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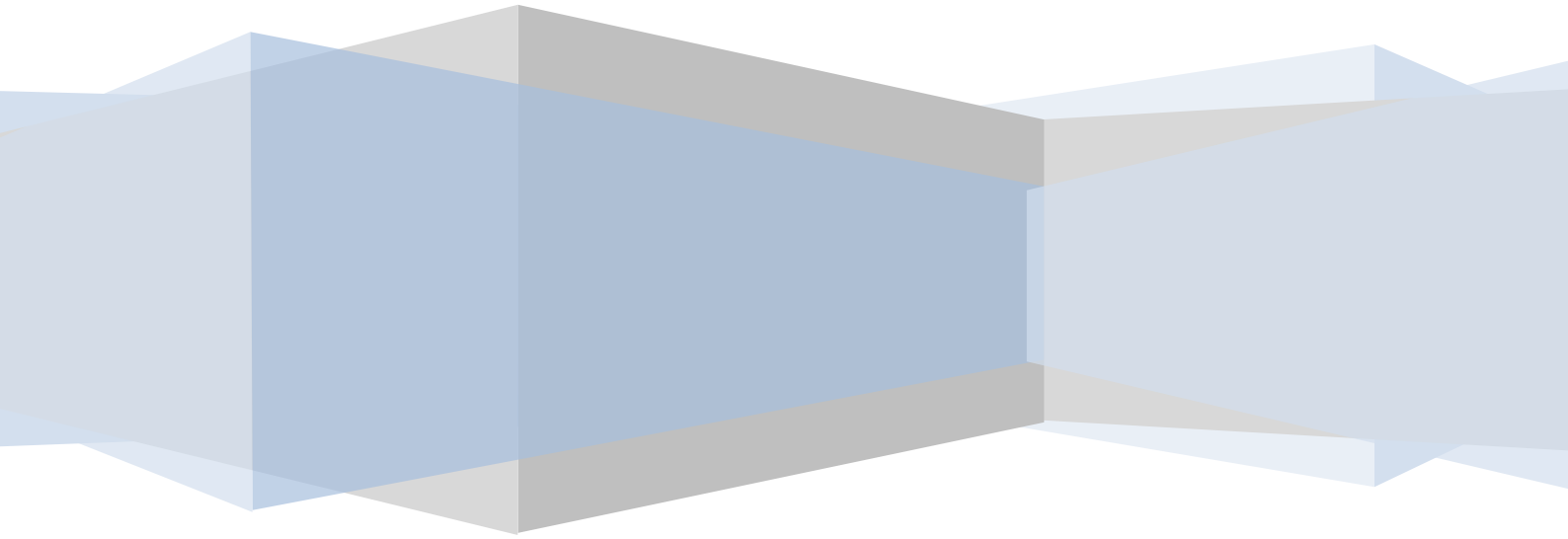
Urban Agriculture as creative city politics in the city of Rotterdam

Merging neoliberal and radical agendas



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The modern city has been shaped by industrialization and urbanization processes which increasingly abandoned agricultural activities from urban environments. However, today we can witness the return of urban agriculture (UA) as part of a strategy to make the city greener and healthier. The newly emerging interest for food and the city gave rise to urban food policies which integrate various policy domains directly or indirectly linked to food including health, education, employment, quality of live and social justice. It is interesting that in many cities one of the main drivers for the development of urban food policies is UA.

By examining UA in the context of sustainability, urban planning and food movements, this thesis investigates which role is attributed to UA by policymakers in Rotterdam. The unique feature of UA in Rotterdam lies according to the municipality in the combination of social initiatives and entrepreneurship, which gives rise to multifaceted forms of UA. An analysis of the policy documents *Sustainability Program* and the strategic agenda *Food and the City* illustrates that the multidimensional approach of UA contributes simultaneously to social and economic developments. On the one hand, policymakers perceive UA as driver to economic prosperity contributing to the attractiveness of the city. On the other hand, UA provides opportunities to enhance social cohesion, reconnect people to their food and educate about food production and preparation. These aspects come to the fore in the policy documents, which highlight the potential of UA to contribute to public health, economic growth and spatial quality.

The ambitions presented in the policy documents are critically analyzed using insights from a literature review. The literature on sustainability, urban planning and food movements points at potential opportunities and contradictions emerging from a combination of social and economic elements. One first recurrent discourse is emphasizing UA's potential to contribute to food security, food justice, public health, environmental sustainability, green jobs, education and community building. Another perspective of more critical social scientists argue that UA together with alternative food networks has often radical intentions to change the food system, but does not pose a real challenge to the capitalist system. As the case study of Rotterdam and the literature review in this thesis illustrate, we can neither assume that UA is simply supporting further neo-liberalization nor can we hope for a radical change of the neoliberal system. Instead, one should regard radical and neoliberal elements as intertwined in the practice of UA. The policy document analysis illustrates that adhering to both, neoliberal and radical discourses offers opportunities for UA to become institutionalized as means of creative city development, social activation and local food production. Institutionalizing UA in the form of urban food policies makes UA less radical, but on the other hand broadens its possibilities to bring radical ideas closer to urban political agendas

List of Abbreviations

AFM = alternative food movement

AFN = alternative food network

FPC = food policy council

UA = urban agriculture

UFS = urban food Strategy

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INTRODUCTION

"The feeding of cities has been arguably the greatest force shaping civilization, and it still is. In order to understand cities properly we need to look at them through food" (Steel, 2008, p. 10).

In the last two decades, the relationship between food and cities has gained more attention for many different but vital reasons. In Europe increasing numbers of households are suffering from food poverty, which "is accompanied by poor diet-related diseases like obesity and diabetes" (Moragues et al., 2013, p. 4). National governments in the global North have failed in addressing this and other food related issues, which are now increasingly dealt with on municipal levels (Sonnino, 2009). It is important to make a distinction between the global North and South because some national governments in the global South have successfully established food policies; an example is the zero hunger program in Brazil (Cassel, 2014). Municipal policymakers in Europe and North America increasingly recognize the role that food plays in sustainable urban development and they are concerned with providing access to fresh and healthy food. Therefore, we can witness the emergence of urban food policies which aim at integrating "different policy domains and objectives that are (in)directly linked to food, such as improving human health, youth education, environmental quality, quality of life, employment and social justice and cohesion" (Wiskerke, 2009, p. 380). There are two different examples of urban food policies emerging in the global North: urban food strategies and food policy councils.

In Europe, the concept of 'urban food strategies' (UFS) has gained prominence while in North America 'food policy councils' (FPC) are predominant; the Rough Guide to Sustainable Food Systems defines UFS "as a process consisting of how a city envisions change in its food system, and how it strives towards this change" (Moragues et al, 2013 p.6). On the way towards a strategic document, charters and action plans are developed that lead to a step by step implementation of food policies. Ideally, UFS have a holistic approach to the food system, integrating policy domains horizontally and vertically. Horizontal relations shall be established among policy domains concerned with economic, environmental, educational, health and community development aspects. Also, a vertical integration of food production, processing, storage, consumption and waste is needed for a holistic approach to the food system. Next to policymakers and politicians, UFS should also encourage participation from business sector and civil society. Through an holistic vision, UFSs "can be a vehicle to integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability, as well as for addressing justice and health issues" (Moragues et al., 2013, p. 4). In this respect, a "food strategy asks what food can do for the city, offering food as the vehicle and not necessarily the object of policy change" (Mah & Thang, 2012, p. 105).

The establishment of a food policy council is another way of integrating food in the political agendas. A FPC is “an officially sanctioned voluntary body comprised of stakeholders from various segments of a state/provincial or local food system. FPCs are collaborations between citizens and government officials that give voice to food-related concerns and interests. FPCs are asked to examine the operation of a local food system and provide ideas or recommendations for how it can be improved” (Mendes, 2008, p. 943). The food system is defined by Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) as a “chain of activities connecting food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management, as well as all the associated regulatory institutions and activities”. There are three ways in which FPC can influence the food system: legal and financial instruments, communication strategies and activities to shorten the food supply chain, which include urban agriculture, community supported agriculture and the development of sustainable food businesses (Moragues et al., 2013).

It is interesting that in many cities one of the main drivers for the development of urban food policies is urban agriculture (UA). To examine this particular role of UA it is considered here within the wider discourse on cities and sustainable development. Sustainability or sustainable development according to the Brundtland Report is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Mori & Christodoulou, 2012, p. 95). This underlying definition leaves a lot of space for interpretation, leading to various contested definitions of sustainability. Therefore, it is important to clarify what I mean when using the term urban sustainable development. I base my definition of sustainable development on a recent report published by the European Sustainable Development Network where a distinction is made between the terms ‘sustainable urban development’ and ‘urban sustainable development’ (Pisano, Lepuschitz, & Berger, 2014). The former is mainly associated with city planning and economic development while the latter refers to an urbanization process which is directed towards sustainability. Therefore, urban sustainable development is defined as encompassing all aspects that influence sustainable development of the urban area including social and economic developments, environmental protection and effective urban governance. This encompassing approach to sustainable development of urban areas, as presented by the European Sustainable Development Network, does not include any attempt to reorganize the food system in cities. However, all four dimensions of sustainable urban development could potentially be fostered by acting on the food system. The connection of the food system to sustainable urban development can be established through food policies such as UFS or FPC.

Drawing on a definition by Mougeot urban agriculture is depicted as “the growing, processing and distribution of food and non-food plant and tree crops and the raising of livestock directly for the urban market, both within and on the fringe of an urban area” (Mougeot 2006 in Caputo, 2012, p. 259). Distinctions can be made between intra-urban and peri-urban agriculture. For the purpose of this research the definition will be limited to the scale of intra-urban agriculture which is taking place within city limits.

Pearson et al. (2010) make a distinction of urban agricultural practices in three scales: micro, meso and macro. At the micro level UA is practiced on green roofs and walls as well as in backyards and on roadsides. At the meso level UA takes place in community gardens, individual allotments and urban parks. Commercial farms, nurseries and greenhouses are forms of macro scale UA. At all three scales public, private or cooperate forms of ownership exist. Next to multiple scales UA is practiced with various different intentions. Private gardens are often used to grow food as supplement to household consumption. This kind of UA contributes to food security which is defined by the WHO as situation "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life" (WHO, 2014a). The concept of food security includes the availability of fresh and healthy food, which needs to be accessible to all people. This means that the price of food products needs to be affordable for all so that a nutritious diet can be purchased. In the Netherlands, the availability of fresh food is given because large areas without a supermarket called 'food deserts' do not exist (Schans, 2010). However, van der Schans also argues that the accessibility might not be guaranteed since people with low income consider buying processed food which is cheaper but less healthy.

The fact that fresh and healthy food has come to be only accessible to those who can afford it has given rise to UA projects that strive for 'food justice'. "Such projects provide free and low-cost produce to local residents, a fresh and nutritious complement to the fast food and processed foods that dominate food retail in the city's low-income neighborhoods" in the US (McClintock, 2013, p. 147). Organizations like Just Food in New York City support "community-led efforts to increase access to locally grown food, especially in underserved [] neighborhoods" (Just Food, 2014). With this approach food justice movements contribute to social activation. Activation can be described as "all techniques that can be used to approach individuals or groups of people (…) and get them communicating (with each other)" (Böhme & Franke in The German Association of Cities, 2013). From a political perspective, activation programs are considered as important instruments to "reduce social security expenditure by lowering the number of people living on benefits and raising labour-market participation rates" (Van Berkel & De Schampheleire, 2001, p. 27). Community organizations like Just Food can therefore be considered as grassroots activation programs which bring people together with the aim to provide healthy food to low income groups. It is therefore, next to sustainability aspects of UA, also interesting to examine in which ways UA is used as instrument for activation of residents living in undeserved neighborhoods. Through means of a literature study, the role of UA in the context of urban development, sustainability and alternative food movements will be depicted in the first chapter of this thesis.

Moreover, with a special focus on Rotterdam, chapter two investigates which meaning is given to UA by policymakers. When looking at the Netherlands, UFS are emerging in several cities including: Amsterdam, Utrecht and Rotterdam (Cretella, forthcoming). The area encompassing the four biggest cities (Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague and Rotterdam) is called the Randstad. Among the cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam there has always been a long historical competitive relationship still rooted in the Dutch urban culture. While

Rotterdam with its big port has an image of an industrial and hardworking city, it is not considered as a cultural capital (Buursink, 1997). This image always made Rotterdam an unattractive city for the "creative" upper and middle class. Within this perspective, the *Stadsvisie* (Rotterdam urban vision) of Rotterdam setup in 2007 defines the spatial development strategy of the city till the year 2030. The document explains that Rotterdam is lacking behind in the Randstad region because the city faces selective out migration of young skilled labor and has a less developed knowledge economy. In order to keep its role as an important and competitive city in the Randstad region, the Stadsvisie of Rotterdam formulates the following mission statement: 'work at a strong economy and attractive residential city' (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007, p. 4). In line with this mission, the document further emphasizes the need to focus on attracting creative and high educated laborers and middle or higher income groups next to the development of the knowledge and service sector. The fact that several policy documents are also available in English might be part of a strategy to attract international experts and business to the city of Rotterdam. The competition for talented people is well illustrated by Florida's book "The flight of the creative class" stating that "competition revolve around a central axis: a nations ability to mobilize, attract and retain human creative talent" (Florida, 2007, p. 3). Looking at the case of Rotterdam competition for creative talent is not only happening among nations but also among cities within one country. This indicates that the focus of policy objectives, similar as to the policy of the 1990s, gives "priority to urban development that would improve national competiveness, and efficiency rather than social equity" (Stouten & Kuipers, 2014).

Next to the *Stadsvisie,* the municipality has developed a sustainability agenda in 2011 called 'Programma Duurzaam'. Research from 2007 indicates that Rotterdam has too little green areas and that many children are eating unhealthy food. Urban agriculture is seen as chance to grow food in poor areas, which can give unemployed people access to fresh and healthy food (Fontein, Stuiver, & Schrijver, 2011). Therefore, the municipality of Rotterdam has stated in a framework on sustainability that urban agriculture can be a point of departure to tackle these problems. De Groot (2011) argue that the social-cultural, economic and environmental spin off of urban agriculture connects well with the diverse priorities of policy objectives.

Both policy documents introduced above have competing claims: urban development to increase competitiveness versus development towards social equity. Mendes argues that the involvement of municipal governments in food "is often driven by two related but sometimes competing goals: 'sustainability' or 'quality of life' on the one hand, and anti-hunger politics on the other" (Mendes, 2008, p. 943). The case of Rotterdam highlights that competing policy objectives (economic vs social) can drive or hamper the development of urban agriculture, however, with different interests in policy outcomes. It is therefore interesting to examine which role UA plays in municipal politics striving for urban renewal and social integration at the same time. These competing claims are an interesting point of departure for a discourse analysis since both might articulate the role of urban agriculture in sustainable development differently.

This research will mainly focus on the role of urban agriculture within wider set of emerging food policies. The main research question addressed here is:

> which role is attributed to urban agriculture by policymakers in the process of sustainable urban development in Rotterdam?

This thesis strives to answer the above stated question by means of a discourse analysis. The methodological approach is shortly introduced here and elaborated in more detail in the second chapter. Hajer and Versteeg define discourse as "an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices" (2005, p. 175). In other words, ideas and concepts are expressed in language terms and the extensive use of these terms in daily practices can make a certain discourse dominant. Language is an important aspect of a discourse, but the practice in which discourses emerge is "not necessarily limited to language" (Hermans, Horlings, Beers, & Mommaas, 2010, p. 48). While the concept of sustainability has effectively entered political debates on the municipal level, the role of the food system is just entering the political arena, which makes it interesting to examine the discourse that emerges among politicians and policymakers. In this research the concept of discourse is used elaborate how the practice of policymaking generates and reproduces a certain narratives around urban agriculture. It is particularly interesting to identify which groups and organizations follow the same discourse and in which case different or even conflicting meaning is attached to urban agriculture.

To conduct this research, I started with a literature review in the domain of urban planning, alternative food movements and sustainable development. The literature is reviewed in chapter one with a special focus on the scientific discourse that emerges around urban agriculture. For the case study on the political discourse in Rotterdam, the policy documents *Food and the city: stimulating urban agriculture in and around Rotterdam* and the *Sustainability Program* are analyzed in chapter two. Findings of both chapters are discussed in the concluding chapter.

1. WHY SHOULD PEOPLE FARM URBAN SPACES?

1.1 Introduction

"Cities face unprecedented demographic, environmental, economic, social and spatial challenges, with six out of every ten people in the world expected to reside in urban areas by 2030" (IISD, 2014).

This chapter highlights why urban agriculture is re-emerging in the global North and in which ways urban space is made available or occupied for alternative means of urban development like urban agriculture. I elaborate further on the argumentation provided by McClintock (2013) who identifies two dominant discourses on urban agriculture in the academic debate of urban studies and planning. In his perspective, one first recurrent discourse is emphasizing UA's potential to contribute to food security, food justice, public health, environmental sustainability, green jobs, education and community building. On the other hand the perspective of more critical social scientists (Galt, Gray, & Hurley, 2014; McClintock, 2013; Tonkiss, 2013) argue that UA together with alternative food networks (AFN) have often radical intentions to change the food system, but are not able to build a real alternative to the capitalist logic and system. Hence, McClintock argues that UA is on the one hand neoliberal, in the sense that it holds an entrepreneurial dimension, but on the other hand it is also radical because UA offers possibilities to redefine the relation between urban space and food production. In this way, "contradictory processes of capitalism both create opportunities for urban agriculture and impose obstacles to its expansion" (McClintock, 2013, p. 148).

In this chapter, I will elaborate on this dual dimension of UA. First, by discussing the re-emergence of UA in the light of economic crisis; and secondly, by exploring in which ways UA can or cannot contribute to a transformation of the urban food system.

1.2 Rising popularity of UA in the global north

Figures from the UN report "World Urbanization Prospects: The 2011 Revision" indicate that population growth will become a largely urban phenomena, expecting that by 2015 67% of the world population lives in urban areas. In more developed countries, the percentage of urban dwellers is estimated to amount to 86% by 2050. Moreover, it is estimated that "cities consume 75% of the world's resources and produce 80% of CO_2 emissions" (Pisano et al., 2014, p. 6). These figures point out that it becomes increasingly important to deal with

social, environmental and economic challenges at city level. Already in the 1980's, the program 'healthy cities' was initiated which puts "health high on the agendas of decision makers and [promotes] comprehensive local strategies for health protection and sustainable development" (WHO, 2014b). An important contribution to health of urban dwellers is, according to a study conducted by Groen Loont, more green space in urban areas. Findings of the study suggest that the percentage of obese children is 15% lower for children growing up in green neighborhoods. In addition, green environments lower the chance of depression and decrease the use of medicines (Bade, Smid, & Tonneijck, 2011). Moreover, a study conducted by Bellows indicates that urban gardening can be a successful strategy to enhance health among urban residents. On the one hand, gardening functions as physical exercise, reducing the risk of obesity, coronary heart disease and diabetes. Besides that she identifies that "the presence of vegetable gardens in inner-city neighborhoods is positively correlated with decreases in crime, trash dumping, juvenile delinquency, fires, violent deaths, and mental illness" (Bellows, Brown, & Smit, 2004, p. 8).

Furthermore, green in the city can improve air quality, function as water retention and mitigate heat island effects. "The term "heat island" describes built up areas that are hotter than nearby rural areas" (EPA, 2014). A hot climate in the city increases the chance for heat related illness and mortality. Next to human health, also environmental pressures like climate change urge cities to reduce their carbon emissions. Improving green space in urban areas can thus contribute to human health and urban sustainable development.

Moreover, access to healthy food constitutes a substantial contribution to human health. Today, globalized food supply chains make it possible to meet the high demand for food in urban areas. However, various problems arise with regard to the agro-industrial food supply chain, including environmental degradation and increased health risks and outbreaks of foodborne diseases (Motarjemi & Käferstein, 1999). Furthermore, the infrastructure needed for transportation, cooling and marketing of food contributes to CO_2 emissions in the city. In response to these problems, consumer groups, food movements and municipal governments increasingly try to establish regional and local food supply chains (Just Food, 2014; Sonnino, 2009). In addition, local food production also reduces "food miles", a term used by Tim Lang to describe the distance that food travels to reach the consumers plate. Reducing food miles can therefore contribute to lower CO_2 emissions.

Partially, the now re-emerging interest for UA in the global North can be understood as response to the concerns and opportunities just described. However, it is important to remember that agricultural activities have been a feature of urban life till well into the 20th century; eventually during the industrialization period vegetables, pigs chicken could easily be found in the backyards of urban factory workers (McClintock, 2013). At the same time, UA has always flourished in times of crisis and it has actively been promoted by the US government during the two world wars and the recession in the 1970's (McClintock, 2010). The intention of these government led programs was to prevent unrest among the hungry and unemployed in town (L. J. Lawson, 2005). Also, with the economic meltdown in 2008

when social safety nets have been slashed in the US UA served to improve "household food security and self-sufficiency" (Galt et al., 2014, p. 141). Compared to the US, the urgency to grow food for food security might be less severe in a country like Germany, for Rosol (2012) argues that stronger social welfare systems are in place. Though, a FAO report from 2008 indicates that "some 43 million people are thought to be at risk of food poverty in Europe" (FAO, 2014). Moreover, the FAO report indicates that food prices have been highest in the year 2008 corresponding with the economic meltdown. Since the production, processing and distribution of food is heavily reliant on fuel, food prices are expected to increase further with the depletion of fuel reserves in the future (Atkinson, 2013).

These developments led to what Holt Gimenez and Shattuck (2011) name the 'global food crisis' because the world's poor could not afford to buy enough food while the world's major agri-food corporations profited from increased food prices (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). These developments reflect the characteristics of the current 'food regime', which is a term defined as "rule governed structure of production and consumption of food on a world scale" (Friedmann in Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 110). In addition, the current food regime is characterized by "unprecedented market power and profits of monopoly agri-food corporations, globalized animal protein chains, growing links between food and fuel economies, a 'supermarket revolution', liberalized global trade in food, increasingly concentrated land ownership [and] a shrinking natural resource base" (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 111). In opposition to the current food regime, alternative food movements (AFM) arose which can be described as encompassing "a wide array of new linkages between agricultural production and food consumption that differ from 'conventional' processes and routes" (Galt et al., 2014, p. 134). UA can be considered as an AFM, because it provides modes of production and consumption that are different from the globalized agri-food production chains of the current food regime.

Emphasizing the positive contributions that UA can make to urban development illustrates why UA can be seen as an alternative to the current food regime. UA provides opportunities for economic development because local production, processing and retail creates new and diverse jobs (Pearson et al., 2010). Also, locally produced food does not need to travel far to reach the consumers plate, which results in lower energy use for transportation, cooling, storage and packaging. Therefore, UA is regarded to have a central function in mitigating urban climate change effects (Specht et al., 2014). Additionally, Pearson et al (2010) note environmental contributions of UA like waste recycling, mitigation of urban heat islands and improved air quality. UA is also believed to hold social functions because it offers new possibilities for social interaction and community building (McClintock, 2010); moreover, the provision of fresh, local food might contribute positively to public health (Bade et al., 2011). These benefits are recognized by policymakers who are putting these ideas in practice through municipal food strategies and food policy councils. The literature on food policies reflects a widely positive understanding of the role that ad hoc policies can play in transforming the food system (Mah & Thang, 2012; Mendes, 2008; Sonnino, 2009). While acknowledging the positive attributes of UA, critical scholars from urban studies question

whether UA can challenge “processes of neo-liberalization in the practice of urban development” (Rosol, 2012, p. 239). In which ways one can consider UA as challenging neoliberal practices is examined in the following, placing UA in the context of food movements.

1.3 UA and food movements

To elaborate how food movements challenge the current food regime, I draw on four different trends in the current food system described by Holt Giminez and Shattuck (2011) as neoliberal, reformist, progressive and radical. The neoliberal vision is based on a logic of liberal markets where production of food is realized for the lowest price through ongoing technological innovation and economies of scale. The reformist trend operates within the neoliberal logic but aims to reduce environmental degradation and enhance ecological and social equity through the introduction of certification schemes. The central theme of the reformist approach is ‘food security’, providing food for all through food aid. The authors place these two trends on the side of ongoing neo-liberalization because they do not challenge the current logic of privatization and deregulation; leaving inequalities existing in production, distribution and access to food unchallenged. Contrary to these two trends, the progressive and radical visions attempt to re-arrange the current food system.

Again, Holt Gimenez and Shattuck identify ‘food justice’ movements that emerge in the global North as progressive because they focus on local food networks that integrate the most disadvantaged citizens through community organizations and alternative business models. The organization Just Food is a pioneer of sustainable food models in New York City and “supports community-led efforts to increase access to locally grown food, especially in underserved [] neighbourhoods” (Just Food, 2014). On their website ‘food justice’ is defined as “communities exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat healthy food [which is] nutritious, affordable, culturally-appropriate, and grown locally with care for the well-being of the land, workers, and animals”. Food justice movements prioritize equal distribution among citizens above profits. With this approach, they operate outside the dominant logic of neoliberalism but do not directly challenge the neoliberal system (McClintock, 2013). Also, the emergence of Food Policy Councils (FPC) is regarded by Holt Gimenez and Shattuck as a manifestation of increased resistance to the neoliberal food system, because FPC are characterized by “direct citizen participation and a commitment to equity and sustainability” (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 126). The radical movement strives for structural change of the food system that brings about a redistribution of wealth. The central idea of a radical transformation is summarized by the term ‘food sovereignty’, which is defined by La Via Campesina as:

“the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and

agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations." (Via Campesina, 2007).

This is just one of many definitions of food sovereignty (Patel, 2009), but it serves to illustrate that giving people the right to define how food is produced "invokes a democratization of the food system in favor of the poor and undeserved" (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 128).

The question that now arises is where we can place UA in the spectrum of food movements as illustrated above; do UA projects mitigate the externalities of the industrial food system through reformist attempts that provide food security, but do not change the inequalities resulting from a neo-liberal market system? Or does UA provide room for new forms of societal organization that radically challenge current logics of the food system? Drawing on McClintock's (2013) argumentation, the following section elaborates why UA is at the same time neoliberal and radical and why these contradicting trends are vital for the re-emergence of UA in the global North.

1.4 UA and creative city politics

"Because of the recent developments in the property market, it is becoming increasingly difficult to run affordable home/work premises. Artists and alternative entrepreneurs experience this problem when trying to find a place in the city. The subculture, one of the most important foundations for the city's creative image, is being squeezed out as a result" (City of Amsterdam, 2003a in Shaw, 2005, p. 161).

The above stated concern of the City of Amsterdam is part of a political strategy called 'Broedplaatsenbeleid' (breeding ground). This policy devotes public spending to the purchase of vacant buildings, which are sold or leased with subsidized prices to artists in order to guarantee that the creative and alternative spirit of the city does not vanish (Shaw, 2005). The positive strategy towards creative city development employed by the city of Amsterdam highlights the importance of a 'creative class' (Florida, 2007) for sustaining the vibrant alternative scene.

Under the banner of creative city politics, Mayer (2013) elaborates that urban governments "discovered cultural revitalization and creativity-led economic and urban development as a useful strategy to enhance their brand and improve their global image" (2013, p. 11). Art, music and self-managed communities take on an ambiguous role, since they mark certain places as attractive. However, this attractiveness is ultimately "transformed by investors into economic capital" (2013, p. 12). While some projects fall under the category of creative politics, and are therefore beneficial for the competitiveness of a city, the 'urban outcast' including "communities of color, informal workers, austerity victims and urban rioters"

(2013, p. 12) is pushed further to the outskirts of the city. These two categories belong according to Mayer to two different groups within urban movements. On the one hand, alternative sub-cultures which fit into the framework of creative city politics, with participants from the middle class; on the other hand, movements from low-income groups rebelling against increased austerity measures, including rioters and 'Food not Bombs' or other anti-poverty organizations. In the past both movements occupied different strategic positions, but with the occupy movement agendas of more privileged sub-cultures start to merge with those of marginalized groups (Mayer, 2013).

This division can be similarly identified within the food movement because Alkon and Agyeman (2011) criticize the alternative food movement of being a white middle class movement, excluding other narratives. Furthermore, the authors critically note that low income communities cannot buy the diet that is advocated by the dominant food movement, which is striving for local and sustainable food systems. The authors suggest that the alternative food movement is becoming a monoculture, consisting of likeminded people with a similar background and similar values, coming to "similar conclusions about how our food system should change" (2011, p. 3).

In response to such exclusionary food movements, communities of color begin to "engage in food justice activism in order to provide food for themselves while imagining new ecological and social relationships" (2011, p. 5). In this way, the food justice movement can be distinguished from other food movements (only concerned with local or sustainable production), in the sense that its goal is to provide adequate food for their own communities who have no access to the products advocated by the middleclass AFM. However, food justice movements cannot be considered as radical because they are locally based initiatives and do not directly challenge the neoliberal system. As a matter of fact, McClintock (2013) highlights how the establishment of social support schemes for marginalized populations could ironically contribute to a further 'roll back' of the state, in the sense that less and less support is provided by state agencies in terms of welfare. In his perspective, relying on market and informal community organizations becomes the dominant mode of operation in today's welfare governance, which is no longer willing to support marginalized communities at its expenses. It is this dynamic which makes McClintock conclude that UA has next to the certainly beneficial features not a truly radical character. The potential for effective food system change depends according to Holt Gimenez and Shattuck (2011) "on the nature and strength of the strategic alliances between progressive and radical trends of the food movement" (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 136). Taking this analysis a bit further, one could argue that actions of both the progressive and the radical food movement cannot be understood without looking at their interrelation with neoliberal policies.

Next to a positive approach towards creative urban development as described above, Tonkiss (2013) elaborates three other policy and planning models: permissive, proscriptive and abandonment. A permissive policy does not exclude but also not support possibilities for re-using a particular space, which often leads to temporary projects. The model of

proscription does not leave much room for alternative uses of space, which often results in prohibition to occupy empty spaces for temporary use; an example is the ban on squatting introduced in the Netherlands in 2010. A political strategy of abandonment leaves the urban territory entirely free for 'independent agency'; this happened in various US cities where municipal budgets were so low that even very basic forms of provisioning were left to social efforts. Detroit serves as a case illustrating a policy of abandonment, which led to depopulation and de-industrialization. As Lawson and Miller (2012) describe, "the responsibility falls on residents and neighborhood organizations to shift vacant land from being perceived as abandoned to having purpose" (2012, p. 17). Also, they further express the centrality of urban gardens and UA as means to revitalize abandoned areas in Detroit.

Tonkiss (2013) emphasizes that these four forms often come in a mix and change over time. In British cities policies of abandonment and prescription "are currently high in the mix" (2013, p. 314). A mix of prescription and abandonment might seem contradictory in the first place, but an example from London illustrates that the prohibition of a certain occupation may encourage a program for creative temporary use under a different heading. The attempt to close a public library in Barnet resulted in strong protest by local residents. Despite petitions, campaigns and protests the city council decided to close the library, but handed over stewardship to a Community Library Trust in 2013, which now runs the library with voluntary staff. The fact that public services are increasingly replaced by voluntary community organizations is described by McClintock (2013) as 'roll back' of state services, leading to increased self-responsibility and market based solutions. Abandonment leaves urban space to projects based on voluntary actions since no monetary support is made available; in such a situation, alternative urban solutions can only develop under self-organization. However, prescriptive policies like the criminalization of residential squatting in London, in 2012, may leave no room for self-organized projects, which poses a serious challenge to unconventional, creative urban development (Tonkiss, 2013). The example of the Barnet library illustrates that the impasse resulting from prescription and abandonment can gives rise to new arrangements between government agencies and societal organizations, in this case, resulting in a new form community stewardship.

A study conducted by Rosol (2012) about community volunteering in Berlin clarifies what McClintock means when he argues that "volunteer labour is a critical component of neoliberal governance of urban green space, subsidising cutbacks to state-sponsored services justified via discourses of community participation, personal responsibility, and environmental citizenship" (McClintock, 2013, p. 163). With a campaign, the government of Berlin asked local residents to adopt their parks since no money was available for further maintenance. This active call of the Berlin government for citizen engagement and self-responsibility makes Rosol conclude that a "new acceptance of civic engagement in the public green sector" emerges; indicating that community participation and personal-responsibility become central themes in urban policies. There are, however, different interests on the side of public administration and local residents. The local administration wants to reduce its workload while at the same time maintain control over the green space.

Residents however, are not interested to work under the command of administrators but strive for self-determination. An answer was found to this dilemma in the two cases studied by Rosol since "the residents groups were given freedom over how to design and run the gardens – as long as these remained open to the general public, followed by some basic safety requirements, and as long as the gardeners accepted the only temporary admission to the land" (2012, p. 248). This example indicates that new form of stewardship emerge in the governance of public green space in Berlin. The fact that residents do not simply perform municipal tasks, but gain freedom and decision making power about the use and structure of the green space, illustrates the transformative character of these newly emerging forms of stewardship.

In another way, UA projects run by voluntary community organization can be considered as welcome intervention in abandoned neighborhoods since they "keep the vacant space warm while development capital is cool" (2013, p. 318). With this statement, Tonkiss (2013) emphasizes that UA can contribute to increase the livability of urban areas which are currently unattractive for public or private investment. Voicu and Been (2008) find significant relation between the establishment of a community garden and increased property values within a radius of 1000 feet. This illustrates that despite of a lack of public investment community gardens and other creative activities improve the neighborhood which ultimately results in increased valorization of the area. There is a two sided implication inherent in this kind of UA initiatives. Tonkiss (2013) argues that UA can make the place more livable on the one hand, while it might on the other hand function as a startup for speculative investment, which will eventually take over the sites that have been cultivated by the community. In this way, UA might become 'victim of its own success' (2013, p. 318) because increasing the attraction of the area results in higher rents which ultimately creates "new urban spaces for capitalist accumulation" (McClintock, 2013, p. 156); a process referred to as gentrification.

Mayer (2013) illustrates how ecological strategies are incorporated in gentrification projects. The Swedish urban gardening movement 'City Soil' became part of a "best practice project of sustainable lifestyles, environmental housing and ecological food-growing" (2013, p. 12), attracting new residents from the white middle class, while displacing working class residents or migrants. This example clarifies that creative and alternative projects have become part of neoliberal urban development strategies "creating spaces of exclusion" (McClintock, 2013, p. 156).

1.5 Beyond the divide between neoliberal and radical

A neoliberal feature can be identified in UA because it operates according to McClintock as 'flanking institution' that serves to "buttress a weakened network of social services, deliver services and entitlements once provided by the government" (McClintock, 2013, p. 155). This happens, as illustrated by the examples above, through voluntary community organizations which take over state responsibilities and therefore perform a reformist task of mitigating the side effects of neo-liberalization. Moreover, UA might be actively contributing to enhance the competitiveness of cities, if it is advocated in creative city politics; thereby attracting the creative class which might start up a process of gentrification.

On the other hand Galt et al highlight that UA is driven by "rationalities that diverge from the capitalist logic" (2014, p. 137) which implies that there is something radical inherent to UA. The difference from a capitalist logic becomes visible in three ways. First, even if the main driver behind UA is efficient production it is also accompanied by other values such as providing adequate wages and decent jobs. Second, UA as part of AFN expresses a rejection of an instrumentalist rationality that only cares about personal gain; in some UA projects, the logic of self-interest is replaced by a rationality embracing values like environmental conservation and social justice. Thirdly, these different rationalities give rise to a wide range of alternative production systems that are completely different from industrial monocultures. In this way, UA can "create space for self-determination and autonomy long denied by systems of oppression" (2014, p. 137). Through these alternative rationalities, UA challenges or circumvents the dominant ways of thinking, valuing and relating to urban space and food production (Galt et al., 2014).

Looking at radical and neoliberal as two separate trends is thus not appropriate since we can neither assume that UA is simply supporting further neo-liberalization, nor can we hope for a radical change of the neoliberal system. Instead, one should regard radical and neoliberal elements as intertwined in the practice of UA. Adhering to both, neoliberal and radical discourses, offers opportunities for UA to become institutionalized as means of creative city development, social activation or local food production. An institutional setting makes UA less radical, but broadens its possibilities to bring radical ideas closer to urban political agendas.

Engaging critically with the implications of UA as element of urban transformation does therefore not imply that the transformative capacity of UA is neglected. On the contrary, conclusions of critical scholars like Tonkiss, McClintock and Galt et al. all emphasize that "a shift [is] happening in many urban food systems where millions of people are re-thinking and changing how we use contemporary urban space in relation to food" (Galt et al., 2014, p. 133). Also, Atkinson recognizes that UA "may be the initial impetus and learning process for more substantial local organisation around the needs arising from the failure of the global, national and local economies, displacing traditional top-down, centrally controlled local government with truly democratic forms of local organization" (2013, p. 94). With reference

to food policies, McClintock recognizes that “a shift in the dominant paradigm surrounding the food system is apparent as the connections between food, city planning and public health are discussed in tandem” (McClintock, 2013, p. 165). To what extend municipal governments really embrace urban agriculture in their policy determines its capacity to challenge the current food system; it is important to note that UA alone cannot achieve a radical shift in the food system, but can be seen as part of a broader attempt to re-arrange it. Real change would occur, if the discourse of the government shifts towards taking responsibility for establishing educational gardens rather than relying on nonprofit organizations for such actions. In addition, there is a need to assign new value to UA in order to join the urban land use priorities of housing and commercial areas, roads and other infrastructure because “only if the production of fresh and healthy food is viewed as a public good” (McClintock, 2013, p. 166) cities will give space to UA in the long run.

Focusing on the case of Rotterdam, the following chapter identifies the political discourse on UA and examines in which ways radical and neoliberal aspects of UA merge or conflict with policy objectives.

2. URBAN AGRICULTURE IN ROTTERDAM

2.1 Introduction

As illustrated in the previous chapter, focusing on the relationship between food and the city is since 2008 a clear trend in the major cities of the global North. This trend is also visible in Rotterdam, well documented in the special edition of the professional journal "Groen – ruimte in stad en landschap", which gives a multifaceted overview of the various social and entrepreneurial initiatives dealing with urban agriculture in the city (Annemieke Fontein, Leon la Riviere, & Broek, 2013). In the last six years, neighborhood gardens and semi-commercial gardens started to emerge under the heading of UA. Organizations like Eetbaar Rotterdam, Rotterdamse Oogst and Transition Towns Rotterdam were among the first groups promoting UA. The association Eetbaar Rotterdam wishes "to gather and spread knowledge in the field of urban agriculture" (City of Rotterdam, 2012, p. 28), with the purpose to make the food chain visible again in the city. The main objective of the organization Rotterdamse Oogst is to reinforce the local food chain by organizing various activities including a big harvest festival. Transition Towns is "an international movement of villages, districts, towns and cities that want to become independent of long supply lines as much as possible" (City of Rotterdam, 2012, p. 28). In Rotterdam, Transition Towns foster the exchange of knowledge on UA though film events, discussions and the provision of information on the internet. It is especially through the engagement of these organizations that UA became a 'hot topic' also on the political agenda of Rotterdam (Oorschot, 2013, p. 9).

Increased political attention for UA highlights that it is no longer a "hobby", but becoming part of society in the city (Annemieke Fontein et al., 2013). The organization Eetbaar Rotterdam sees a chance in UA as trade mark of the city (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2011, p. 35), which also comes to the fore in policy documents like the *Sustainability Program* and the strategic agenda *Food and the City;* both documents illustrate that the multidimensional approach of UA provides several opportunities to contribute to urban sustainable development. The *Sustainability Program* from 2011 "describes ten tasks that will be carried out until 2014 in order to make the city more sustainable" (City of Rotterdam, 2012, p. 9). Task six in the *Sustainability Program* concerns the greening of the city. Besides other measures UA is regarded as means to realize more green in the city, which positively contributes to health, heat reduction and water retention (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2011). With an explicit focus on the support of UA, the agenda *Food and the City – stimulating urban agriculture in and around Rotterdam* describes concrete actions to support UA with regard to three main objectives: health, a sustainable economy and the quality of urban environments. Moreover, since 2010 a think tank on UA advises the alderman for Sustainability, Inner City and Outdoor Space (City of Rotterdam, 2012) and the establishment of a regional Food Council in 2013 ensures that stakeholders of the whole supply chain get a

say in regional food polices (Oorschot, 2013). However, political opinions on the relevance of policies supporting UA in Rotterdam diverge. While Alexandra van Huffelen, alderman for *Sustainability, Inner City and Outdoor Space,* became enthusiast supporter of UA, Jan-Willem Verheij (part of the parliamentary group from 2010 till 2014) considers UA not as a topic that should be dealt with by municipal politicians because he does not see any additional benefit in terms of food provisioning (Verheij, 2012). The fact that a lot of fresh food is produced in the direct surrounding of Rotterdam supports his point; however, policies concerning UA do not simply aim at providing local food, but recognize UA's potential to contribute to health, a sustainable economy and the quality of urban environments. The municipality of Rotterdam understands UA as food production within (intra-urban) and around (peri-urban) the city (Oorschot, 2013). Support for peri-urban agriculture stimulates interaction between farmers, consumers, business and retailers in and around the city. While the reconnection of farmers and consumers is on its way in various forms (Boereninzicht, 2014; Oorschot, 2013; Rechtstreex, 2014), this analysis focuses on possibilities for intra-urban agriculture, which is concerned with UA within city limits.

The unique feature of UA in Rotterdam lies according to the municipality in the combination of social initiatives and entrepreneurship that gives rise to multifaceted forms of UA (Oorschot, 2013). Projects which have been realized include social initiatives of housing corporations, neighborhood gardens, a roof garden, commercial UA business in the city, better facilities on farms in the surrounding of Rotterdam and eatable green in public space. To finance professionals who take the lead in establishing UA projects, money needs to be made available either through founding or through market opportunities. Funding is obtained for UA in various ways; examples include funds for artistic or societal purposes, but also budgets for livability and neighborhood development that are provided by housing corporations. Van der Schans (2013) notices that social and commercial elements become intertwined in many projects; he regards this development as positive because in this way UA becomes a means for economic development of the region and borough. Projects which have a social setup, but also gain income through the market, are for example Hotspot Hutspot and Rotterdamse Munt. Hotspot Hutspot provides opportunities for children to help in the vegetable garden and learn how to prepare a complete meal with fresh vegetables, which is served in a small restaurant for an economic price (Vanhauwaert, 2013). The organization Rotterdamse Munt teaches women in the district of Rotterdam Zuid how to grow herbs which are sold to restaurants in Rotterdam (Rotterdamse Munt, 2014).

In these projects the government often takes a facilitating role, leaving the actual implementation in the hands of citizen or professionals (Bronsveld, 2013a). In which way the municipality wants to facilitate UA is laid down in the *Sustainability Program* and the strategic agenda *Food and the City*. It is interesting to investigate what meaning is given to UA by politicians in Rotterdam in order to identify whether radical as well as neoliberal notions of UA dominate the political discourse and how this manifests in practice. The following section introduces methodological contributions of a discourse analysis.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

I understand a discourse as "an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices" (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005, p. 175). In other words, ideas and concepts are expressed in language terms and the extensive use of these terms in daily practices can make a certain discourse dominant. To elaborate why analyzing the discourse on UA in Rotterdam contributes to an understanding of UA, I draw on Hajer and Versteeg (2005) who identify four contributions of discourse analysis to the study of environmental politics. These contributions are equally helpful for developing an understanding of the discourse on urban agriculture: firstly, it is assumed that reality is shaped by language, which implies that reality is socially constructed. Taking the perspective of discourse analysis allows to understand that "nature is not something out there, but a culturally appropriated concept" (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005, p. 178). In this sense one can also look at UA as culturally defined practice which takes on different meanings in different cultural contexts.

Secondly, a discourse shapes what can be thought and what cannot be thought, which leads to an exclusion of other meanings. In this way, a discourse can "serve as a precursor to policy outcomes" (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005, p. 178), limiting the options to only those ideas and practices that are part of the dominant discourse. Identifying a discourse on food policies or urban agriculture in particular can contribute to uncover which political strategies get hold in a certain context and which other meanings are neglected.

Thirdly, a discourse can be analyzed as cultural politics because policies are often made with a cultural bias which manifests in the political language. The language used defines the possibilities to act and has thus high influence on the practices carried out. With regard to the sustainable development discourse, Hajer and Versteeg (2005) illustrate that actors who feel that they cannot conform to the values and practices of the discourse on environmental sustainability "tend to cloak themselves in the language of environmentalism" (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005, p. 180). Concerning food policies it can be interesting to dismantle whether the multidimensional benefits of UA are at the same time obscuring other developments, which are not adhering to the values promoted by the sustainability discourse.

Finally, a discourse analysis can identify language practices as means of disciplining society (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). This last point refers to a Foucauldian understanding of governance, which implies that government strategies aim at disciplining and civilizing urban areas according to a dominant logic (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Van Melik & Lawton, 2011). Hajer and Versteeg (2005) elaborate that the concept of governmentality also exposes a shift in responsibility from the state to citizens "whereby the state empowers the individual citizen to make choices based on good information provided by the state" (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005, p. 180). Engaging citizens in UA and public green space management might be

analyzed with regard to a shift in responsibilities or as attempt to activate and civilize certain groups in society.

To get an insight in the political discourse on UA in Rotterdam, the policy documents *Food and the City* and the *Sustainability Program* will be analyzed according to *economic* and *social* criteria. Even though social and economic objectives are not strictly separated in practice, they are used here as analytical categories which help to distinguish between two different discourses.

Economic criteria are closely linked to a neoliberal discourse which adheres to the logic of the market with little government involvement and increased levels of privatization. The outsourcing of formerly public tasks to private companies and social organizations is therefore part of the economic paradigm. Besides that, the core principle of the market is competitiveness; with regard to cities, this also means competing to attract the most talented and creative people (Florida, 2007). Becoming more attractive as a city or district increases the real estate value of the area and thus yields economic benefits. More broadly, the creation of paid jobs and services as well as the establishment of new business and extended markets is part of the economic discourse. Examining the economic discourse highlights possibilities for UA to become integrated in the local economy, which is vital in order to sustain UA in the long run since a change in the discourse on UA might dry up funding for projects. Moreover, competitiveness and outsourcing of public tasks can create new room for UA, while at the same time these policies potentially contribute to maintain inequalities and marginalization.

At the heart of the social discourse lies the reduction of inequalities among social class and city districts as well as inclusivity and increased social cohesion. With regard to UA, social criteria encompass the reconnection of people with their food and the thereof resulting benefits for health, nutrition and city climate. The role of the government as provider, supporter and facilitator of social and environmental services is here considered as component of a social discourse because the government is taking an active role rather than abandoning services. Moreover, new modes of food provisioning which are not driven by a logic of profit accumulation are part of a social rather than economic discourse because people and the environment are given priority above economic gains. Examining the social discourse enables to identify whether policies are truly social in the sense that they include the marginalized districts and low income class in the program on UA. As elaborated in chapter one, creative city politics and local food movements do not necessarily pursue the same goals as movements from marginalized groups. Elaborating on the economic and social discourse shall expose whether UA in Rotterdam can potentially merge the agendas of both movements.

Examples from the praxis serve to demonstrate in which ways economic and social objectives stated in the policy documents are put into practice. Moreover, practical examples illustrate to what extent the political discourse is shaped and contested by existing and emerging organizations and projects

2.3 Sustainability Program

2.3.1 Content

„The Rotterdam municipality aims at an optimum balance between social, ecological and economic interests in the development of the city. The municipality wishes to achieve this in collaboration with the inhabitants and the private sector [...]. I am convinced that Rotterdam will become more attractive due to a variety of new types of food production in and round the city." Van Huffelen (City of Rotterdam, 2012, p. 5)

The municipality of Rotterdam places its *Sustainability Program* in the context of international developments which press for sustainable solutions. Climate change, resource scarcity, depletion of fossil fuels and the supply of clean water and nutritious food are issues which give rise to a growing sector in the economy occupied with knowledge development and innovation. Moreover, sustainability is also an important topic with regard to social developments like poverty reduction, health and education. Therefore, developing and marketing of sustainable solutions presents a point of departure for entrepreneurship, knowledge development, job opportunities and reintegration which can contribute to social cohesion. The combination of economic growth, intensified land use and improved livability of urban environments constitute core elements of the *Sustainability Program*. Furthermore, the *Program* presents ambitions for a clean, green and healthy city. Ten different goals are listed in the document whereby task six 'to make the city greener' is in the focus of this analysis. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that all ten tasks are part of one *Program* and are therefore interrelated. More green in the city functions as water retention; in addition trees, flowers, green yards and green roofs make the city more attractive and contribute at the same time to mitigate heat. Additionally, a green environment reduces stress and eases traffic noise.

The above statement by Alexandra van Huffelen points out several elements which are indicating the presence of a social as well as economic discourse on UA in Rotterdam. First, Van Huffelen recognizes that UA can be a means to achieve a balance between social, ecological and economic interests; secondly, she refers to the public and private sector which play a major role for the implementation of UA in Rotterdam; and thirdly, she notices the contribution of urban food production for enhancing the attractiveness of the city.

These three topics are well reflected in the main objectives stated under task six of the *Sustainability Program* aiming 'to make the city greener'

- the goal is that by 2014 the neighborhoods with fewest green in 2010 have become greener
- to plant 2000 extra trees till 2012
- to realize 160.000 m2 of green roofs and green faces of buildings till 2014
- more involvement of citizens in green areas
- in the long term green shall become a standard tool for accomplishing goals related to health, noise, climate, water retention and air quality. This shall indicate that also an urbanized and industrial environment can go hand in hand with biodiversity (p. 34).

To achieve these goals the following actions are listed in the *Program*.

- to focus at stony areas with little or no green
- more than ever the municipality is asking entrepreneurs, citizens, organizations and sub-municipalities to contribute to the accomplishment of these tasks
- work together with the water authority to realize green roofs and faces of buildings for more water retention capacity

Next to green roofs, trees and green faces of buildings the potential of UA as means to accomplish the above state goals is well documented in the *Program*. Under the heading of UA organizations and citizens combine the provision of sustainable food with other goals like maintaining landscapes and involving the youth through nature and environmental education. The municipality recognizes that "urban agriculture is thus an excellent tool to achieve other goals" (p. 36 translation by author). Also neighborhoods have been transformed by residents into greener environments, which is illustrated by the neighborhood garden "Schat van Schoonderloo" in Delfshaven. This example is elaborated in more detail below.

Working together is a key concept of the *Sustainability Program* giving a central role to shared responsibility. With this framework, the municipality hopes to facilitate already existing initiatives of citizens, residents, companies and organizations that contribute to the objectives of the *Sustainability Program*. Specific actions are designated to seven different groups in society which are categorized as: (1) residents, (2) the harbor and large industries, (3) entrepreneurs, associations and institutions, (4) corporations, investors and developers, (5) car drivers, (public) transport companies and logistic service companies, (6) schools, vocational education and research institutes and (7) municipal organizations and sub-municipalities (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2011, p. 47 translation by author). For this analysis, it is most interesting to look at the activities that shall be carried out by residents and sub-municipalities.

The choice of Rotterdamers to live and work in a sustainable manner is seen as a vital contribution to a sustainable city. The municipality states that many citizens want to live sustainably, but have difficulties to put this attitude into practice. Figures from a survey in 2013 indicate that 64% of the population in Rotterdam regards locally produced food as

important for different reasons; however, only 3% indicate that they buy always sustainably produced food, while another 19% buys sustainable food regularly (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2013). Obstacles can be financial reasons, little information about potential benefits and the unavailability of sustainable products and services. The municipality identifies several tasks that can be carried out by residents in order to make the city greener and healthier.

- Isolate the house in order to save energy
- To invest in green roofs and green faces of houses
- To save energy with the school, the street or an association
- To make sustainable choices as consumer
- To buy local products
- Use the bike, public transport or electric cars and scoters
- To be more careful and conscious about waste

The municipality considers active participation and finical contributions of residents as necessary to accomplish the goals of making the city greener and healthier. Therefore, public-private pilot projects will be set up which involve at least one local fund for entrepreneurs. In addition, promising initiatives shall receive support through a fund for citizen-initiatives and the organization of 'meet and green sessions' for residents and business shall encourage new projects. An example of residents' involvement is 'Stadspark Schoonderlo'. To make their environment more livable, a group of residents transformed an empty lot that was intended for residential building into a green park. Design and maintenance is done by the residents who use the park as meeting place and report that joint action in the park has contributed to an intense feeling of cohesion among participants (p. 49).

Another project which illustrates that citizens and housing cooperatives work together on a greener neighborhood are allotment gardens in the district Schiebroek Zuid. In order to increase the value of a post war social housing complex, the housing cooperative Vestia developed a vision to transform the neighborhood within 30 years into a self-sufficient area. UA is part of this vision and working together in the gardens had a positive impact on the neighborhood since less garbage was dumped outside. The project is financed by Vestia who also owns the land and has hired a professional project manager who supervises the gardening activities. A group of women from various ethnic backgrounds is growing vegetables in the gardens, selling meals on harvest festivals and receiving catering requests. The income they generate is used to be reinvested in the gardens (Bok, 2013).

A prior task of the municipality and sub-municipalities is the facilitation of already established initiatives through supporting measures, removing obstacles and supervising agreements between residents, entrepreneurs and building cooperatives. Moreover, by example the municipality wants to encourage and stimulate also other actors to follow. Through the purchase of local products the municipality wants to create and expand the market for regional products. The overall aim is to integrate sustainability in the operational management of the municipality. Furthermore, the municipality recognizes that municipal

tasks like collecting waste and maintaining pubic green space are vital means to make public space more attractive. In general municipal institutions at all levels shall internalize the principles of sustainability in their tasks, so that policies made in the future adhere to these principles.

With this policy, the municipality of Rotterdam aims to become an attractive location for business that have sustainability at the core of their mission. In the long term, the municipality wants to profile Rotterdam as the most sustainable harbor city of the world, broadening the image of a 'climate city' towards 'sustainable world harbor city' (p. 75 translation by author).

2.3.2 Analysis

The *Sustainability Program* encompasses both social and economic components. The social dimension becomes visible in the objective to focus on the areas with fewest green, which adheres to a logic of equality and inclusivity tying to minimize inequalities between city districts. Moreover, involving youth in nature and environmental education programs contributes to a reconnection of people to food and the environment, indicating that these social aspects constitute a central part of policy objectives. In addition, the municipality and sub-municipalities facilitate knowledge exchange and pave the way for new projects by taking away obstacles and indicating areas for UA. In this respect, the municipality pursues a positive policy towards new organizations, projects and initiatives dealing with UA. To collect waste and maintain public green space is recognized as municipal responsibility, which indicates that the municipality of Rotterdam does not pursue a policy of abandonment as elaborated in the previous chapter. Moreover, the example of 'Stadspark Schoonderlo' highlights that active residents can implement their ideas and get access to empty lots in the city, which shows that creative use is encouraged by the municipality. Identifying tasks for various groups in society to work on the topic of sustainability can be considered as inclusive since everyone can participate. However, the tasks that the municipality directs towards citizens including investments in green roofs, isolation of houses, to buy local products and to make sustainable choices as consumer are mainly tasks which can be carried out by middle or upper class residents. Emphasizes on sustainable choices and local products, which are often more expensive than other products, highlights that sustainability goals might not necessarily involve lower class residents.

The municipality acts mainly as facilitator, but also takes up responsibility to provide services like maintaining public green space and collecting waste. Municipal tasks are not executed through voluntary labor, but are considered as vital tasks to keep the public environment attractive. In this case, the emphasis on 'shared responsibility' does therefore not hint at a retreat of the municipality, but rather indicates that citizens, organizations, business and the municipality work in cooperation. First of all, room is given to citizens' initiatives and new

forms of green space management; moreover, municipal services stay in place and are intensified in areas with little green space.

The example of neighborhood gardens in Schibroek Zuid, as part of a program to transform the whole neighborhood into a self-sufficient quarter, successfully combines social and economic criteria (EXCEPT, 2010). One the one hand the project is located in an area with social housing contributing to the livability of the area. Through participation in neighborhood gardens residents meet outside which creates social cohesion and contributes to keep public space tidy. On the other hand also new opportunities for residents to establish a commercial business are created which enhances the possibility that the gardens can be maintained by individuals, independent from funding. Besides that it remains uncertain what will happen in the future if real estate values increase as a result of the project. Such innovative projects, as developed by private companies like Vestia, are welcome contributions to achieve the municipality's objective to become a 'sustainable world harbor city'. In addition, innovative developments contribute to create a specific image of the city as favorable location for companies that work on the topic of sustainability. The objective 'to become more attractive' strives to attract the creative class, tourists and business, a strategy that makes UA part of creative city politics. But is questionable whether a focus on competitiveness and sustainability can at the same time increase social equity and reduce food poverty.

To conclude, the above elaborated social elements with a focus on social inclusion are intertwined with the below stated economic aspects of UA. In this way the concept of sustainability and the multidimensional character of UA blend together social, environmental and economic developments in the city of Rotterdam.

2.4 Food and the City

2.4.1 Content

The agenda Food and the city is presented as “the strategy that the Rotterdam municipality wishes to use for the promotion of urban agriculture” (p. 17) with a focus on three main objectives: health, sustainable economy and spatial quality. Other policy objectives that are connected to UA are mapped in the document according to the principle of people-planet-profit. This approach is based on the three pillars of sustainability and strives to incorporate social and environmental priorities with economic growth. Under this framework economic objectives supported by UA are: increased real estate value of areas, more diversity in restaurants, shops and markets, variation in fresh food and more jobs in the food, green and agricultural sector. Social objectives are listed as A) solution for the mismatch between vacancies in the green sector and too little skilled labor to occupy these jobs, B) to create social cohesion by working together in green neighborhoods, C) better health especially in disadvantaged districts including a reduction of obesity, D) a better connection between youth and green and E) more highly educated inhabitants. UA should contribute to the achievement of all these objectives. The document also elaborates ecological elements which are, however, not considered in the present analysis. Instead, the following present an overview of the actions which are undertaken by the municipality in order to support and facilitate UA.

Under the topic of health the two main objectives are ‘healthy nutrition’ and ‘new community gardens’. Improving health among Rotterdamers is a primary objective because “the average resident of Rotterdam has a poorer health than the average Dutchman” (p. 13). Figures from the document suggest that the percentage of young people (2-21 years) who are seriously overweight rose from 6% in 1980 to 14% in 2010 on the national level. Additionally, 15% of adults are expected to be obese by 2015. The municipality assumes that bad eating patterns and too little physical exercise are two main causes of this trend. Therefore, the municipality wishes that “affordable vegetables and fruit become available for all income groups” (p. 18). Through active participation in vegetable gardens low income groups can get access to healthier food for a low price. Actions taken by the government are the provision of information about wholesome food and the attempt to increase the number of care institutions with vegetable gardens, especially in the ten least green districts of the city.

Moreover, an information exchange network between schools shall facilitate knowledge exchange about vegetable gardening. A leading school project is the primary school De Bloemenhof which has a special program teaching children how to grow and prepare vegetables. The municipality regards education about wholesome food as very important since “the basis of bad eating patterns is laid in the early childhood” (p. 18). The children of the primary school De Bloemenhof are monitored by the Vewery-Jonker institute.

Monitoring over a longer time period makes it possible to get an idea about the potential results of this education program.

Under the heading of economic sustainability, the expressions 'vital landscape', 'enhancing sales', 'green job market' and 'reduction of food miles' are highlighted as main objectives. To create and maintain vital landscapes the municipality encourages entrepreneurs to expand existing and new activities in food production and processing. Therefore, a better connection between farmers from the region and the urban market shall be established. Moreover, municipal land shall be used as much as possible for UA and the municipality "will examine the possibilities of including relevant conditions in lease or sale contracts" (p. 20). In addition, zoning plans and regulations which hinder the development of UA shall be adjusted. To enhance sales, the government wants to facilitate a farmers' and neighbors' market and support the process of the setting up of a logistics system for regional products. Furthermore, setting requirements in catering contracts to provide a certain percentage of local products allows to indirectly impact the regional market. Purchasing food locally decreases food miles, which lowers CO_2 emissions caused by transportation.

"In the wider Rotterdam region, there is a mismatch between the supply of labour and the demand for labour in the green sector (horticulture, agriculture, green space management)" (p. 21). A survey of the green job market and education will make recommendations on how to improve this situation. In addition, "proper education is an important precondition" (p. 21) to fill vacancies in the green sector.

New forms of agricultural entrepreneurship offer extra opportunities to preserve valuable landscapes around the city. The objective to enhance spatial quality shall be accomplished by 'facilitating initiatives from residents and civil organizations' and by giving space to 'the new green'. 'The new green' is described as UA and green space management in which residents play a crucial role. Till now, there is only limited knowledge available on these two topics within municipal organizations. In order to successfully facilitate citizens' initiatives a clear point of contact for UA shall be established and a program for professional knowledge exchange will be set up. This shall be linked to Creatief Beheer which is a new occupational group within the public domain that works on green, healthy and child friendly neighborhoods (Creatief Beheer, 2014).

Creatief Beheer is an organization that tries to implement management and maintenance of public green space on a small scale through active participation of local residents. In this way, maintaining the physical green space is coupled to social objectives such as social cohesion, physical exercise and child friendly environments. Rini Biermans, the initiator of Creatief Beheer, argues that in times where the old system of public space management is becoming too expensive it is crucial to speed up a transition towards a system which increases self-help capacities and self-organization of neighborhoods (Biermans, 2011). To achieve this transition, a gardener (Tuinman) is introduced who becomes the central figure in the neighborhood, but relies for his work on cooperation and support by residents, schools, organizations, housing cooperations and the municipality. The municipality

recognized that this approach combines social activation and gardening, which is a new form of public space management that contributes to lower maintenance costs.

To facilitate initiatives, the municipality pursues several strategies including an annual competition for the best citizens' initiative in UA, the setup of a standard contract for making land available to residents' and civil organizations and the provision of a brochure, which describes possibilities and preconditions for creating a vegetable garden. Since people find it difficult to understand the procedures that need to be followed in order to start a vegetable garden, a civil service shall advice new initiatives. This can be done through vouchers which entitle to a number of support-hours from officials. To stimulate investments in rooftop gardens knowledge and financial contributions shall be made available through the Green Rooftops Program.

In general, "the municipality wishes to maintain the current, spontaneous character of urban agriculture" (p. 17), which is characterized by grassroots initiatives from citizens and organizations. While gardening and food production in allotment associations has been part of Rotterdam's history, the today emerging forms of UA are located in the direct surrounding of houses. This happens especially on development locations which are currently not used. "These locations are available for a longer period than they used to be, due to the stagnation in the construction of office buildings and houses" (p. 7). Moreover, it is stated that "there are particularly good opportunities for mobilizing entrepreneurship and knowledge among the city's multicultural population. In this approach to urban agriculture, Rotterdam distinguishes itself from other Dutch cities, which often aim at the highly educated residents" (p. 17).

2.4.2 Analysis

Social criteria especially come to the fore with regard to the objective 'health'. In order to improve health, education and access to fresh and healthy food are main concerns stated in the document. Education is a measure which may contribute to a reconnection of people to their food. Moreover, if all children get a similar education about food in primary school, this might increase equity among social class regarding knowledge about wholesome food. However, long term results are not available yet. In addition, one can question whether knowledge alone can contribute to healthy diets because low income families might consider to buy cheap products rather than more healthy but expensive alternatives. However, the combination of the objectives 'healthy nutrition' and 'new community gardens' is an approach which shall contribute to provide fresh and healthy products at low costs; thereby contributing to downsize social inequality. Furthermore, the objective to implement more gardens in care institutions in the ten least green districts highlights that unequal access to green space might be reduced.

Economic criteria are especially emphasized with regard to the objective of sustainable economic development. From an economic viewpoint, UA creates new jobs and opportunities for local entrepreneurs in production, processing and marketing of local products. In order to enhance sales of local products, municipal canteens and catering contracts need to procure a certain percentage of products locally. This kind of political measure indicates that the municipality adopted a logic which is not concerned with reducing costs, but rather takes into account environmental and social aspects of food provisioning. Through increased purchase of local products the distance between producer and consumer is reduced which may contribute to reconnect people with their food.

The question which arises is whether opportunities to establish a commercial business dealing with UA are also created for low income groups. The establishment of commercial farm requires considerable investment of time and money (Broek, 2013). Therefore, setting up a truly commercial business dealing with UA might not be possible for low income groups. However, examples like the vegetable gardens initiated by the housing corporation Vestia in Schiebroek Zuid show that investments of companies and corporations create commercial opportunities for low income groups. This implies that investments and funding from the municipality or other organizations are crucial for an inclusive approach to UA. It might be with regard to this that the municipality argues that UA creates opportunities for multicultural entrepreneurship. While the projects dealing with UA in Rotterdam involve also low income groups, it cannot be assessed here, whether this is a feature which distinguishes UA in Rotterdam from other cities in the Netherlands.

Spatial quality is an objective which involves again social as well as economic criteria. Many actions of the municipality aim to provide information and make procedures for setting up a vegetable garden easier. In this way, starting UA becomes possible also for foreigners and less educated people who might be unfamiliar with bureaucratic procedures. These measures, in addition, open up opportunities for citizens to get involved in public green space management. The example of Creatief Beheer illustrates that social cohesion and attractiveness of the physical environment can be achieved and maintained in tandem. On the one hand, the approach of Creatief Beheer supports social aspects like child friendly environments, self-determination, social cohesion and increased capacities of self-help in neighbourhoods. Managing public space at the local level opens up new possibilities to design, maintain and connect to the urban environment. In this respect, Creatief Beheer challenges the predominant practice of green space maintenance informed by top down and centralized structures. On the other hand, an approach to public green space management advocated by Creatief Beheer might shift responsibilities for public space maintenance to residents. To conclude, political objectives and examples from the praxis illustrate that economic and social criteria are interconnected in projects dealing with UA.

2.5 Political Discourse on UA in Rotterdam

This section elaborates the political discourse on UA in Rotterdam drawing on the above analyzed documents and the contributions of a discourse analysis identified by Hajer and Versteeg (2005). The discourse on UA in Rotterdam connects well to the widely applied approach of sustainability. As highlighted by the *Sustainability Program*, adhering to the principles of sustainability and attracting business dealing with sustainability are regarded as important contributions to the city's image. The sustainability discourse paved the way for UA as political strategy because the multidimensional character of UA fits well to the three pillars of sustainability. The fact that UA is associated widely with sustainable practices changes several previous biases against food production in urban areas. Growing food in allotment gardens was in the past a characteristic of poverty; and commercial farming was regarded as rural activity (Bronsveld, 2013b). To approach UA though a lens of sustainability helps to overcome these cultural biases. However, connecting UA to sustainability makes it at the same time subject to critique. The sustainability movement has been criticized of being a middle class movement because only people with a considerable income can afford to make sustainable choices. The fact that UA in Rotterdam encompasses multiple other purposes than just the production of sustainable food opens up possibilities to overcome the exclusivity inherent to the sustainability discourse. A good example is the approach to improve health via community gardens as depicted in the strategic document *Food and the city*. In this way, engaging low income groups in the production of food in urban areas may overcome contradictions between sustainability and anti-(food)poverty agendas.

With an emphasis of the various contributions that UA can make to local economic development, social cohesion, improved diets and environmental sustainability, the dominant discourse on UA in Rotterdam neglects other meanings. First, UA can be a strategy of creative city politics to attract the creative class which might lead to processes of gentrification. Moreover, increasing participation of residents in public green space management may lead to a shift of responsibilities in the long run. From a radical perspective, this shift is regarded as new opportunity to challenge existing meanings of public space and allow for self-determination. On the contrary, shifting responsibilities from the state to residents can also be interpreted as burden for citizens, because they need to perform tasks previously provided by the municipality. Through the participatory approach of Creatief Beheer, the discourse on UA in Rotterdam puts an emphasis on the positive opportunities created through participation in public green space management. Furthermore, increased real estate values and lower maintenance costs are recognized as contributions of UA to municipal objectives, but these topics remain at the sidelines of the political discourse.

In contrast, the municipality in Rotterdam mainly emphasizes the positive contributions of UA, which supports the establishment of various projects and initiatives dealing with UA. Pointing out social and economic elements of UA makes it possible to integrate UA in the

widely neoliberal ideology which dominated the political agendas from the 1980's onwards (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). At the same time, social and environmental aspects connect UA to radical agendas. The fact that UA combines social and environmental elements with commercial interests makes it possible to give meaning to UA from the perspective of a neoliberal and a radical discourse. The ability to merge these two agendas opens up various possibilities for UA in Rotterdam.

CONCLUSION

The role that is attributed to UA in the scientific literature is shared to a certain extend by the political discourse on UA in Rotterdam. The dominant political and scientific discourses both emphasize the positive contributions that UA can make to social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development. Attributes of UA which might have a negative connotation such as gentrification or a retreat of the welfare state, and thereof resulting shifts in responsibility, remain at the side lines of both discourses. However, the more critical scientific discourse recognizes next to positive contributions also a neoliberal dimension inherent to UA. In the case of Rotterdam, the municipality does not elaborate on neoliberal tendencies, but puts an emphasis on the unique combination of economic and social elements of UA, which indicates that the economic dimension of UA is regarded equally important as social contributions. In this sense, both discourses acknowledge that UA can give rise to new social and environmental relations while contributing at the same time to economic development. As elaborated in the previous chapters, both scientific and political voices suggests that precisely the combination of neoliberal and radical or of economic and social elements constitute driving forces for the popularity of UA.

To explore which role is attributed to UA by policymakers in Rotterdam constitutes the central question of this thesis. The previous analysis indicated that the municipality of Rotterdam regards UA as driver for local economic development, social cohesion, improved diets and spatial quality of urban environments. While the municipality of Rotterdam highlights the link between UA and improved diets of low income residents, the literature in contrast points at a contradiction between sustainability and anti-poverty agendas. Therefore, it is discussed in the following, whether UA in the specific case of Rotterdam might overcome contradictions between sustainability and anti-poverty agendas.

Comparing findings from the literature and the policy document analysis makes it possible to understand in which ways UA can function as creative city development. The literature on creative city politics emphasizes that attracting the creative class has become a major issue to keep the city competitive. However, the literature does not depicted UA as means of creative city development. Through the document analysis in the previous chapter, it becomes clear that UA is regarded as vital contribution to make the city of Rotterdam attractive for business, tourists and middle class residents. In this way, UA becomes part of creative city politics in Rotterdam, creating alternative places where food is grown, processed and sold locally. The potential of UA to attract the creative class opens up commercial opportunities. The fact that people from the middleclass are attracted by these new forms of UA and that they can afford to pay a bit extra for the innovative mode of production provides opportunities for UA to be economically viable. This type of UA is depicted by the literature on urban activism as urban 'movements corresponding with the creative city brand' (Mayer, 2013). Similarly these types of movements correspond with AFM which advocate short food supply chains as a solution to various problems caused by the

current food regime. It is with regard to the exclusive character of alternative and local food supply chains that scholars like Allen (1999) and Power (1999) point at a contradiction between sustainability and anti-poverty objectives.

In contrast, organizations like Just Food and anti-hunger organizations like 'Food not Bombs' are next to various other groups part of the movement of the urban outcast, aiming to provide for the poor and hungry. UA projects which arise in this context have often social and anti-(food)poverty objectives, striving for social justice and self-determination. Movements of the urban outcast emerge especially in response to marginalization and the absence of state services. Since both the political and scientific discourse recognize the potential of UA to contribute to social cohesion and to increased valorization of areas, the discourse on UA embraces grassroots organizations in low income neighborhoods. As depicted in the literature review, positive policies but also a mix of prescription and abandonment may facilitate the establishment of new projects. Considering UA as political strategy against food-poverty can however only be justified, if sufficient information and financial support is made available for the establishment of neighborhood gardens. A positive political strategy towards UA may activate citizens and encourage companies to invest in UA. The fact that housing corporations like Vestia invested in the establishment of a neighborhood garden makes it possible for residents in Schiebroek Zuid to benefit from the opportunities offered by the project. It remains however uncertain whether investment, funding and support for vegetable gardens in undeserved neighborhoods is only a contemporary phenomenon that got hold in urban space as result of the financial crisis. For McClintock argue that funding for UA is strongly dependent on the boom and bust of the economy; "such ebbs and flows of funding have shaped the urban agricultural landscape by defining where and what kinds of gardens have taken root and for whom" (2013, p. 163).

To sum it up, the potential of UA to overcome the contradictions between sustainable food networks and anti-(food)poverty organizations depends on the political discourse on UA in a city. One the one hand there is a need to secure that UA remains part of the political agenda in the long run. This can be guaranteed through long term food strategies or food policy councils. On the other hand the narrative of the discourse determines which role is given to UA. Whether UA is regarded as creative city politics or as means to reduce social inequalities strongly impacts its potential to overcome contradictions between sustainability and anti-(food)poverty agendas. Since UA may be on the one hand part of creative city politics while at the same time contributing to decrease social inequality, the big challenge lies in assessing whether one objective is prioritized above the other. Nevertheless, the literature and policy documents note that both neoliberal and radical elements are intertwined in UA and that exactly this interconnection provides potential to bridge the gaps between different agendas.

Another point which would need further investigations is the question whether intra-urban agriculture can indeed make a positive contribution to food provisioning. On the one hand, this question leads to a debate about the potential of UA to provide a considerable

contribution to a healthy diet of low income families. The political strategy of the municipality in Rotterdam indicates that neighborhood gardens are part of the solution to provide access to fresh and healthy food for low income families. However, the question arises, whether enough space is available in the direct neighborhood and whether this space can be used for UA in the long run. Examples from the literature suggest that space is made available in most cases only on a temporary basis as a result of economic recession. It would therefore be interesting to investigate whether space is made available for UA in Rotterdam only temporarily or also permanently.

On the other hand, it remains unclear if vegetable gardens can indeed contribute to reduce social inequalities. While UA might currently be a trend among the middle class, only low income families are dependent on own vegetable gardens for a healthy diet. Families from the middleclass can afford to buy locally produced vegetables. With a change in the discourse on sustainability, UA might lose its trendy image and become again a feature of poverty. Also, a change in the discourse on UA might thus discourage participation in neighborhood gardens. Nevertheless, neighborhood gardens provide a certain amount of fresh food and make vegetables available to residents for a very low price. In this regard, UA does mitigate the inequalities existing in accessing locally grown vegetables. I therefore conclude that UA cannot change the underlying structure of inequality among social class, but it might well contribute to provide fresh vegetables, social interaction, education and also opportunities to earn an income for lower class residents.

Considering the multidimensional character of UA, one cannot contemplate UA as means of food provisioning without accounting for various other contributions. While the political strategy of Rotterdam indicates that UA is envisaged as a means to achieve healthy diets, this is by far not the only purpose of UA. Positive contributions to health, social cohesion, spatial quality, education and job opportunities indicate that the role of UA is comprised of various elements which all together may lead to spiral development. As elaborated by the scientific discourse and by the document analysis, UA is not considered as providing food for the whole city, but rather as a multidimensional approach to reconnect people to their food, to educate about food production and preparation and to contribute to healthy and interactive urban environments.

Nevertheless, the literature on food policies and also policymakers in Rotterdam acknowledge that ad hoc policies to promote intra- and peri-urban agriculture can contribute to a change in the food system. Important aspects which indicate a change in the food system are a reconnection of the city to the rural hinterlands and the creation of local food provision networks. To strengthen the ties between the city and farmers around the city is a central objective of the municipality in Rotterdam. Stating this, in a strategic policy document like *Food and the City,* makes UA part of the political agenda, thereby enhancing its potential to contribute to a change in the food system. The change that occurs in the food system as a result can neither be defined as radical nor as neoliberal, but requires a different approach which allows for change in both directions. I therefore conclude that UA does not

radically challenge the current food system, but it creates room for a new discourse which provides opportunities to redefine and contest current ways of relating and valuing social and environmental elements in urban sustainable development.

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