardens, derelict land and industrial sites). All types are to be found in or near urban areas (both private and public as well as publicly accessible and inaccessible) and only relate to woody vegetation elements (Randrup et al., 2005).

Figure 6 shows how the three terms potentially have overlaps, and in some cases also differ due to the type of vegetation in focus. Urban green space is including sites with all types of vegetation (woody and non-woody) as long as the spaces are predominately ‘green’. Urban forests, on the other hand, are only consisting of woody vegetation, but this concept includes elements such as street trees in pavements, which in some cases could be predominately ‘grey’. Parks in urban settings can be seen as a subset of the two previous terms, depending on which type of vegetation is in focus.

![Diagram of Urban Green Space, Urban Park, and Urban Forest](image)

**Fig. 6. The three concepts of green spaces in urban settings – and their potential overlaps.**

**Terminology used in the papers**

In paper A the term urban green space is used. The examples of green spaces related to in the empirical data are guided by which areas the individual interviewee works with. These range from urban parks, to village water ponds over urban forests.

In paper B + C urban green spaces is used as a general expression, whereas the specific cases are all of urban parks of varying size, content and use.
In paper D all three terms introduced above are keywords used in the literature search, whereas the phrase *urban green space* (since it is seen as the broadest term) is used throughout the article to describe the green resources forming the scene for user participation activities.
Theoretical and research framework

The focus of this thesis is on governance in connection to operational green space management, where operational management of green spaces is seen as not only encompassing technical and biophysical aspects, but also political, cultural and social processes which can potentially be included in the physical management procedures through place-based decision-making. This calls for approaches and concepts that can help understanding how governance is organised in the context of green space management. Therefore a theoretical and research framework is needed that combines approaches to green space management with theories of governance. In the subsequent sections the theoretical and research frame of this dissertation will be outlined through a summary of included approaches to governance and concepts of green space management. The framework builds on the definitions of concepts as provided in the previous chapter.

Theoretical approach to governance

Governance can be understood as “governing or steering a policy domain” (Arnouts et al., 2012, pp. 44) by governmental and/or non-governmental actors. To be able to understand these activities it is not enough to focus on the actors and their agency (ability to affect their surroundings); it is also necessary, according to Arnouts et al. (2012) to look at the way they are organised around their substance (typically being the discourses of policy). In other words, governance can be seen as the organisation of the content in a policy arrangement (ibid.). This is illustrated in table 1.

Table 1. The main components of policy arrangements (based on Leroy and Arts, 2006; and Arnouts et al., 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Leroy and Arts (2006) changing policy making will at different stages have a temporary stabilisation of content and organisation. This is central to the so-called Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA) which provides a systematic framework that can be used to analytically link changes in day-to-day policy practices to broader, structural changes in contemporary society.

Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA)

A policy arrangement is defined as “as the temporary stabilisation of the content and organisation of a particular policy domain at a certain policy level or over several policy levels – in case of multi-level governance” (Leroy and Arts, 2006, pp. 13). These temporary stabilisations are named institutionalisations (Arnouts et al., 2012) and by putting focus on the structure aspects (rather than the agency) an institutional approach is taken (Leroy and Arts, 2006). In connection to environmental governance, Leroy and Arts describe three structural properties of policy arrangements, namely the Resources, Rules and Discourses (ibid.). The Actors (comprising the forth policy dimension) will
either be constrained or enabled by these properties (as well as by overall structural processes such as globalisation). Actors will therefore try to advance their interest by mobilising their resources, make use of rules, frame discourses or form coalitions (Arts and van Tatenhove, 2006). In this way all four dimensions are interrelated and constitute what is called a policy arrangement. In table 2 a detailed description of the four interrelated dimensions is given.

Table 2: Description of the four policy dimensions in PAA (based on Arts and Leroy, 2006) and their relation to agency and structure, the latter divided into the governance part (organisation) and the substance of governance processes (content).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Discourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governmental and non-governmental actors, between whom, coalitions* can emerge</td>
<td>Relates first of all to power, e.g. in terms of the relative power of govern-mental and non-governmental actors, referring to the ability that such actors have to achieve a desired outcome through interactions with others</td>
<td>The rules that shape the interactions between actors, in terms of formal pro-cedures and informal routines, delineating what actors do and do not do in their dealings with one another</td>
<td>The ideas, concepts, story lines and the like, being the subjects of governance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* defined as groups of at least two actors that work together to achieve a certain goal

These interactions of actors might result in internal change in structures in one policy arrangement (Arts and van Tatenhove, 2006), which together with external change caused by trends and events (Arnouts et al., 2012), such as change in adjacent policy arrangements (Arts and Leroy, 2006), can lead to de-stabilisation, or change. After a while the policy arrangement will temporarily become fixed (or institutionalised) again (Leroy and Arts, 2006; Arnouts et al., 2012).

Governance arrangements (GA) and shifts in governance modes

Arnouts et al. (2012) use the organisational parts of the PAA as operationalization in a framework of four ideal-typical governance arrangements (GA), which can be applied in studies of modes and shifts in governance. In this approach Discourses are omitted since they do not relate directly to governance processes (but are the substance hereof). Arnouts (ibid.) name the three governance dimensions actors, power and rules. Besides these three dimensions, the GA-approach reflects four different modes of governance. These modes refer to the situations of governance by government or with or without government, which here are termed hierarchical, closed and open co-governance and self-governance. In table 3 a comprehensive overview of the four ideal-typical GAs is given.

Table 3: Description of ideal-typical governance arrangements by Arnouts et al. (2012)
Because of the organisational focus of this approach, shifts in a governance mode are influenced by actors’ actions in connection to power and rules. Arnouts and colleagues (ibid) describe the four governance modes as a continuum from ‘old’ modes (hierarchical and closed co-governance) to ‘new’ modes (open co-governance and self-governance). Shifts in governance will depart from old modes towards new modes (ibid.) or from state-centred modes to user- and market-centred modes.

Application in this dissertation

In figure 7, the application of the selected approaches to governance is illustrated. The three governance dimensions of the GA-approach have served as the focal points of the empirical studies included in this thesis, i.e. paper A, B and C, which all aim to increase the understanding of different aspects of governance processes. Paper A takes a (highly) explorative approach to the study of governance arrangements in Danish green space maintenance from the perspective of a number of green space managers. Therefore all governance dimensions were included to explore what community actors these managers form coalitions with as well as how their interaction is organised. Furthermore, the analyses of these dimensions were operationalised through the four ‘modes of governance’ to gain understanding of where in the policy arrangements shifts towards increased user participation are occurring. Paper B and C, on the other hand, have a specific actor focus in terms of partnerships between English local authorities and Friends groups. Hence, the actor dimension is fixed in these papers and not a part of the analysis. As for paper B that concentrates on the division of responsibility between these specific actors, the emphasis is put on the rules in play for actor interactions. More specifically, this is done by using the responsibility aspects of the rules dimension in the GA-approach (for more details see paper B) as a searchlight for analysing the various dimensions of the place-keeping concept (which are outlined in the following section). Finally, the third empirically-based paper (C) sets out to increase the understanding of the capacity of partnerships between local authorities and community actors in the context of increased localism in England. Partnership capacity is here understood as “the ability of cross-sector partnerships to withstand and respond to changes in support to remain effectively involved in place-keeping practices” (paper C, pp. 6). This has obvious links to the resource/power dimension of governance, which focuses on the ability of actors (and coalitions) to achieve a desired outcome. Therefore, within the theoretical frame of this thesis, paper C can be understood as relating to the power aspect. However,
The context of governance, in this thesis, is municipal green space management at the operational level (‘maintenance’). Therefore concepts of green space management which embrace operational as well as strategic aspects (to ensure that place-based governance can feed into more strategic decisions and is not seen in isolation) form the last dimension of the theoretical framework. In their re-
view of different concepts of management in relation to green spaces, Jansson and Lindgren (2012) found that there are many approaches to the management of green spaces, but only few acknowledge the importance of user inputs. Two of these are the strategic green space management approach by Randrup and Persson (2009) and the more recent concept of place-keeping by Dempsey et al. (2014).

**Strategic green space management (SGSM)**
The Strategic Green Space Management approach (SGSM) (Randrup and Persson, 2009) has already been touched upon in the introduction section of this thesis. It refers to the ‘manager’ dimension of the ‘park-organisation-user model’, by providing further details on how a green space management should ideally be organised. The main perspectives of SGSM are that management of green spaces should be carried out at strategic, tactical and operational levels to ensure that long-term goals are formulated and accomplished. This should be based on cross-sectoral collaboration including interaction with users for example through promotion of achieved goals. However, as pointed out previously, the original version of the ‘park-organisation-user model’ (which is a central component of SGSM) does not allow for users to influence green spaces directly through physical participation. This can be related to the strong focus on NPM in relation to green space management where outsourcing of maintenance is common (ibid.). In other words, it can be argued that this concept reflects what Arnouts et al. (2012) refer to as ‘old’ modes of governance. Yet, with the adaptations made in figure 1, the model with its three interrelated entities is helpful in illustrating the actors and potential processes between them, as well as the output of these, namely the urban green spaces.

**Place-keeping (PK)**
The place-keeping concept (PK) has been explored in relation to the earlier mentioned EU MP4 project and was in a previous version presented by Dempsey and Burton (2012), while a comprehensive introduction to the approach was published recently (Dempsey et al., 2014). The PK concept introduces an ongoing time aspect to green spaces by suggesting that PK is integrated with the place-making phase and thereby acknowledges the ever ongoing work of management and rehabilitation of existing spaces with maintenance operations and systemic park policy making. PK focuses on the local or site-specific level, but takes into consideration interrelations with policies at regional, national and international scales. Central to this concept are several interrelated dimensions relating to process and product, which should be taken into consideration in both the making and keeping of green spaces to ensure that quality is sustained - namely partnerships, policy and governance as well as funding, evaluation and design & management, as well as coordination hereof (Dempsey and Smith, 2014). All of these are described in details in table 4. As one of the dimensions indicates, partnerships between public, private and civic actors are seen as crucial to ensure the needed knowledge, skills and resources (Dempsey et al., 2014). For the purpose of this thesis it should be emphasised that maintenance in this concept is seen as a part of the design & management dimension.
Table 4: Description of the six place-keeping dimensions and the coordination hereof (based on Dempsey and Smith, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy</strong></td>
<td>Supports place-keeping at different scales: national, regional, local and site-specific, e.g. such as citywide green space strategies underpinned by national policies or international conventions as the European Landscape Convention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governance</strong></td>
<td>Relationship between a range of stakeholders involved in decision-making which can be influenced by the marked-led model or the user-centred model or lie closer to the traditional state-centred model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partnerships</strong></td>
<td>Association of two or more partners with agreed shared responsibility for delivery of place-keeping. Can be formal or informal and are closely related to the governance model in play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>Refers to a range of financial models used for efficient long-term management which is important since place-keeping is a non-statutory service. Examples are funding from public-private partnerships or donations and charitable organisation funding made available for community organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design and management</strong></td>
<td>The design of a place relates to the making of high-quality places for people. Management is about maintaining and enhancing its quality to maximise the benefits for users. These activities are highly interrelated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Monitors the process and product of place-keeping by assessing the economic, social and environmental benefits such as awards, satisfaction measurements and evaluation of procurement. With place-keeping being a holistic concept the need for a comprehensive approach is stressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coordination</strong></td>
<td>Highlights the complexities and the interdependency of the above dimensions and the need to coordinate these. In practice this can be through a long-term green space strategy or management plan. In involving stakeholders, a strategic and local focus is needed to ensure knowledge transfer and profile-raising.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just as the SGSM approach, PK is normative in its description of ‘good’ open space management (which includes green spaces). In PK green space managers (as representatives of local authorities who are often land owners) have a central role. Yet, the concept focuses on partnerships as a way to achieve sustainable long-term management through activities related to governance as well as operational management. Thereby PK opens up to user involvement at all levels of green space management and can be said to have closer links to what Arnouts et al. (2012) refer to as ‘new modes of governance’.
**Application of SGSM and PK in this thesis**

Besides indirectly serving as a conceptual frame for place-based governance in green space management, SGSM, represented by the ‘park-organization-user model’, is also a central analytical frame in paper D. Here, research findings and propositions are charted along this framework to relate participation process descriptions to green space management dynamics and allow the illustration of which dimensions of green space quality are directly or indirectly impacted by participation. In paper A focus is placed on governance processes between managers and users in the context of green space maintenance. In this way the three entities of the ‘park-organization-user model’ are in play. However, SGSM is not used explicitly as a concept in this paper.

PK is applied in connection to paper B and C, which are dealing with the English context. In paper B, PK is used directly in the conceptual platform by forming the frame on which the ‘rules of responsibility’ in connection to the different governance modes are operated. In paper C, PK plays a more indirect role by building on the work conducted in the MP4 project, through exploration of a number of emerging themes of partnership capacity (derived from the project) in the context of specific cases. Special attention is thereby given to the PK dimension ‘partnership’ (in combination with the ‘governance’ dimension via the focus on *power* - as explained above).

A graphical overview of the use of the two green space management concepts is given in figure 8. The figure also shows their relations to the concepts of governance, thus providing an overall theoretical frame of this thesis.
Fig. 8. The theoretical framework of this dissertation. Relations between governance dimensions and green space management concepts divided into process or output focus, as well as operational approach used in the four papers (grey boxes). Dotted boxes indicate implicit use of concepts.
**Methodological framework**

This section presents the methodological framework of this thesis through a description of the inductive process and the explorative methodology. Methods used in the individual studies are linked to the philosophical approach taken as well as the theoretical frame presented above.

**Philosophy of science perspectives and overall methodology**

The approach taken in this PhD-project can be subscribed to a pragmatic worldview where emphasis is put on the problem researched rather than on specific methods and commitment to one system of philosophy (Creswell, 2009). Green space management is a highly applied and interdisciplinary field which encompasses elements of natural sciences, social science and the humanities that are applied in practice (Konijnendijk et al., 2005). This type of approach is also reflected in the concept of ‘place’ (Cheng et al., 2003), another key perspective from which this dissertation emerges. The project is focusing on the social aspects of the green space management field and is directing its attention to newly emerging practices of governance in green space management – a field which is not well researched. Therefore an explorative and inductive approach was taken in order to create enhanced understanding and generate theoretical clarification.

The application of theories in connection to the three empirically based papers emerged at a late stage of the processes, something which for example is reflected in the way paper C is based on emerging themes from the MP4 projects and in itself forms as a potential pilot study for further research. Also the concept of place-based governance and this theoretical frame were developed during the final write up of the thesis. While a pragmatic worldview often manifests itself in a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2009), this thesis is taking a qualitative stance in the three empirically-based papers. However, the review paper is inspired by the systematic literature review methodology which is quantitative in its nature.

**The inductive process of the thesis – and case selection**

Retrospectively the Danish (paper A) can be seen as dealing with a (potential) shift from ‘governance by government’ to ‘governance with government’. To explore how these changes in governance arrangement and practices were approached in the Danish municipalities, a methodology was needed that could give a broad, but nuanced insight to the occurring practices and reveal what key issues were in play. The perspective of the green space managers was chosen, since these were perceived as potential ‘gatekeepers’ as green space management practices have traditionally been a municipal matter (at least in Denmark). To obtain a sound insight in the status of user participation in municipal green space maintenance, a stratified sampling approach was used. First of all, all 98 Danish municipalities were divided into five groups according to their size (number of inhabitants). Then one municipality from each group was chosen randomly according to geographical location (western or eastern part of Denmark), resulting in ten participating municipalities.
The two English papers, on the other hand, arose from a political situation which could potentially lead to shifts from ‘governance with government’ to ‘governance without government’. Through the wider MP4 project my English co-authors already had contact with a number of community groups with established partnerships with Sheffield City Council, which was one of the partners in the MP4 research project. These partnerships became the focal point of the first round of interviews in Sheffield. The interviewees in Stockton-on-Tees were arranged by one of my contacts from the European Forum on Urban Forestry, an annual international meeting of urban green space practitioners and researchers. At first they were meant as pilot interviews for the Sheffield study, but we later decided to include them in paper C, to give further nuances to the exploration of partnership capacity. The two initial rounds of interviews were later supplemented by additional interviews in Hackney, London (paper C), which again was selected for its established partnership approach.

Methodologically, the English part of this thesis can be seen as a part of the inductive process, since the format of the initial rounds of interviews was inspired by the interviews I had carried out in Denmark. Through a brainstorming process the knowledge gained through the Danish study was merged with the knowledge held by my English colleagues about the local English context. This knowledge sharing process resulted in two interview guides; one for the managers (see appendix 1 in paper C) and one for the Friends (see appendix 2 in paper C).

Finally, the review paper, with its focus on the effects of user participation on green space quality, can be seen as building on top of the insights gained from the empirical studies. Especially the Danish interviews served as a catalyst, because of the revealed highly technical focus of the green space managers. Service-delivery seems to be in focus in Danish municipalities and in some cases doubt about the relevance of user participation in this context occurred. Hence, a call for comprehensive knowledge about the possible links between arguments for involvement of users and the quality of green spaces was discovered, as well as a need to find out what we actually have empirical evidence for (and thereby can fed into new policy-discourses about user participation at the operational level). In other words, the inductive process affecting paper D was primarily based on the results derived from paper A, rather than a part of a methodological evolution.
Case studies

As illustrated in figure 10 (below) the studies included in this thesis can also be seen as a series of case studies - based on which dimension of the ‘park-organisation-user model’ is in focus. While paper A is based on empirical data derived from interviews with green space managers, papers B and C derive from interviews with both managers and users working in partnership around green space management. Finally, paper D (the review paper) is focusing on the effects of user participation on green space quality.

The inductive process is also reflected in the way the data collection was built up across the papers. Paper A, based on the initial data collection in the PhD-process, was the most explorative of the papers. The interviews with the Danish green space managers in this paper were initiated to identify problems within the new (emerging) situation of ‘governance with government’. The interview themes guiding these interviews were derived from a literature study conducted in the initial phase of the project, as well as a number of pilot interviews with contact persons in the Municipality of Copenhagen. Paper A has the broadest ‘sample’ and the cases were selected randomly, because there was no previous case identification to build the study on. Understanding from this study then fed into the English papers through knowledge sharing and into the review paper via identification of a specific problem. Paper B is the most explorative of the two English papers, since it is based on interviews in Sheffield (which was based on an interview-guide tested in pilot interviews in Stockton). It was through these interviews the identification of partnership capacity was identified as a key issue to explore further in paper C, by supplementing with interviews in Hackney, London (and including the pilot interviews from Stockton). For more details on the inductive development of the partnership capacity themes, see paper C.
In summary, Paper A can be seen as including ten separate cases of municipalities that are involving users in green space maintenance in a context where this is traditionally a government matter, seen from the managers perspective. Paper B is then including one case from Sheffield, with embedded units of four partnerships between user groups (more specifically Friends) and the Sheffield City Council. Next, paper C is based on three different cases of municipalities working in partnership with a number community groups. Each of these cases has embedded units, representing each group of Friends. The number of cases, as well as number of interviews with respectively managers and user is shown in figure 10 below.

![Fig. 10. The methodological framework of this dissertation.](image)

**Interviews and empirical data-analysis**

All included interviews were semi-structured, to e.g. allow for flexibility in the order of the questions asked (Bryman, 2008) and anticipate emerging themes during the interviews.

However, in the ten Danish interviews, which were the most explorative, the interview guide primarily served as checklist of themes (see appendix 1) to touch upon, which allowed for new issues to occur. The interview questions concerned the actor set-up in green space maintenance, with focus on the current role of non-governmental actors in collaboration with governmental actors. Interviewees were also asked about their perception of changing allocation of responsibility in the light
of user participation (relating to rules) as well as possible power shifts (resource dimension). Moreover, they were asked to reflect on their own role and the impact of possible changes in governance arrangements on this role. The precondition of ‘public involvement being desirable’, in line with the prevalent discourse on enhanced user participation in green space maintenance, was used as a starting point for discussion on e.g. managers’ perceived benefits from involving the public. Challenges resulting from public involvement for professional managers were also discussed. These interviews were carried out during the winter 2010/11 and lasted between 47 and 96 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. The transcriptions were reviewed for emerging themes and coded (in Microsoft Word). This data was then analysed and discussed using the theoretical perspectives of PAA (Liefferink, 2006) and the ‘modes of governance’ (Arnouts et al., 2012). Additionally, in the result section of this thesis the examples of user participation given in the ten interviews have been reflected upon in relation to the ‘organisation of volunteers’ by Klausen (1990) (figure 11).

The English interviews had a more tight structure and closely followed the questions in the interview-guides. Interview questions were designed to capture information about cross-sector partnerships in green spaces, from the perspective of respectively managers and representatives of Friends groups. The questions concerned aspects of responsibility division between partners, as well as the capacity of groups to take over enhanced responsibility, even though the specific theories were not applied before later (see appendix 1 and 2 in paper C for interview guides). The interviews were carried out in 2011 and 2012 and lasted approximately one hour each. The interviews were audio recorded and afterwards transcribed and coded for emerging themes. This led to the identification of the responsibility and capacity perspectives.

Introduction to cases
Below, background knowledge about the cases included in the three empirical papers is briefly presented in four tables. The tabulated information should serve as a basis for the following sections where the findings of this thesis are described.

The ten Danish cases (paper A)
Below overall information about the ten Danish cases is provided. Besides names of the municipalities and their number of inhabitants, table 5 also gives details about the educational background and present job description of the interviewees. On some interviews two staff members participated.
Table 5. Overview of municipalities included in paper A, as well as the interviewees' background and job description.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>No. of inhabitants*</th>
<th>No. of interviewees</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Job description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Frederiksborg  | 96,718              | 2                   | 1. Horticultural graduate  
2. Landscape architect                                                      | 1. City head gardener  
2. Work experience trainee                                                |
| Horsens        | 81,957              | 1                   | Horticultural graduate                                                     | Responsible for maintenance and parks                         |
| Holbæk         | 69,550              | 2                   | 1. Landscape architect  
2. Landscape gardener and technician                                          | Responsible for planning maintenance (shared responsibility)     |
| Hjørring       | 66,803              | 1                   | Forest- and landscape engineer + landscape gardener                         | Head of green space maintenance                               |
| Hoje Taastrup  | 47,664              | 1                   | Landscape gardener and Park diploma                                        | Head of park department                                        |
| Vejen          | 42,768              | 1                   | Landscape architect                                                      | Responsible for development and maintenance of parks           |
| Tønder         | 39,710              | 1                   | Forester                                                                   | Responsible of park maintenance                               |
| Halsnæs       | 31,077              | 1                   | Agronomist                                                                | Coordinator for water and nature                                |
| Odder          | 21,721              | 1                   | Landscape gardener                                                        | Head of maintenance                                           |
| Ishøj          | 20,606              | 2                   | 1. Forest- and landscape engineer  
2. Forest- and landscape engineer-student                                    | 1. Head of maintenance of urban green spaces  
2. Trainee                                                        |

*Indenrigs- og Sundhedsministeriet (2011)

The English cases (paper B and C)

In this subsection the three English cases are presented with details on their embedded units, namely the individual Friends groups and the parks they are affiliated to (table 6, 7 and 8). Abbreviations subsequently used for the different groups/green spaces are given in brackets after the name of the green spaces. Besides the interviews with members from each Friends group six interviews with managers (three in Sheffield, two in Hackney, London and one in Stockton-on-Tees) were also conducted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sheffield green space</th>
<th>Firth Park (FoFP)</th>
<th>Sheaf Valley Park (FoSV)</th>
<th>Porter Valley (FoPV)</th>
<th>Millhouses Park (FoMP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location in Sheffield</td>
<td>Approx. 5 km north east of city centre</td>
<td>Directly behind Sheffield train station</td>
<td>From the edge of Peak District National Park to city</td>
<td>Approx. 5 km southwest of city centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type and character of green space</td>
<td>Victorian park with open grassed areas and ancient woodland and listed clock tower building</td>
<td>Transitional green space in city centre on steep gradient with amphitheatre</td>
<td>River corridor with restored dams, wheel houses, weirs and ancient woodland</td>
<td>Linear city park along part of the river Sheaf with open grassed areas and woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of green space</td>
<td>16 ha</td>
<td>14 ha</td>
<td>10 km long</td>
<td>13 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site established</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Regenerated 2009</td>
<td>Parks created along Porter Brook between 1855-1938</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type and extent of user group activities</td>
<td>Low level maintenance activities (e.g. litter picks), fund-raising for park improvements, events organisation, involvement in master plan of clock tower area</td>
<td>Events organisation, guided walks, involvement in regeneration decision-making process, community representation</td>
<td>Conservation group, events and talks organisation, guided walks, conduct user/ ecology surveys, fund-raising</td>
<td>Events organisation, fund-raising for park improvements, low level maintenance activities (e.g. tree removal), park security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of members in user group</td>
<td>30 (&lt;12 active)</td>
<td>6 (2-3 active)</td>
<td>&gt; 470 (10 on committee)</td>
<td>Approx. 300 (&lt;10% active)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other info: FG member characteristics</td>
<td>Most retired and over 60 and female. Young people and ethnic minorities are well-represented in the membership</td>
<td>Very small group for a site which is still in a state of flux because of Park Hill flats not fully occupied</td>
<td>Most retired and over 60 but physically active. No ethnic minority groups represented</td>
<td>Consider themselves representative of the area, but young people are a focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hackney green space</td>
<td>Robin Hood Community Garden (RHCG)</td>
<td>Clissold Park (CP)</td>
<td>Clapton Square (CS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type and character of green space</strong></td>
<td>Community garden on council-owned land once earmarked for development</td>
<td>Traditional Victorian park with Grade II listed Clissold House incorporating café</td>
<td>Urban square in a conservation area with regenerated play area, historic water fountain and community planting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size of green space</strong></td>
<td>0.1 ha</td>
<td>22.5 ha</td>
<td>0.6 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site established</strong></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1889 with restoration in 2012</td>
<td>1816</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friends Group established</strong></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type and extent of user group activities</strong></td>
<td>Garden for growing fruit and vegetables including orchard</td>
<td>Restoration and management activities of Clissold House have dominated</td>
<td>Gardening, wildlife habitat creation and event organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of members in user group</strong></td>
<td>15 (5 active members)</td>
<td>110 on contact list (5 active members)</td>
<td>110 on contact list (&lt;5 active members)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other info re: FG member characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Mix of age groups but want to engage disabled and very old people</td>
<td>Active members are older with gender mix but ethnic minority groups not well-represented</td>
<td>Active members are 40-50; younger and more members needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8. Characteristics of Stockton-on-Tees Friends groups and parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stockton-on-Tees green spaces</th>
<th>Ropner Park</th>
<th>Newham Grange Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type and character of green space</strong></td>
<td>Victorian park with large lake</td>
<td>Formal park with large expanses of grass and newly established woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size of green space</strong></td>
<td>15 ha</td>
<td>16 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site established</strong></td>
<td>1893, regenerated in 2002</td>
<td>1940s, regenerated in 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friends Group established</strong></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type and extent of user group activities</strong></td>
<td>Fund-raising for park improvements (including benches), events organisation (including bandstand concerts), run the council-owned café</td>
<td>Events organisation, involvement in regeneration decision-making process, practical maintenance activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of members in user group</strong></td>
<td>145 (6 active)</td>
<td>60 (5-12 active)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other info re: FG member characteristics</strong></td>
<td>There are younger people but majority of members are older and female.</td>
<td>Active members are over 60 and female.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Literature review methodology

Paper D is based on a review of scientific articles identified through literature search, based on the search terms ['participation’ OR ‘involvement’ OR ‘engagement’] AND ['green spac*' OR ‘park*' OR ‘urban forest*']. Thereby the two categories of search terms reflect the two main concepts contributing to the theoretical frame of this thesis, namely that of governance including users and that of green space management. The conceptual frame of this thesis is also directly reflected in paper D, which also uses an adapted version of the ‘park-user-organisation model’ by Randrup and Persson (2009) to guide the analysis of the reviewed papers.

The review method of paper D is inspired by the systematic literature methodology (as described by e.g. Roy et al., 2012). The review includes 31 articles from peer-reviewed scientific journals. These articles were found through a series of literature searches in the databased Scopus and Web of Science. Further selection of which articles to include was done through a set of criteria as well as a review of abstracts and snowballing. The full procedure of the review and the underlying considerations behind this are described comprehensively in the method section of paper D.
Findings

This thesis contributes to the understanding of place-based governance in green space maintenance through study results presented in the four included papers. The articles all address different dimensions of governance in operational green space management, in relation to potential shifts in governance modes, guided by overall discourses about enhanced user participation. The Danish and English cases, set in different overall political and governance contexts, provide empirical evidence and examples. Whereas the Danish paper (A) explores a situation of (potential) shifts from hierarchical governance to co-governance, the English papers (B and C) study a situation of (potential) shift form co-governance to self-governance. Finally, the review paper (D) – which includes research from across the world - addresses the research discourse of benefits from user participation in operational green space management against what is actually empirically tested.

PAA is one of the major components of this study’s theoretical and analytical frame. The interdependent nature of the different PAA dimensions (as described by Leroy and Arts, 2006) is reflected in the findings of the four papers. While the core findings of each paper relate to the dimension(s) that they are theoretically guided by, some additional findings that are closer related to other dimensions also occur. Examples of this are the English papers in which the explorations of ‘responsibility rules’ and ‘partnership capacity’ also reveal details on the other dimensions of governance/policy arrangements, than respectively rules and power.

Below, results are presented according to the four immediate objectives of the thesis.

1) To what extent does user participation exist in green space maintenance and how can it be characterised in terms of actors and their coalitions and partnerships?

In the interviews with Danish managers (in paper A), examples of user participation were found in all ten municipalities. However, the users with whom managers ally themselves vary a lot in terms of how organised they are and what interest they (are perceived to have. From the numerous Danish examples users fell into four main categories, according to organisation and interest:

- Individual users with a private interest (such as removing vegetation that affected their private property).
- Individuals and groups of users with a local interest (e.g. maintenance of street trees on local major streets).
- Individuals and groups of users with a specific interest (e.g. anglers maintaining water stream to improve conditions for fish).
- Groups participating in events (e.g. schools participating in tree planting events).

In other words, users are often organised into different groups; something which from a governance perspective is one aspect of the forming of coalitions between users (while coalitions can also refer to different groups teaming up under a specific agenda). These coalitions between users emerge in form of groups which are more or less structured, ranging from a few individuals doing once off, ad
hoc tasks, to groups maintaining a site over a longer period and constituted associations with a defined agenda working locally or even nationally. Municipal managers, in most cases, stated that they preferred to cooperate with organised users (constituted associations), for different reasons. In the start-up phase of involvement processes, associations often take the initiative because they have been established for achieving a common goal and have experience with working towards realising their interests. In cases where the municipality is initiating a project, established associations have known contact persons and an established network to draw upon. Looking at the long-term success of involvement processes, associations were furthermore seen as the best way to ensure continuity because of their formal set-up. Another type of coalition is seen in connection to the events organised by the Danish Society of Nature Conservation. As an example, this organisation established a scything guild which is maintaining a municipal site. The initiative, recruitment and set-up lie with this organisation, whereas the municipality provides refreshments and removes hay from the site.

In figure 11 the range of organisations mentioned in the interviews is illustrated on the organisation-chart by Klausen (1990).

Fig. 11. Illustration of the range of organisations that were involved in Danish green space maintenance (dotted line) with ‘associations’ highlighted for being the preferred coalition of actors by managers. For the purpose of this thesis ‘individuals’ are added since they formed coalitions with managers in a number of Danish examples. Base figure built on Klausen (1990).

No managers collaborated with other staff at the administrative level when user participation was concerned; neither did they have collaborators within the green administration nor across municipal administrations. Yet, at the manual labour level, gardeners and other staff working on site were described as playing a considerable role. They often have the immediate contact with user in the green space and do also work together with users in connection to realisations of physical projects. At the
political level, local politicians had an indirect role by sometimes facilitating contact between users and managers.

The English papers (B and C), even though focusing on specific partnerships between Friends and local authorities also uncovered details about the actors and their coalitions in connection to green space maintenance. In paper B, which is based on cases of partnerships in Sheffield, the demographics of the Friends groups were generally older (retired) and predominantly female. This in some cases appeared to have an influence on the preferred activities of the group, i.e. committee meetings (providing social opportunities) and events (familiar social activities and organisation). The majority of these group members were neither keen to take on more formal, sustained activities such as in a committee nor practical work. In general Friends’ activities were mostly relating to other dimensions of PK rather than the design & management dimension (which includes day-to-day maintenance). However, a few examples of maintenance tasks with contribution by Friends emerged (see below). As for demography, Friends expressed difficulties in recruiting younger members and members with ethnic background.

The Friends groups appeared to be highly dependent on ‘champions’ within the group, such as strong chairpersons and engaged committee members. In addition to the partnerships the groups had formed with SCC, external networks appeared to play an important role in determining the extent to which Friends took responsibility over place-keeping dimensions in general.

Regarding external networks, most Friends groups had formed partnerships or contact with other organisations; however, these were primarily related to activities in connection to governance at a strategic level and were not in play in connection to day-to-day maintenance activities on site. Yet, these external networks might have indirect effect on the groups’ contributions to maintenance activities. In paper C, which also includes cases from Hackney and Stockton, it was uncovered that groups with relatively large networks had a greater capacity to draw on resources and develop further networks and sustain membership more easily than others. Coalitions with other Friends were seen as beneficial in terms of knowledge exchange, but coalitions between Friends groups were in some cases threatened by competition for funds (from which money can contribute to the physical upgrade of a park).

2) What resources do actors bring into the governance processes and how do they contribute to the capacity of partnerships in terms of providing green space maintenance?

As for the managers themselves, findings from paper A reveal that most managers had a distinct technical background (education-wise) and that none of them were trained in management of governance processes. This was reflected in the resources managers brought into the processes of user participation. This primarily comprises professional knowledge on matters of green space maintenance, while knowledge about user participation was obtained through ‘learning by doing’. The approach taken to user participation was very much up to the individual manager’s preferences and personality. These professional and personal resources were used when decisions were made about
what users could partake in. The managers were (as assumed) in all cases functioning as ‘gate keep-
ers’ of user participation. In by far most examples delegation of power to the users in terms of re-
sponsibility and decision-making only occurred if the activities were seen as something ‘extra’.

The managers pointed at different resources that users bring into green space maintenance through
user participation. In many cases users were the initiating actor by establishing contact with the mu-
nicipal managers or by kick-starting specific projects/activities. These were often based on
knowledge about the local area or community wishes, or on specific expertise (such as knowledge
specialised maintenance techniques). However, if managers assessed that there was a lack of pro-
fessional knowledge and expertise by users in relation to specific tasks, this was limiting to delega-
tion of power.

As for other municipal actors, politicians were perceived to potentially play a central role in facili-
tating governance by putting user participation on the strategic agenda of green space management.
The gardeners, through their labour unions, appeared to have power to influence the extent and type
of user participation. Several managers expressed awareness of potential conflict with paid staff if
users took over tasks that would traditionally have been carried out by them.

In the English paper (B) the scope and organisation of the groups also seemed to influence the ex-
tent to which they in general were dependent on support. In Firth Park the Friends’ interest in the
park was broad and generally related to improvement of the whole site; a task which requires con-
siderable specialist support from SCC. The FoMP, on the other hand, was set up with a number of
different sub-committees for specific interests (e.g. skaters that arrange skater-events) which needed
only little support. Stand-alone projects were said to have been successful in sustaining the Friends’
involvement and breaking down the work into “manageable chunks”.

Paper B also revealed an important resource, namely the groups’ ability to generate funding. In
Sheffield one group member expressed awareness of the need to raise their profile with SCC and
appearing ‘useful and active’ in order to sustain council support, while another group saw their abil-
ity to attract funding as something which had put them in a powerful position in relation to their
partnership with SCC. Related to this, Capital (being a place-keeping capacity theme) was (in paper
C) one of the factors explored as contributing to the capacity of place-keeping partnerships to with-
stand decreasing financial support. Friends groups that could secure funding often attracted further
investment. However managers were essential in supporting development of funding applications.
Commitment was also found to be essential for partnership capacity. As for managers this con-
cerned e.g. attending meetings and helping to organise funding applications, whereas the Friends in
many cases contributed with a considerable time-commitment (up to 24 hours per week). Being
actively involved required significant time committed, therefore many groups were led or com-
prised predominately of members of retirement age. This was identified by the groups as a potential
threat to continuity. Related to this is Skill base. Whilst managers are paid professionals who under-
stand the complexities of project management, tendering, design and consultation, their time is
spread thinly over many groups and sites. Community groups often can commit a greater amount of
time (than could be achieved by managers alone) to the focused development of a site of which they have rich local knowledge and regularly use. This is closely connected to Motivation (of Friends). The interviews highlighted how some community groups are highly effective, skilled and motivated to organise events as a means of local engagement and raising funds inaccessible to the council as many group members had professional backgrounds. However, when addressing the potential maintenance gap created by diminished council capacity to undertake manual onsite work, some groups showed little interest in developing this skillset. Of those groups directly involved in manual work, RHCG was the most actively involved in site clearing and building, maintenance and developments. This group’s high capacity for manual work resulted from the chair’s professional landscape background, motivation, younger age of the members and the large partnership network with other community organisations. Skills in Communication were also explored in paper C. Several Friends expressed that they found communication with managers crucial. Where this failed dissatisfaction over not being consulted occurred, for example in relation to onsite changes carried out by the local authority. Externally, communication primarily concerned contributions of Friends, in order to e.g. attract more members; for example via newsletters, webpages or through site walks and festivals. The final capacity theme on Political influence did not have direct links to the groups’ engagement in maintenance. However, most community groups interviewed felt they had relatively strong political influence at a local level due to prominent members or their wider network.

3) What rules, formal as well as informal, shape the interaction between actors? How is this manifested in terms of division of responsibility between actors?

In the Danish municipalities (paper A) involvement of users was in general treated in an ad hoc manner and the extent and format of participation was up to the individual manager. None of the municipalities had any specific strategy for user participation in green spaces. This could also explain the lack of in-house experience-exchange about how to approach user participation. In general, a hierarchical and technical focus of managers was prevailing and was reflected in the way user participation was approached and organised (or not). Some managers did not find user participation compatible with the maintenance standards that guided their practise otherwise. In many cases lack of clarity about safety rules was limiting to user participation. Overall, transfer of responsibility to users did vary a lot. In far most examples delegation of power to the users in terms of responsibility and decision-making only occurred if the activities were seen as something ‘extra’, which would not have been done otherwise. In that way the risk of continuity in service-delivery (if users stopped their participation), as well as the potential conflicts with labour unions decreased. Another way of safeguarding continuity was through ‘use agreements’ in which the precise tasks that should be delivered by users are described. Managers in general perceived themselves as civil servants who should deliver a service (namely green spaces of the best quality to the citizens), while also meeting the desires of politicians. Several managers found it challenging to balance the general public’s interest with the (some-times) more specific interests of engaged groups.

Paper B identifies different ‘rules’ that influence if Friends take part in maintenance. Safety is, again, an issue; Sheaf Valley Park was (by SCC) described as not suitable for groups to maintain
because of its steep and inaccessible terrain. Also the present maintenance status influences this. In Firth Park, because of the high priority placed by SCC on maintenance due to its Green Flag status, it had not been necessary for the Friends to get involved in physical upkeep. Yet, poor site conditions were the original catalyst for the FoFP’s engagement when it was formed in 1999. This was the same for the FoMP which also formed as a response to a lack of site management.

In general green space managers were open towards user participation, which is probably related to the fact that the three local authorities were selected as cases for their partnerships with Friends. Yet, the SCC interviews revealed how, in the previous 15 years, numerous groups had been established and how many had been successful in securing funding. However, in the same period the Parks Department budget had been reduced, with more dramatic cuts more recently. More specifically, this was expressed as the council becoming ‘victims of their own success’, with too many Friends groups for the council to realistically support.

The few specific examples of Sheffield Friends being engaged in maintenance varied in terms of responsibility division from the perspective of ‘modes of governance’; from a tree planting event organised by SCC (hierarchical) over renovation of a specific area of a park in partnership with SCC (co-governance) to site maintenance (i.e. bench repainting, shrub clearance, litter picks) at monthly workdays (self-governance). Still, SCC in general appears more dominant in connection to place-keeping dimensions directly related to the physicality of the green space itself (operational management, funding and evaluation). A general finding throughout the four embedded cases is that high responsibility by Friends in connection to a place-keeping dimension only applies to specific and restricted tasks and hence, SCC has the overall responsibility for all sites. In total, ‘old modes’ of governance still prevail in Sheffield and no overall shift towards self-governance was found.

All Sheffield Friends perceived a partnership approach as the only sustainable model for ensuring involvement, and emphasised their dependency on support by SCC in connection to different tasks – such as maintenance. The Friends were all highly aware of their limitations and of their role as volunteers, for example in connection to on site management. Friends seem to expect support and influence on decisions, but perceived maintenance to be the council’s responsibility, and the demographics of many groups suggested a limited capacity to undertake manual work. In Hackney (Paper C) Partnership Agreements between Friends groups and the council were seen by managers as a positive way of informing groups of the commitment and support they could expect from the council. An enhanced partnership agreement was in the process of being drawn up with the local authority so RHCG could take on further onsite responsibilities.

As in Denmark, safety concerns, again, influence the involvement of groups in manual work. In Sheffield, groups pay for their own insurance, while in Hackney, groups were insured by the local authority to undertake manual work under the Hackney Park Forum Insurance Liability. This requires annual financial commitment from the local authority in order to increase its capacity for day-to-day maintenance through user participation. In Sheffield continuity was also an issue. The age bias of most Friends was identified by the groups as a potential threat to continuity if key mem-
bers are no longer capable of involvement. Also continuity in local authority support was mentioned. The lack of strategic guidance on the long term role of project officers - and the short-term approach taken by the Conservative government to funding of green spaces (and thereby project officers), were perceived as detrimental to the support of Friends groups long-term plans.

Finally, the awareness of the green space being public was also reflected in one of the interviews with Sheffield Friends. The FoMP felt that they had a high capacity to take over more hands on green space management, but did not want the park to feel ‘privatised’ or owned by the Friends. The group’s ‘strap line’ is ‘Millhouses Park – a park for everyone’ and hence they saw the SCC partnership as a way of keeping the site public.

4) What are the potentials and pitfalls of place-based governance as an integrative framework for user participation in green space maintenance in terms of quality of green spaces?

Paper A assumed a prevailing discourse amongst Danish green space managers of public involvement being desirable, which could point at a shift of governance mode from hierarchical governance to closed and open co-governance. This shift also emerged from several of the interviews. The interviews revealed more details about how municipal green space managers perceive this discourse - including the potentials of user participation in green space management. Several of the potentials mentioned have close links to the perspectives of ‘place’. For example that managers see themselves as being employed to make green spaces attractive for local citizens, and by involving citizens the managers have a chance to obtain better understanding of citizen needs. Conflict management was another theme in several of the interviews. Also, user participation was said to give access to ‘place knowledge’, be a way of providing ‘support of organisations’ and create ‘publicity’. In general, involvement of local users did seem to form a base for on-going dialogue and mutual acquaintance. This can be linked to the pre-assumption of this thesis that human dimensions can be integrated with the physical management of green spaces. In these cases, via responsive managers who are open to user needs.

Other aspects were closer related to the overall pre-assumption of this thesis that place-based governance can build on, and benefit from people’s commitment and close ties to their environments. Here, the issue of ‘ownership’ was often raised in the Danish interviews; for instance in connection to a wish for decreasing vandalism and littering. One interviewee referred to ‘use agreements’ as enhancing social control and thereby reducing abuse. Because of this, assigning an area to a group was regarded as an important incentive for users to take care of it.

Other benefits were closer connected to the output of user participation (or the green space quality) in relation to the resources that users bring in. Economic benefits were often referred to and these were frequently linked to decreasing maintenance budgets. Involvement of citizens was in many cases seen as a way of keeping up the maintenance standards for green spaces that would otherwise have been affected by cut-backs. Relating to this the issue of ‘green space quality’ was repeatedly pointed out as a key benefit. User participation was regarded as helping to ‘lift’ maintenance stand-
ards to a level that would not have been possible under municipal budget restraints. As mentioned above, this topic also had to do with specific and more targeted maintenance practices (such as scything or grazing) that are too time-demanding for municipal staff. This again relates to the economic debate of financial crisis and public budget cuts, since the ‘economy’ of implementing user participation was perceived to have two sides. Several managers expressed doubts about actual economic payoffs from collaborating with the public. Involvement processes are often time-demanding and challenging, while benefits are difficult to measure because of their ‘non-marketable’ nature.

In paper A, a final benefit related from user participation was the ‘increased use of green spaces’ noticed by the managers, which from both a ‘place’ and green space quality perspective can be seen as a desirable goal. However, increased green space use was not verified in the different municipalities.

As mentioned above, there was overall support for the partnership approach in Sheffield (paper B). The results of paper B also show that Friends are not immediately able to take over increased responsibility over green space management, especially not for the physical up-keep of the parks. Also there were concerns that the new ward-based approach could threaten continuity in SCC support if money was not allocated to green space management. At the time of the interviews, one year after the Big Society policy was announced; great differentiation in prioritisation of green spaces by the Community Assemblies across Sheffield was noticed. In the south-west area (the area of Porter Valley and Millhouses Park) green spaces were the number one priority (and already of a high standard) while in the northern and eastern parts of Sheffield, where Firth Park and Sheaf Valley are located and where parks are of a “lower standard”, green spaces “get lost” in the system as they can be regarded as a lower priority than, for example, education, young people and social services. Potentially this could lead to even higher inequality in green space quality with consequences for the communities surrounding them. In other words; resources and priority have to be given to the support of users and it cannot be expected that they can take over full responsibility and engage in ‘self-governance’.

The review paper (D) set out to improve understanding of the relation between user participation in green space management and the quality of urban green spaces. The paper looked at ‘arguments’ for user participation used by researchers against what was actually being ‘empirically tested’. Arguments for user participation’s positive effect on green spaces were found in several papers. These include ‘increased area/number of trees’, ‘healthier trees’, improved ‘functionality’, ‘better appearance’ as well as ‘higher quality’ of green spaces. However, only one argument, that of ‘healthier trees’, could be demonstrated empirically. In other words, there was not much proof found of a direct link from user participation to green space quality. Yet, with the ‘place’ approach taken in this thesis, empirically proven benefits of user participation relating to the other dimensions of the ‘park-organisation-user model’ are also of interest. As argued in the introduction (and illustrated in figure 1) a place-based governance approach to green space management is just as much about the ‘meaning’ of green spaces held by users and the processes which supports the creation and development of ‘place attachment’. Related to this, paper D uncovers promising scientific findings which
are illustrated in figure 12. Several of these could be pointed at as particularly interesting in connection to the concept of place-based governance, e.g. ‘satisfaction’ and ‘increased use’; ‘empowerment’ and ‘environmental awareness’; ‘fostering local knowledge and learning’ and ‘use of local knowledge’. However, it should be noted that some of the articles included in the review also concern planning of green spaces; and not only management and maintenance.

Fig. 12. Demonstrated arguments along the ‘park-user-organisation model’ (from paper D).
Discussion

The results of this PhD-study highlight a number of aspects to take into consideration within place-based governance in green space maintenance. These relate to the users, roles of managers, rules and resources that guide the practices, as well as the implications of user participation on green space quality. This discussion will address these issues and illuminate some of the perspectives of ‘pulling’ governance all the way down to the operational level of green space management, by taking a place-based perspective.

Governance arrangements in green space maintenance

The results offer an insight to the organisation of user participation in green space maintenance in Denmark and England. Several examples of user participation in connection to physical up-keep activities in the green spaces were found. However, especially in Denmark, technical skills and service-delivery were in focus and guided the approach to user participation. This could imply that the NPM-mind-set (where users are seen as ‘customers’ (Agger and Lund, 2011)) is still prevailing, which supports the finding that hierarchical governance still dominates (yet, with a move towards closed co-governance). However, in practice users are (in some cases) actively involved and in ongoing dialogue with managers; probably due to the practical nature of the activities users partake in at this operational level. In some cases users were allowed a role which corresponds more with the ‘co-producer’ role in which users are seen as holding resources and being able to make informed and qualified choices, as well as to make their wishes and preferences heard in order to get satisfying public services (ibid.). In other words, the nature of operational-level activities which users participate in implies that users are not only consulted, but also have an actual say in decisions about the specific activity or project. This could explain why a number of Danish managers perceived user participation as conflicting with standardised maintenance procedures; the institutional frames of the hierarchical governance mode simply do not correspond with ‘co-production’. Yet, other managers were able to integrate user participation and maintenance – something which could relate to the finding that user participation is approached ad hoc and arranges between single managers and users; and therefore some ‘rules’ become dependent on the individual manager’s personality.

One prevailing ‘rule’ was that managers preferred coalitions with organised users (in constituted associations); something which in itself can restrain who participate. Agger and Lund (ibid.) point at the importance of remembering that users are different. Formalised and binding processes might limit the participation to only the very resource-full and engaged few. If the full potential for getting access to new ideas and perspectives held by users should unfold, opportunities for dialogue should be made easy (ibid.). Even though user participation in green space maintenance does not necessarily need to be innovative, the relation between indirect exclusion of users (or potential users) and the way governance processes are organised should also be taken into consideration here. This is at least the case if these practices should feed into the process of meeting the goals of e.g. Local Agenda 21 about “broad public participation” of “all groups in society” within the context of sustainable development (UNCED, 1992, §23).
A study of public involvement processes in connection to Local Agenda 21 in England found that initiatives of broad involvement by one officer were rejected by senior officers and councillors. These saw the initiatives as being at odds with, and potentially damaging to, the dominant economic development and regeneration objectives of the local authority (Connelly, 2006). In other words; the *ad hoc* approach taken in Danish municipalities (and lack of coordination in the administration) might allow for some user participation activities which may not have been possible if these practices had been institutionalised. In Denmark managers functioned as ‘gate keepers’, deciding whether or not users were involved. In some cases this resulted in ‘co-production’; in some cases in no user participation, besides e.g. participation in already established anti-littering campaigns. Hence, it is possible that a strategic approach to user participation in green spaces by the municipalities could open up for enhanced user participation in some local authorities, while also limit occurring practises elsewhere, since different ‘actors’, ‘resources’ and ‘rules’ come into play.

An expression of how institutionalised user participation procedures can limit the range of projects and community actors is found in the English studies of this thesis. The Friends group approach was heavily based on ability to attract funding. Friends were often formed as a prerequisite for gaining access to grants. Later, the Friends’ ‘power’ and possibility to achieve results depended much on their ability to attract further finding. Connelly (ibid. pp. 19) depicts this as ‘the publicity for the fund set[ting] up a filter, effectively selecting the nature of groups and proposals that would be brought forward for consideration’.

**Users and non-users**

In connection to the above, the English studies revealed that the common demographic composition of Friends groups was very homogenous; something which was perceived as a threat to the continuity of the group (due to age bias and activity preferences). One of the explanations for this lies in the considerable amount of hours Friends spend. You simply cannot engage in this way if you have a fulltime job. Often the key members of the groups also brought in skills from their own profession, for example in connection to fundraising and event making, and in one case even physical up-keep. In summary, rules and resources required when participating as a Friend alone limit the involvement to certain users.

Another explanation for the age bias and task preferences of English Friends relates to the motivation of volunteers, which was addressed in an American study of urban landscape eco-volunteerism. The study found that volunteers are not a uniform group in terms of motivation. Different factors are more or less motivating to volunteers depending on their age, levels of income and education, gender, race, and employment status. For example, women are more motivated than men by non-environmental factors, such as the quest for positive emotions. Also in terms of age, motivation differs, with more elderly being motivated for eco-volunteerism than the younger segment (Asah et al., 2014). In relation to the place-based governance approach, these findings are also relevant. The various motivations for participating in green space management stress the importance of seeing maintenance as a broad and multi-faceted, rather than as purely ‘technical’ or operational.
Another type of exclusion is the exclusion of other users, something referred to by one Friends group as ‘privatisation’ (paper B). This scenario was also indirectly indicated throughout the Danish interviews, as managers expressed that the wider public’s interest was important – and in some cases concern was given as a reason for not making some users participate. Here lays a potential clash when focusing on ‘place attachment’ as a central argument for user participation in operational management. The basis of this thesis is that municipal urban green spaces should remain publically accessible, both physically and psychologically (i.e. people should not feel excluded or less welcome). Urban green spaces play a significant role as free-spaces for e.g. recreation, relaxation and for meeting other people (Chiesura, 2004). Nielsen (2013) argues that the concept of a ‘neutral’ democratic space should continue to be an ambition, since urban spaces play a significant role in helping people to understand and live positively with the variety of cultural and political positions that characterizes today’s globalized society. Yet, the call for making public spaces less homogeneous and anonymous is inherent to the concept of ‘place’ (Beatley, 2005). User inputs can be a way for this to succeed by influencing the appearance of the sites in a way that correspond with (some) local users’ preferences. However, none of the studies analysed in the review paper (D) demonstrated (or not) this relation. The place concept assumes that sites become less anonymous through ‘place attachment’, i.e. the positive feelings towards a place, which can be developed through use – and through participation. Therefore, it is crucial that place-based governance not only increases the attachment of the participating few, but ideally also enhances the regular use of not-participating users.

This is a fine balance. Speller and Ravencroft (2005 pp. 52), in their study of Friends groups in England found that these, despite e.g., age bias, were able to think “beyond their own needs and wanted to increase opportunities for the wider community”. However, other examples of user participation describe exclusion of other users; such as the case of the Arnos Vale Cemetery in Bristol, England. Here a Friends group was formed with the aim of fighting years of deterioration and resulting vandalism. The group carried out maintenance and surveillance activities, which led to a reduction in criminal activity. Yet, some users of the area started to feel ‘excluded’ by the group (Jones and Cloke, 2002). In summary, ‘rules’ should allow for users to participate, while also ensuring public access in any way. Here, managers have an important role to play.

Green space quality

The above links to the discussion of what green space quality is (and to whom), as well as how quality is ensured and who has the formal responsibility for this. As mentioned in the introduction, Dempsey and Burton (2012) in connection to PK see high quality spaces being those that the users want to ‘visit again and again’.

In the cases from Sheffield (paper B) overall responsibility of evaluation and coordination dimensions of PK primarily rested with SCC. This could suggest that formal responsibility of ensuring quality was kept by the local authority, even in a context where ‘newer’, more multi-actor govern-
ance modes are in play. Carmona et al. (2008) see ‘delivery of space quality’ as crucial for holding spaces from deterioration and not fulfilling their economic, social, and environmental potentials. From this perspective, several of the examples of user participation given in the papers of this thesis could be seen as contributing to green space quality. These include Friends of Firth Park, who have played a central role in the overall regeneration of the park (through funding bids); the Friends of the Porter Valley who have a distinct environmental focus and have preserved nature areas in the park; as well as the Danish anglers carrying out gentle maintenance activities in a water stream. However, from the standpoint of the place concept, green space quality should be seen as more than physical characteristics – and attention should also be given to the social processes leading to enhanced ‘place attachment’ by users in general.

Economy
In the present study, user participation is considered in the wider context of governance; something which is said to be important in order to get a feeling of the complex processes that user participation develops from, in which many actors with conflicting agendas contend with each other (Connelly, 2006). Another widespread agenda within green space management is that of economic constraints (e.g. Randrup and Persson, 2009; Kreutz et al., 2014). Reflecting this, the question of whether user participation is economically feasible was raised by several Danish managers. Findings from a cost-based valuation of urban forestry stewardship volunteerism in USA found that both volunteers and event hosts (i.e. individuals with responsibility for recruiting and managing volunteers onsite and carrying out events) contributed with substantially resources. On average volunteers contributed with one third of the total participation costs, through vehicle-; travel time- and onsite time costs (Daniels et al., 2014).

Some answers regarding economy can also be derived from the English studies, which show that Friends have a vital role to play in terms of fundraising. The economy of green space management is based on the funding bits that communities can access. However, support from managers in writing applications is needed; something which makes cut-backs in municipal staff critical to the sustainability of green spaces (as described in paper B). In other words, user participation can bring in money, but on the other hand also require substantial municipal resources. In the context of the Danish welfare society the same dependency on external funding was not found. However, in more of the Danish examples cut-backs led to delegation of maintenance tasks to users in order to keep up maintenance standards, and managers did also express difficulties in finding time for managing user participation. This calls for a more strategic approach in the Danish municipalities, where resources are prioritised for support of user participation. In the meantime Danish managers have to balance the two agendas themselves. Here, Connelly (2006 pp. 21) points at a risks that decisions “are made ‘by default’ following accepted or prescribed norms… or that resource constraints and administrative structures channel decisions towards quick and/or routine processes, rather than towards innovative and difficult attempts to engage the community”.

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User participation in the context of marketization

Again, to really understand the concept of place-based governance, it is important to see user participation processes as just one component of decision-making in a green space maintenance context. Not only municipal and community actors are in play, but also actors from private businesses. Green space maintenance in most Western countries is guided by market-based principles and decentralisation due to the comprehensive influence of NPM (Nuppenau, 2009). In Denmark this has led to a considerable shift from traditional hierarchy to market-like organisation of municipal green space management (ibid.). Often management is handled by one unit, whereas maintenance activities are located in individual units elsewhere in the municipal organization (Randrup et al., 2004; Randrup and Persson, 2009). As an indicator, 63 percent of Danish municipalities used the model of internal division between purchasers and providers in 2005. At that time, eight percent of the Danish park authority budget was distributed to private companies and 93 percent of all park authorities carried out control duties (ibid.).

Paper A also reveals that managers point at operational staff as having an important role to play in connection to user participation on site, as they are the immediate contact persons and also in some cases collaborate with users about the physical delivery of projects. From a ‘place’ perspective, much could be said for collaboration between users and municipality happening on site, where place attachment is grounded and where exchange of specific knowledge e.g. maintenance procedures can occur. Thus manual staffs are potentially resourceful actors to include on processes of place-based governance. Here, managers also have a central role to play, based on their influence on both service-delivery and user participation, in ensuring that place-based governance is integrated into maintenance – whether outsourced or not. In municipalities where maintenance is contracted out an approach where contractors also get more ‘communicative’ tasks could be considered.

Changing roles of managers

In a study of manager roles in connection to the shift to marketization of Danish green maintenance (from 1995-2005), Nuppenau (2009) describes how the first years of functioning as maintenance service purchasers often comprised a period of ‘learning by doing’ by managers during which maintenance was considered a technical issue only. However, after becoming familiar with the procedures of contracting out, some managers transferred into a ‘second generation’ of their purchaser role where they became more strategic in their approach.

This could have parallels to the Danish managers’ approach in connection to user participation, which generally was found to be technical and ad hoc. It is likely that managers also have to undergo different stages of roles in their dealing with user participation. As described above managers now play a central role in connection to coordination of both (semi-)private and community actors, just as new rules and resources are brought into operational green space maintenance through user participation. Seen from a governance perspective (and the interrelated dimensions of PAA) this is likely to change the role and position of managers.
This increasing complexity in governance of green space maintenance has parallels to the concept of network governance. Network governance has been defined as (political) steering networks which are more or less stable connections between a number of private, semi-public and public actors who due to institutional mediated interactions contribute to the societal governance. Governance networks can be formal and initiated from above or they can be informal and emerge from the bottom (Sørensen and Torting, 2005). Just as found in connection to green space maintenance, network governance is a result of more fragmented governance system where networks extend both horizontally (across public and private boundaries) and vertically (across levels of public decision-making) (Sehested, 2009). These networks are dependent on trust, negotiation and interdependence and can range from open networks with various actors to closed (and elitist) networks with few participants. Governance networks are to some degree self-regulated, but often some level of meta-governance is occurring – a situation where e.g. public servants regulate and coordinate networks through various techniques, such as political and economic framing and network design, management and participation (ibid.).

As described in the introduction there is a long tradition of public involvement in Denmark, also when it comes to urban planning. In this context, the trend of more inclusion of private and civil actors in public administration has led to a shift in professional roles among civil servants, in order for them to be able to meet new responsibilities in connection to e.g., project planning. A study on this has shown a development from a traditional autonomous expert role towards various hybrid roles. The latter combine professional knowledge with other forms of knowledge and values connected to collaboration, network governance and meta-governance, influenced by business-style organizational forms as well as strategic and collaborative approaches (ibid). More specifically, four variations in hybrid roles were found: the professional strategist is the one closest to the traditional expert role and focuses on professional knowledge, but is loyal towards political decisions. Communication is used as a means to convince others, mainly other experts and politicians, about the importance of professional knowledge and hence this hybrid role supports closed and elitist networks. The manager is focused on decoding political signals into professional messages, which besides professional knowledge, requires knowledge about political processes and administrative procedures. The manager communicates to sustain a dialogue between different actors, but trusts in formalized networks and the representative democracy and prioritize to be represented in many networks. The market planner is focused on economic development and investments by private actors, which requires knowledge hereof. Communication is used to create a constructive dialogue with investors and in this sense formalised networks are prioritised. Finally, the process planner aims at including all relevant actors in order to create ownership. Also ‘ordinary citizens’ should be included since this type of planner is prioritizing open and informal networks.

Even though this study does not explicitly focus on the roles of managers, findings could indicate that Danish green space managers in their approach to user participation are placed closer to the traditional expert role, prioritising closed and formalised networks. In England, where governance in general has shifted to ‘newer modes’, user participation is a more integral part of the managers’ roles. Hence, this indicates that shifts in professional roles will occur with shifting governance
modes. While this thesis has its primary attention on the organisation of governance, focusing on manager roles could also hold part of the explanation for why there are nuances in approaches across the ten included Danish municipalities, despite the widespread *ad hoc* approach. Managers simply perceive their roles differently.

**Linking place-based governance to strategies**

As described in connection to the study’s inductive process, this thesis is inspired by, and partly based on the PK-concept. PK, by placing the focus on ‘place’ and the continuous need to maintain and develop places in close collaboration between managers and users seeks to support the long-term management of sustainable open spaces through the six interrelated dimensions of *Policy, Governance, Partnership, Funding, Design & management* and *Evaluation*. The place-based governance concept, on the other hand, can be seen as placing governance and decision processes in the centre. Place-based governance focuses more deeply on processes, partnerships and various forms of user participation – while linking these to a specific site / place. In this way it remains open to more types of user participation, while putting attention on the social and decision-making processes of the operational part of management. However, the findings from England (though possibly biased by being based on PK as analytical frame) show that involvement in maintenance cannot be de-coupled from more strategic activities, such as fundraising and lobbying. This provides support of the underlying assumption behind the place-based approach that user participation in operational management can help ensure governance at all levels of green space management. Therefore it is important to recognise governance as more than just strategic-level, overall decision making - but as being relevant to all levels of decision making and thereby the institutional ‘silos’ referred to in the introduction can perhaps be eliminated all the way through the municipal system - into the green spaces, where users attach with places. This would be in line with the visions reflected in the Aarhus Convention and the European Landscape Convention regarding calls for involvement of citizens in their local environments.
Conclusions

This thesis applies a place-based governance approach to municipal green space maintenance and provides information about the implicated actors and their coalitions, as well as the resources and rules that structure their interaction – in two different contexts, i.e. Denmark and England. Further, this thesis provides some insight to the possible implications of such processes on the quality of green spaces.

Users do bring in resources complementary to those of managers, but do need support in return. Hence, mutual commitment is needed. User participation should be seen as only one aspect of the wider governance processes. Therefore managers need skills in facilitating and coordinating networks of actors from both communities and (semi-)private organisations. Managers have an important role to play in terms of ensuring that green spaces stay inclusive, while also enabling ‘place attachment’. Here formal rules allowing users with different resources to partake could potentially be important. A strategic and formalised approach to user participation could secure access for users to participate by minimising the ‘gate-keeper’ role and ensuring municipal resources to put into governance processes – but could also limit some of the ad hoc collaborations occurring. Still, informal ‘rules’ about who should take care of the physical up-keep of green spaces seem to impact whether managers can let go of responsibility and whether users are willing to take over. There is not much scientific evidence of the positive influence of user participation on physical green space quality. Yet, findings from this thesis indicate that there are several other benefits closer related to social and human aspects of ‘place’, such as ‘use of local knowledge’, ‘conflict management’, ‘place attachment’, ‘environmental awareness’ and ‘increased use’. These benefits should be taken into consideration when assessing the advantages of place-based governance.

This thesis provides strong indications about the applicability of a place-based governance perspective on green space management. The conclusions offered through the synthesis of findings across the four included papers reveals that a holistic approach to green space maintenance should be taken. Maintenance should be seen as a part of the wider management and planning of green spaces and as a relevant context for place-based governance to take place. This is illustrated in figure 13, which is a revised version of the conceptual frame (figure 1) presented in the introduction section. In this version the three entities of green space maintenance are moved closer together to indicate that users and managers strengthen their ties through interaction, just as users get closer to green spaces through ‘place attachment’ and environmental awareness. Managers can, through potential interaction on site and access to local knowledge, ‘move closer’ to the green spaces, which again influences the managers work through e.g. decreased vandalism. This version of the illustration differs from the previous by suggesting that users can partake in maintenance, both through decisions and through physical activities. It is in this dynamic that the ‘place’ concept comes into play. The organisational diagram is kept in the ‘manager corner’ to stress the importance of seeing place-based governance as a part of the wider governance and to stress that actors at all levels of the municipal organisation potentially are important actors to include. This also includes onsite staff, pri-
vate as well as municipal. However, managers are seen as key actors in respect to facilitation of collaboration across sectors and administrative levels. Critical to the place-based approach is also that user participation is seen by managers as an integral part of maintenance, just as maintenance is seen as an integral aspect of user participation by users.

![Diagram of users, green space managers, place-based governance, and urban green space]

**Fig. 13. Place-based governance in green spaces**

**Critical reflections**

This section reflects upon the study’s use of theory and methodology and the implications of this on what can be concluded from the findings of this thesis. Also it reflects on the contributions of this PhD to the theoretical development within the fields of governance and green space maintenance.

**Theoretical reflections**

The thesis reflects my journey as a researcher, which has also been a journey towards greater theoretical clarification. As reflected upon above this process has been highly inductive, which means that theories have been applied late in the process and therefore have been used as a way to understand the collected data in a retrospective way. Theoretical development throughout the project is also reflected in the use of terms such as citizens and users, which have been used in the papers detached from theories on democracy or governance approaches.

The original intension of this PhD-project was to focus on public involvement in onsite maintenance. However, the inductive process led me to England and the MP4-project with its focus on PK. Thereby a more comprehensive perspective on long-term management was taken. The advantage of this has been that I have become aware of the interrelatedness of various tasks in connection to upkeep of green spaces. Users do not necessarily make the same divisions between what is physical maintenance and what is closer related to e.g. tactical aspects of management. In this light, I became more critical to my initial approach and to the Danish data in particular by seeing maintenance as
just the context in which processes between actors happen. From this the governance perspective arose which clearly indicates that contributions of users at the operational level is more than just physical tasks; it is also about interactions between actors guiding these procedures – which again are interrelated with the other levels of the municipal organisation.

However, zooming in and out between onsite maintenance and long-term management, and even green space planning in paper D, has likely made data collection less focused than it could have been. Had I concentrated on the physical up-keep carried out by Friends groups in England, I possibly would have had other case selection criteria and would have ended up with a deeper understanding of the organisation of these tasks in partnerships between local authorities and users. Yet again, this would probably have taken away my nuanced understanding of the overall setup in which maintenance is carried out.

The theoretical frame of this synthesis served well as a way to understand the inductively generated data and the results clearly show that the different GA-dimensions do occur at an operational level. Also, the place concept served as the overall argument for applying governance theories into this operational level of green space management. However, the outputs of the governance processes at this level do not always feed directly into political decisions (policy-making), but rather result in onsite manifestations of the interaction between actors through user participation in maintenance activities. This is, to my knowledge, a new way of approaching governance and in this way this thesis contributes with new theoretical development within the field of green space management as well as the concept of governance itself.

Methodological considerations

In retrospective, the overall methodological approach of this thesis has served as a way to put light to the concept of place-based governance from various angles. While primary attention was given to the organisation of place-based governance, the explorative methodology has also allowed for enhanced understanding about the involved actors and their coalitions. It has also provided insight to implications of the governance arrangements for urban green spaces. Yet, the explorative and qualitative style also means that findings are not based on any representative samples. The interviewees represent their respective organisation; their responses to the interview questions were influenced by personal opinions and experiences. For example using committee members of the Friends groups as interviewees might bias the interviews in connection to e.g., time commitment and task preferences. The choice of focusing on established partnerships between Friends and local authorities might also have influenced the attitude of interviewees towards more self-governance and decreased support from managers. Further, the English interviews did not provide much information about the role of the manual/operational staff in connection to user participation. This could indicate that the interviewed managers were not in close contact with this part of the public-service delivery process. This might have to do with the fact that in both Sheffield and Hackney managers were specifically employed to work with users about delivery of projects. In that way, the thesis would likely have benefited from inclusion of additional interviews with manual staff. Also, some bias in the Danish
interviews can be expected. Due to great differences in for example size and organisational set-up, the managers across the cases had different level of responsibility in the green space management administrations. This is likely to have influenced for example how strategic user participation was perceived.

In other words, examples provided in the interviews do not cover all situations occurring in connection to maintenance or place-keeping of individual sites, but can be used as indicative for the actors, resources and rules in play in connection to user participation.

In connection to the English papers it should be noticed that Friends have contact with various actors from the local authority. Yet, Friends group members might refer to the local authority more broadly than to just the particular managers interviewed as part of the study. These studies are based on specific Friends groups which have demonstrated a variety in the groups’ motivation, skills and preferences in connection to different dimensions of place-keeping. Had other groups been included, alternative preferences might have emerged. Still, from the perspective of the explorative methodology needed to offer insight into this under-researched field, the random approach to selection of the cases, based on presence of established partnerships, can be defended.

Therefore, rather than generalising from them, the results can serve as a way to understand possible links between different aspects of place-based governance as well as emerging themes and questions for further exploration. The latter is discussed in the next section about future research perspectives.
Future research perspectives

As reflected upon above, the inductively derived results of this thesis point at a relevance of seeing green space maintenance from the perspective of place-based governance. This dissertation provides promising results. However, due to their qualitative and explorative nature, findings can only be used as indicators of possible explanations to different trends in connection to the interactions that occur between actors. While the thesis has contributed with increased understanding of user participation processes in green space maintenance, it also identifies a number of new gaps in knowledge to explore in future research, if the concept of place-based governance should be evolved further.

Starting with the actor dimension, where this thesis primarily focused on managers and users. Yet, onsite staffs (such as gardeners) were found to be potentially important actors in connection to the place-based approach. Future research could reflect further on the role of manual staff including what skills, competences and resources they require. Related to this, this thesis also calls for increased understanding of the changing of roles of managers in connection to the introduction of ‘newer’ governance modes. Also, the implications of decreasing support from managers on for example the remaining actors and their interaction, as well as the attachment to places and green space quality could be addressed.

As for the ‘rules’ of place-based governance, further studies could look into how a formal set-up of place-based governance can support and enhance ‘place attachment’, while also ensuring that green spaces stay inclusive and optimally also enhances the use of the sites.

Related to resources is also the motivation of users to participate in green space maintenance. While several papers address this theme in context closely related to municipal green space management (e.g. Still and Gerhold, 1997; Van Den Berg et al., 2009; Moskell et al., 2010; Asah et al., 2014), a comprehensive overview of the different perspectives on this, for example through a review of previous research, could provide further understanding of the relevance of ‘place’ as a carrying argument for involving users on site.

Further, as also pointed at in paper D, more knowledge is needed about the influence of place-based governance on the physical quality of green spaces. Here before- and after studies could be a way to approach of tracing the consequences of actions taking in the potentially complex governance arrangements.

Finally, this thesis only bases its empirical findings on specific cases in Denmark and England. Future research in other contexts will add depth and nuancing to the status and potential of the place-based governance approach.
Outlook

Indications of shifts in governance modes were found in both the Danish and English cases; something which makes it likely that changes in the way user participation is approached will occur in both contexts. In her dissertation on marketization in Danish municipal park management organisations, Nuppenau (2009, pp. 75) points at a shift in of these organisations “from focusing on green space maintenance practice based on craftsman values, into focusing on competitive strategies and use of contracts based highly on economical values. Subsequently it has been indicated, that having learned how to use competitive tendering and contracting as procurement, park management organisations will now be able to move on towards an outcome and service-quality oriented focus based on strategic professional values”. One step in this direction could be to focus more on co-operation with users; and hence Nuppenau (ibid.) points at a need for a comprehensive overview of volunteer partnerships in Denmark, in order to get a feeling of the potentials for taking a more integrated approach to green space management. This thesis provides not a comprehensive overview, but at least insight into extent, form, benefits and challenges of involving users in Danish green space operational maintenance. With the increasing political focus on participatory approaches to public service delivery, which has been manifested recently in for example the government platform from 2011 (Regeringen, 2011) and the ‘Charter for interaction between the volunteer world and the public sector’ from 2013 (Frivilligrådet, 2013), it can be expected that public service delivery through user participation is going to become a political priority in the Danish municipalities. In the future, it will be interesting to see how this influences the roles of green space managers. They will have to collaborate more, not only with contractors, but also users, as well as how this can be combined in the most constructive way. This thesis reveals that experiences with user participation in green space maintenance already exist in many municipalities. However, managers did not have many opportunities for experience-exchange within their individual organisations. Networking between managers across municipalities could be a way to ensure knowledge-exchange and sparring. Also, continued training and education of ‘green professionals’ should provide insight and skills which could support the continual development of new manager roles. In this regard, this thesis stresses the need of fostering increased understanding of social and human aspects of ‘place’ as important supplements to technical competences.

The English studies provide some insight from a context where user participation has been an integral part of green space management for decades. Findings show that partnering with users requires commitment and resources from the municipality. The studies of English partnerships indicate that restricting participation to constituted associations could limit which users get involved and what resources are brought into the processes.

Related to this the findings showed that Friends have limited capacity to take over enhanced responsibility (as could be a potential scenario with the localism-push described earlier), especially when it comes to physical maintenance activities. Handing over additional, or even full, responsibil-
ity over place-keeping to Friends carries a risk in terms of continuity, since all groups depended on number of key individuals, many of them elderly, who can be expected to retire at one point. The individual Friends groups have different skills, but these still needs to be supplemented to be able to deliver comprehensive place keeping. One way forward could be to secure this support from outside the local authority, such as through a third-sector organisation. Here, the groups’ ability to network with other stakeholders who have experience in place-keeping could be crucial. Those groups with a large network felt that external contacts added to their capacity to contribute to place-keeping, however, in relation to physical maintenance no indication of this synergy was found. Managers, through their widespread contacts to Friends, could facilitate a network of such groups in order to support knowledge and experience exchange (as also suggested by one of the Friends). Further, to be able to carry out the work in practise, Friends will have to attract members with skills and resources to carry out physical maintenance. However, even if Friends manage to increase their skills and capacity to deliver these tasks, they lack skills in overall coordination of place keeping, which requires a large overview and professional expertise. It is unclear which organisations, other than the local authorities, would be capable of such a city-wide role. In other words, there is a risk that decreasing local authority support will have consequences for the quality of English green spaces. However, from a governance perspective there is a chance that over time, the governance arrangements around green space management will find new forms where new actors emerge and contribute with their respective resources and rules. One scenario could be that volunteers take over parks, as has been the case in for example Central Park in New York. Central Park is managed by the private non-for-profit organisation Central Park Conservancy that raises 75 percent of the park's annual park-wide expense budget and is responsible for the day to day maintenance and operations (Central Park Conservancy, 2014). The Conservancy works closely together with the city’s Parks Department, but its major role in park management is clear.

No matter what the future holds the change in governance mode will likely influence peoples’ 'place attachment’ due to the changes in appearance of green spaces and the governance set-up.
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LIST OF PAPERS

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Paper B
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Paper D
Fors, H.; Molin, J.F.; Murphy, M.A. & Konijnendijk van den Bosch, C.C.. User participation in urban green space planning and management - for the people or the parks? Under 2nd review after revision by Urban Forestry and Urban Greening.

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