# GOVERNING URBAN FOOD

## The role of citizen food initiatives

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*The role of citizen food initiatives*

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May 2021

# Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank both of my supervisors, Sigrid Wertheim-Heck and Anke Brons, who guided me during the writing process of my thesis. The valuable feedback and advice you gave me, together with the in-depth conversations we had about this complex topic, helped to clarify my thoughts, and ultimately strengthen my thesis. I would also like to thank Anke for allowing me to use some of her interview data which provided me with useful additional information. Furthermore, I would like to thank all the participants of this research for their valuable time and knowledge that helped to give meaning to my theoretical findings. I would also like to thank my housemates for making the intense writing process of this thesis a little less lonely during these turbulent times of COVID-19 and providing me with distractions when I needed them. Special thanks go to one of my housemates, Jan Willem van Veelen, for designing my beautiful front page. Last but not least, I would like to thank my boyfriend Daan Krekels for his invaluable support during this entire thesis period. Thank you for your relentless belief in my work and for helping me get through the difficult moments.

# Abstract

As food is increasingly subject to a process of governance instead of government, the roles of state, market, and civil society become increasingly blurred. This leads to changes in the roles and relationships between these groups of actors in the food governance domain. Furthermore, cities are becoming increasingly important levels at which food is governed, as is shown by the proliferation of urban food strategies, charters, and plans worldwide. The importance of bottom-up citizen initiatives (in this research termed citizen food initiatives (CFIs)) in the transition towards sustainable food systems is acknowledged by multiple scholars. However, it remains rather vague as to how they are involved and to what extent. Therefore, this research aims to answer the question: to what extent and in which ways are CFIs involved in urban food governance? To answer this question, a literature review was done on the different roles that CFIs can play in urban food governance. In addition to this, the Dutch city of Almere was chosen as an empirical case to investigate how this plays out in practice. 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted with actors in relation to food governance in the city of Almere. The results show that the roles of governance actors in the food domain are indeed changing and that cities are increasingly involved in food governance. However, the results also show that no straightforward answer can be given to the main research question. First of all, the concept of CFIs as actors in food governance poses difficulties for analysis, as multiple aspects influence their role in governance. Secondly, the extent to which CFIs are involved in food governance relates to their active involvement as well as the meaningfulness of their participation. Since this is dependent on the initiatives themselves and the context of where food governance takes place, no straightforward answer can be given to this question. Finally, the ways in which CFIs are involved in food governance are hard to identify. Since informal spaces of deliberation are often invisible and no causal links can be established between the actions of CFIs and governance outcomes, their role in these spaces of deliberation remains unclear. Taken together, these results suggest that taking CFIs as the subject of analysis presents multiple difficulties. Therefore, it might be more useful to analyse the types of actors that are actually involved in urban food governance instead. This can lead to more information on how these actors are involved and how they relate to CFI actors. This can in turn provide more insight into the ways CFIs can be involved in urban food governance and the extent to which they are involved, both directly and indirectly.



**Keywords:** urban food governance; citizen food initiatives; Almere; urban food strategy; food policy council; sustainable food systems; participatory governance; governance theory; meaningful citizen participation

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The current global food system is contributing to multiple big environmental and public health challenges (Garnett, 2013). To understand how these challenges became part of our food system, it is important to get an idea of how the food system developed over the years and which dominant factors shaped it into what it is nowadays. The 1930s marked a time of agricultural depression and collapsing markets, which resulted in the development of a productionist framework that remained dominant in the field of food policy for many decades (Lang et al., 2009; Lang, 2010). Between the 1950s and 1970s, global industrialisation of agriculture took place through the 'Green Revolution' which introduced high-yielding varieties of crops combined with multiple external inputs such as artificial fertilizers and pesticides (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). The shocks of both famines and high oil prices in the 1970s sparked criticism from neo-liberal economists on the dependencies that state subsidies and other government regulations created (Lang et al., 2009). This in turn led to the liberalisation of markets, and what Holt Giménez & Shattuck (2011) refer to as 'the corporate food regime' that is still dominant nowadays. From the 1980s onwards, however, the flaws in this productionist and neoliberalist global food system have become increasingly visible. In terms of environmental impacts, the food system "is a major driver of climate change, land-use change and biodiversity loss, depletion of freshwater resources, and pollution of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems through nitrogen and phosphorus run-off from fertilizer and manure application" (Springmann et al., 2018, p. 519). Furthermore, while the globalised food system has increased food availability and affordability for many citizens (Wiskerke, 2015), "one in nine people still suffer from chronic under-nourishment, half a billion people are obese, and one-third of all the food produced is lost or wasted" (Jennings et al., 2015, p.4).

Urbanisation plays an important role in shaping our food system. Cities are putting huge pressure on ecosystems, consuming approximately 75% of natural resources while covering only 2% of the earth's surface (UNEP, 2013). This will only increase in the future because while the global population used to be predominantly rural, rapid urbanisation has caused this division to shift. In 2009 the division reached a tipping point and the number of people living in urban areas started to exceed the number of people living in rural areas (Wiskerke, 2015). The percentage of the urban population is only increasing, expected to reach 68% by 2050 (United Nations, 2018). Urbanisation directly influences the amount of land available for agriculture due to an increase in the built environment, which often takes place on productive land given the fact that most cities were historically developed in fertile areas (van der Gaast et al., 2020). Also, the demand for food changes, as cities' diets often involve more meat consumption as well as refined sugars and fats, and alcohols and oils (Seto & Ramankutty, 2016).

These problems have gained increased attention, both from citizens and policymakers. Policymakers are trying to find new ways to deal with the different unsustainable aspects of the current global food system (Lang et al., 2009). While traditionally food policy was something mostly dealt with by national and supranational governments, currently more and more cities start to develop these kinds of policies on a local level (Wiskerke & Viljoen, 2012). Apart from urbanisation being an important factor in the environmental and health problems of the food system, cities are also believed to be better able to address local challenges by having more insight into the local situation and because they are not held back by international relations that result in the slow procedures of national governments (Hebinck & Page, 2017). Taken together, this makes the city a promising scale to govern food.

As food is increasingly governed on a local level, the governance structure of food also changes. Food is increasingly subject to a process of governance instead of government (Mansfield & Mendes, 2013), meaning that the roles of state, market, and civil society become blurred. This leads to changes in the roles and relationships between these actor groups in the food governance domain. As policymakers come up with innovative ways to govern food, citizens are also becoming more prominent actors in the food domain. Worldwide, tens of thousands of grassroots movements have started to form as a response to the failure of the conventional food system (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011). These movements often strive towards a more local, ecological, sustainable, and just food system. Examples of related initiatives are community-supported agriculture, community gardens, urban farms, etc.

The changing roles and relationships between the different actors in food governance processes become visible for example in the development of urban food policies. Instead of traditional top-down policy implementation initiated and developed by government actors, urban food policy becomes increasingly

subject to multi-stakeholder processes which involve civil society and other actors (IPES-Food, 2017). A prominent example is the emergence of food policy councils, defined as:

> *A policy advisory board, meaning that it operates outside regulatory government structures, which seeks food systems change by influencing existing political processes and institutions. … Food policy councils are in many cases civil society organizations where government employees may or may not participate"* (Prové et al., 2019, p. 171).

But also the development of urban food strategies: "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), often includes civil society organisations (Hebinck & Page, 2017; Moragues-Faus & Morgan, 2015).

The importance of bottom-up citizen initiatives in the transition towards sustainable food systems is acknowledged by multiple scholars. For example, Renting et al. (2012) state that:

> *In a context of profound crisis of market and state governance, civil society-based initiatives become an important source of innovation through social learning, the building of new capacities and by creating 'space to manoeuvre' for organizing food production, distribution and consumption differently* (p. 298).

Derkzen and Morgan (2012) also state: "more often than not the stimulus for change comes not from politicians, policy-makers and planners, but rather from grassroots initiatives which draw on the energy, the talent and the creativity of civil society." (p. 65). At the same time, however, they also mention the necessity of political support for these initiatives to bring about change (Derkzen & Morgan, 2012).

The novel governance mechanisms thus reflect changing relations and roles of both government actors and civil society actors in food governance processes, and the involvement of civil society actors in food governance is mentioned by scholars. But to what extent are these civil society organisations actually involved in urban food governance? And in what ways? And how does this play out in practice? These are questions that this research will attempt to answer.

## 1.2 Research objective

The development of urban food policies within a broader frame of urban food governance is a relatively new phenomenon. Even though for example urban food strategies are often seen as promising governance instruments towards more sustainable urban food systems, little is known about their practical implementation, the design process, and their actual impacts (Cretella, 2019). While the involvement of multiple stakeholders and the inclusion of civil society organisations is often emphasized in the literature on urban food policy mechanisms, the extent to which they should be involved in the governance process is not clearly mentioned and empirical examples of how this translates into practice are scarce. This asks for more clarification on the actual role of citizen food initiatives (CFIs) in urban food governance, which is important to understand the relationship between these initiatives and the urban food policies that ultimately affect cities and their citizens. As Cretella (2016) also argues, more investigation is needed on the content, priorities, partnerships, stakeholders and main actors that are involved in the development of urban food strategies, to assess their political impacts.

This research will therefore investigate the extent and ways in which CFIs are involved in urban food governance. First, the different roles of CFIs in food governance processes will be identified from the literature. This will provide theoretical insights into the actual meaning of the relatively new and contested concept of 'urban food governance', while also defining 'CFIs' as the actor group whose role is being researched in these food governance processes. To apply these theoretical findings to a real-life case, the Dutch city of Almere will provide a relevant case, as this city is currently developing an urban food strategy. This empirical case will give insight into the involvement of different stakeholders and their relations, with a focus on the role of the CFIs present in Almere, and how this expresses itself in the development of the urban food strategy as well as in broader governance processes.

## 1.3 Research questions

The research objective has led to the formulation of the following main research question divided into two sub-questions:

**Main research question:**

To what extent and in what ways are citizen food initiatives involved in urban food governance?

**Sub-questions:**

(1) What is the role of citizen food initiatives in urban food governance?
    a. What is urban food governance?
    b. What are citizen food initiatives?
    c. What roles of citizen food initiatives in urban food governance can be identified?
(2) What is the role of citizen food initiatives in the food governance of Almere?

# Chapter 2: Methodology

To answer the main research question (*To what extent and in what ways are CFIs involved in urban food governance?)*, a combination of methods was used. In-depth insights and opinions of different actors were needed to answer the research questions and therefore a qualitative approach was chosen as the most suitable research approach. This chapter will describe the methods used and analysis done to conduct this qualitative research and justify the choices for these specific methods. This will be structured according to each separate sub-question.

## 2.1 Methods for sub-question 1: What is the role of citizen food initiatives in urban food governance?

Not much research has been done on the concept of food governance and CFIs as used in this research. Therefore, instead of working according to a pre-defined theoretical framework, the first sub-question (*What is the role of citizen food initiatives in urban food governance?*) was meant to improve the understanding of these concepts by means of a literature review. The literature review included both academic and grey literature and different academic databases such as Scopus and Google Scholar were used. Literature was selected by using advanced search methods for retrieving relevant academic sources. Apart from direct searches in databases, literature was also collected by using both backward and forward snowballing. This means that articles were selected from the references of relevant articles as well as from their citations (Wohlin, 2014).

Since there is no clear definition of food governance, this sub-question starts with investigating what is written in the literature about food governance. To define CFIs, a literature review was done on what is written about different groups in society concerned with food, and how different studies demarcate these groups. Due to the large variations in the kinds of citizen initiatives related to food, this section is not meant to present a strictly demarcated definition, but rather a way of defining CFIs and their possible characteristics in relation to their role in governance. This is useful to give the reader an idea of what is meant by the term 'CFI' that is used throughout this research. Finally, with the definition of food governance and CFIs in mind, roles of CFIs in food governance were identified. The literature review provides both theoretical insights as to what the role of CFIs should be according to different scholars, as well as case studies that demonstrate how this plays out in practice. A conceptual framework was developed according to the results presented in this theoretical section, which was in turn applied to the empirical case study.

## 2.2 Methods for sub-question 2: What is the role of citizen food initiatives in the food governance of Almere?

The main method used to answer the second sub-question (*What is the role of citizen food initiatives in the food governance of Almere?*) were semi-structured interviews. Academic and grey literature were also used to complement the empirical data gathered. Literature was used for retrieving factual information concerning the city of Almere and for identifying important factors that contributed to the context of food governance in Almere.

Semi-structured interviews were considered the most appropriate research method for gathering empirical data. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews compared to structured interviews allowed for varying question sequences that were most appropriate during the interviews and it allowed for probing when important or unexpected topics came up. The interviews were based on a list of predetermined questions, which allowed for certain issues to be addressed in more or less all interviews (Bryman, 2004). To develop this interview guide, the theoretical insights gained from the literature review were used.

Interviews were conducted with different actors in the food governance domain of Almere. In total 12 semi-structured interviews were done. The number of interviews was not predetermined but rather a result of the saturation point and the available time frame in which the interviews had to be done. The saturation point was reached when new interviews did not add to the information already retrieved from the previous interviews (Kumar, 2014). When the number of interviews done increased, the amount of recurring information also increased, until a point was reached when it was no longer considered necessary to do more interviews. Even though there is always the chance of new insights or opinions coming from new interviewees, the available time also needed to be kept in mind.

The participants were selected using both purposive sampling and snowball sampling (Kumar, 2014). First of all, an online investigation was done to find relevant CFIs in Almere. This included findings on CFI websites as well as a municipal document found on green initiatives in Almere (Gemeente Almere, 2019). According to this, a list was made with potential interviewees. The supervisors, who both work within the context of Almere, reviewed the list and added contact details to some of them. Then an interview was scheduled with Arjan Dekking, an expert on food in Almere who also had a large network within the city. He also reviewed the list of potential interviewees to judge their relevance to the study. Apart from this list made beforehand, which consisted of 10 interviewees, some interviewees were also selected through snowball sampling (Kumar, 2014). This means that, especially in the first few interviews, the interviewees were asked if they knew other actors that might be relevant to interview on this topic as well, leading to two additional interviewees. In the end, interviews were done with 8 representatives of CFIs in Almere, 2 municipality members of Almere with a relevant role in food policy development and 2 experts with knowledge about Almere as a city as well as its relation to food production. In addition, data was used presented by 5 interviews that were conducted by a fellow researcher on a similar topic and with a similar interview guide. These interviews were done with 3 municipality members including a high local government official, a former representative from the Flevo Campus and an expert on the food strategy. For more details on the interviewees see Table 1.

Interviews with experts and municipality members contributed to the background information on the city of Almere itself and the role of food in the city. This was helpful to gain more insight into the context of the research and the external factors that play a role in the relevance of food for the city. Interviews with municipality members and with the expert on the food strategy gave more insight into the development process of the food strategy. It provided information on how the food strategy was developed, which stakeholders were included and what the drivers were for developing a food strategy for Almere. At the same time, the semi-structuredness of the interviews also allowed for more in-depth questions regarding the development process. This led to more information for example on the trade-offs that were made before and during the process and which role the policy makers envision for CFIs. Finally, the interviews with the representatives of different CFIs gave important insights into their roles in the food governance of Almere and their perspective on their involvement. It also provided information on their goals, values, actions, and networks. In addition, it revealed barriers and opportunities related to the meaningfulness of their participation in broader governance processes.

Due to the COVID-19 induced lockdown at the time of fieldwork, the interviews were all done and recorded online, via Microsoft Teams. After all interviews were completed, they were transcribed manually in their original language (Dutch). When all transcripts were complete, they were read again to become more familiar with the data as well as to make sure that all data was fresh in the mind of the researcher before starting with the coding (Bryman, 2004). For coding the interviews, the programme ATLAS.ti was used. The codes were formed by following an abductive approach, meaning a combination of deductive and inductive coding (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Deductive codes were defined using the criteria that resulted from the literature review from sub-question 1. These criteria formed the initial code categories and thus the backbone of the coding structure. To further refine these code categories, inductive coding was used by dividing the deductive codes into different sub-codes that were developed while going through the data. Also, some additional inductive code categories and codes that emerged from the interviews were added during the analysis. This resulted in a total amount of 10 code categories and 74 codes, which can be found in the Appendix.

Regarding the interviews done by the second researcher, this data has also been analysed according to the steps used for the primary data analysis as described above. Since all interviews were conducted in Dutch, it must be noted that the quotes used from the interviews in this research are translated from Dutch to English by the author, who is a native Dutch speaker.

*Table 1. Interviewees*

| | Interviewee | Role/name | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Primary data** | A | Arjan Dekking | Has been living in Almere since 1995. He works as a researcher at the University of Wageningen with a specialisation in urban agriculture and urban food systems. Apart from his role as a researcher, he has also initiated various initiatives in Almere related to urban agriculture and local food. |
| | B | Stadsboerderij Almere (CFI) | Stadsboerderij Almere (city farm Almere) is a biodynamic farm that has been operating in Almere since 1996. Its fields are spread in and around the city of Almere. Apart from agriculture, the city arm is also open to visitors and numerous public activities are organised at the city farm. http://www.stadsboerderijalmere.nl/ |
| | C | Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt (CFI) | Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt (food forest Sieradenbuurt) is a food forest in Almere of about 5,5 hectares, established in 2015. It was initiated by the neighbourhood as an alternative destination to the municipality's plan to plant oaks and ash trees in that area. |
| | D | Municipality | Municipality member of Almere. |
| | E | Flevofood (CFI) | Flevofood is a network between food companies in the province of Flevoland to strengthen regional food production. It was established in 2017 and includes members active in agriculture, processing, distribution, trade, restaurants, catering and retail. https://flevofood.com/ |
| | F | Stichting Buitengewoon Almere (CFI) | Stichting Buitengewoon Almere (foundation extraordinary Almere) is a foundation that was officially established in 2018. It originates from a temporary municipal project that was carried out between 2017-2018. It is a food aid organisation that collects food surpluses to provide healthy and fresh food for poor households. |
| | G | VINDplaats Zenit (CFI) | VINDplaats Zenit is an archaeological site that has developed into a multifunctional and green meeting place for the neighbourhood. Food production is one of its functions. It facilitates allotments for private use as well as for primary schools and also has a food forest. https://vindplaatszenit.nl/ |
| | H | Regelrechtvandeboer (CFI) | regelrechtvandeboer is an initiative of a citizen of Almere who collects and sells organic and local food on a small scale. It was set up in 2014. https://www.facebook.com/mo.regelrechtvandeboer |
| | I | ONZE Volkstuinen (CFI) | ONZE Volkstuinen (OUR allotments) is an enterprise that is situated in an organic greenhouse and rents allotments to customers. Apart from this they also have a small-scale shop where they sell their crops. http://www.onzevolkstuinen.nl/ |
| | J | Municipality | Municipality member of Almere. |
| | K | Groene Buur (CFI) | Groene Buur (Green Neighbour) is a project launched in June 2020 and financed by the Growing Green Cities team of the municipality. Citizens can apply to become a Groene Buur, which means that they will become a green ambassador of their neighbourhood and receive a starting kit from the municipality. https://groenengezond.almere.nl/initiatieven/groene-buur |
| | L | Expert | Works as a researcher at the Wageningen University & Research with a specialisation in urban agriculture, urban food systems, urban food strategies and urban food planning. He also contributed to the establishment of Oosterwold. |
| **Secondary data** | M | Municipality | Municipality member of Almere. |
| | N | Former Flevo Campus representative | Used to work at the Flevo Campus. |
| | O | Former councillor | Former councillor of Almere. |
| | P | Expert | Closely involved in the development of the food strategy and is therefore regarded as an expert on the food strategy. |
| | Q | High local government official | High local government official of Almere. |

# Chapter 3: Results

This chapter presents the results of this research. Section 3.1 presents a theoretical section with insights gained from the literature review and section 3.2 presents an empirical section with insights gained from both literature and semi-structured interviews conducted with the research participants.

## 3.1: The role of CFIs in urban food governance

### 3.1.1 What is urban food governance?

The way food is governed is changing in two important ways: from government to governance and from global to local. This section will explain both developments in more detail and thereby explain the concept of food governance as used in the literature.

#### *From government to governance*

As Mansfield and Mendes (2013) argue, food is increasingly subject to a process of governance instead of government. An example of a very simple definition of governance posed by Termeer et al., (2011) is the following: "the interactions between public and/or private entities ultimately aiming at the realization of collective goals" (p. 160). A more comprehensive and arguably less normative definition is given by Clark et al. (2020): "the relationships, processes, rules, practices, and structures (both institutional and discursive) through which power and control are exercised and decisions are made" (p. 2). The notion of governance can, however, not be explained simply by giving a clear cut definition of governance, as evidently it is a much-contested concept within the literature and used by scholars in multiple ways with different interpretations. Jordan et al. (2005) provide a further refined explanation by distinguishing four main points of agreement by scholars when describing the shift from government to governance: 1) the declining ability of central governments to steer society, 2) the growing importance of multi-level government structures for the spread of 'new' modes of governance, 3) the idea of a continuum with the extreme form of government as a 'strong state' and the extreme form of governance as 'a self-organising and coordinating network of societal actors', and 4) the association of government with traditional forms of regulation and governance with new policy instruments. A comparative definition given by Mendes (2016) also provides more clarity on the distinction between government and governance:

> *While government [emphasis added] can be understood to refer to the exercise of authority over a political jurisdiction by the "state" (whether a municipality, region, or country), governance [emphasis added] broadens this understanding to refer to a more transparent and participatory process of decision making, involving not only the formal institutions of the state ("government") but equally those in civil society. (p. 293)*

She describes the shift from government to governance as "a recognition that multiple groups and interests are (or should be) meaningfully involved in identifying a community's concerns and proposing solutions to address them" (Mendes, 2016, p. 293).

When linking governance to the food domain, the concept of food governance arises. Lang et al. (2009) define food governance as:

> *Governance in the food sector [that] can occur in the absence of direct state involvement when private and societal interests seek to exert forms of control within the market economy. However, the shadow of the state does loom over these arrangements, usually providing some enabling or operating context for this governance. (pp. 77–78)*

Food governance is used in different contexts in the literature. Within the current study, food governance will be framed in the context of increasing multi-stakeholder processes, opening up spaces for civil society actors to participate and steer the direction of discourses within the food domain. The definition of a "new food governance" as described by Rossi and Brunori (2015) as a model that is "that of a *multi-stakeholder governance*, rebalancing the role of civil society, of the public government and of the market" (p. 4), is thereby regarded as the most suitable definition for this research.

#### *From global to local*

A second shift taking place relates to the tendency to bring food back to local governance levels. Critiques on the increasingly globalised food system and its related issues result in alternative ways of governance. This can express itself on a global level, as is shown for example by the development of ecolabels (e.g.

Oosterveer, 2015). It can also be observed on the local level, where the idea of a city-region food system is believed to increase the resilience and health of cities, as well as to provide a more environmentally sustainable alternative due to shorter food supply chains (van der Gaast et al., 2020).

This shift from global to local causes food to be increasingly governed at the city level. As Sonnino et al. (2019) put it: "cities … are becoming strategic transition nodes that can exploit the policy vacuum created by the absence of comprehensive, coherent and integrated national and supra-national food policies to develop more sustainable food systems" (pp. 110–111). City administrators have realised their influence on food system change, and integrating other city-level policy domains such as housing, transportation and ecosystems with the food system, poses opportunities for this territorial view of policy making (Doernberg et al., 2019). Furthermore, Stierand (2012) identifies four new urban food needs apart from a constant food supply that contribute to the push for urban food governance: 1) *confidence in food supply chains* as a result of anonymised production chains and recent food scares, 2) *sustainability of the food system* as a result of the excessive use of resources, 3) *decreasing pressure on the health system* as a result of the increase in malnutrition and obesity, and 4) *fairness within the food system* as a result of unfair pricing. The city is seen as the place where most of the current food system problems become visible as well as originate and is therefore regarded as an important level to deal with these issues (Stierand, 2012).

An example that illustrates the shift of governance towards the city level is the development of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), which is currently signed by more than 200 cities worldwide (*Milan Urban Food Policy Pact*, n.d.). This pact provides a voluntary Framework for Action, which consists of strategies that cities can adopt to achieve a more sustainable food system (MUFPP, 2015). At national levels, programmes are also developing to link cities to frameworks for more sustainable food systems. For example, in the Netherlands, a city network developed called *City Deal - Voedsel Op de Stedelijke Agenda* (2017) (translation: City Deal - Food on the Urban Agenda), which is part of the Dutch national food agenda and involves twelve participating urban municipalities across the Netherlands. In the UK and the US, national food policy assemblages have also been established to help build the capacity of local food policy groups (Santo & Moragues-Faus, 2019).

The shift of food governance to the urban level also leads to some critical notes from especially (urban) political ecologists. One of these critiques relates to the question if this shift is not a mere consequence of neoliberal state policies and financial austerity. According to this critique, state responsibilities are transferred to other actors that lack financial and other resources, under the disguise of more inclusive food governance (Coulson & Sonnino, 2019; Lever et al., 2019). Furthermore, they warn for underlying power relations present in society, which are overlooked when talking about new formal partnerships between city governments and other stakeholders. The danger of this is that it could lead to idealising multi-stakeholderism as a less hierarchical and more inclusive way of decision-making, while in reality the existing power dynamics stay in place. It could also increase the power of non-state actors that are not democratically chosen and lack legitimacy (Cornea et al., 2017). Finally, the idea of "the city" as a distinct area of analysis is criticised. The notion of "the city" would give the false impression that all citizens are included, and it obscures existing inequalities and overlooks the disempowered people that are not engaged in a meaningful way in these new governance spaces (Moragues-Faus, 2020).

Taking these critiques in mind, this research focuses on what actually happens in urban food governance processes and the role that CFIs play in these processes. Rather than assuming that CFIs are involved, or only looking at factual information regarding their involvement, this research dives deeper into the role that CFIs play in newly emerging food governance mechanisms. It not only focuses on the role of CFIs according to theory but also investigates how this plays out in practice by studying food governance processes in the urban context of Almere.

### 3.1.2 What are CFIs?

A common approach within the governance perspective is the so-called governance triangle showing the three main actor groups: state, market and civil society (Abbott & Snidal, 2009). Even though this governance triangle presents a useful framework to differentiate between the different actor groups within governance processes, the groups also remain very broad and abstract. 'Civil society', is therefore not easy to define and can be interpreted widely. Many different concepts are used in the literature to describe food-related initiatives taken by citizens. This variety makes it difficult to keep to one single definition and each definition poses different restrictions. Therefore, a new term is proposed in the current study: citizen food initiatives (CFIs). This term builds onto two important concepts within food governance, namely food citizenship and food democracy.

#### *A framework of "food citizenship" and "food democracy"*

The words 'citizen' and 'food' are both included in the term 'CFIs'. These two words are also used in a term that is closely linked, namely 'food citizenship'. The concept of food citizenship implies that citizens have both rights and responsibilities that need to be fulfilled. In relation to food, rights could be for example to have access to safe and adequate food (Wilkins, 2005), while a responsibility could be to actively participate in the governance of food (Hatanaka, 2020). Food citizens are therefore seen as active participants in governing the food system, rather than passive, uncritical and dependent consumers (Lozano-Cabedo & Gómez-Benito, 2017; Wilkins, 2005). Wilkins (2005) defines food citizenship as: "the practice of engaging in food-related behaviors (defined narrowly and broadly) that support, rather than threaten, the development of a democratic, socially and economically just, and environmentally sustainable food system" (p. 271). Hatanaka (2020) identifies five values and commitments ascribed to food citizenship: 1) inclusivity, as all actors in the food system can be food citizens, 2) meaningful participation in decision-making on food and its production, 3) orientation towards the community and the collective good, 4) transparency regarding the practices, processes, and relations regarding food production and consumption, and 5) association with localisation and short food supply chains. Even though these values and commitments give a more comprehensive view on wat food citizenship entails, food citizenship does not have a static definition and changes in relation to the social praxis of food movements as well as the food behaviour of individuals (Lozano-Cabedo & Gómez-Benito, 2017).

Another concept closely related to food citizenship is 'food democracy'. As defined by Hassanein (2003), "food democracy ideally means that all members of an agro-food system have equal and effective opportunities for participation in shaping that system, as well as knowledge about the relevant alternative ways of designing and operating the system" (p. 83). It is not entirely clear what the difference and relation between the concepts of food citizenship and food democracy are since some scholars use them interchangeably (e.g. Welsh & MacRae, 1998). One could argue that food democracy can be seen as a method to achieve food citizenship, as Hassanein (2003) proposes the view of food democracy as a "*method* for making choices when values and interests come into conflict and when the consequences of decisions are uncertain" (p. 83). As Lozano-Cabedo and Gómez-Benito (2017) see it, food democracy and food citizenship are very similar. The difference according to these authors lies in their different focus points: while food democracy tends to focus more on the objectives and outcomes that result from individual and collective efforts, food citizenship focuses more on the individual, 'the food citizen', that is formed in the process.

Even though these concepts overlap and can be used differently, they both present relevant frameworks for the proposed concept of CFIs. From this point of view, CFIs present actual groups of citizens practising food democracy, meaning a group of food citizens. This means that they all do something to work towards a more democratic, socially, and economically just and environmentally sustainable food system, as the definition of food citizenship above describes. CFIs relate more to the collective level rather than the individual level of food citizenship. This collective dimension of food citizenship is also mentioned by Lozano-Cabedo and Gómez-Benito (2017), who highlight not only the importance of the changing actions and awareness of individuals but also the importance of collective action, as a way to acquire knowledge on the food system, raise public awareness on existing food issues and present alternatives to deal with these issues. When it comes to participating in the governance of food systems, they point out that food citizens should aim for a radical transformation of the food system while also making food governance more horizontal and inclusive to civil society actors. To accomplish this, they should contribute to the establishment of more democratic and transparent governance institutions which allow for increased citizen participation (Lozano-Cabedo & Gómez-Benito, 2017).

## *Categorising CFIs*

When reviewing the literature on CFIs, two sub-categories can roughly be identified: community food initiatives and professional food initiatives. These will each be described in more detail below and various examples will be provided. What they both have in common is that they impact the local area and are predominantly led by local citizens. At the same time, they both take action as a response to the current issues that result from the conventional food system in terms of health, animal welfare, environment or fair trade (de Bakker et al., 2011).

### Community food initiatives

Community initiatives are small-scale initiatives on a neighbourhood level. A similar definition can be used as the one formulated by Duvernoy (2018) on community organisations: "the voluntary associations formed by the inhabitants in order to fulfil a collective project concerning their neighborhood" (p. 615). Examples of community initiatives are community gardens and community kitchens.

Community gardens in this case are gardens in public spaces that are cultivated by citizens living in or nearby the neighbourhood where the garden is situated. They can fulfil different functions, including social functions, for example by increasing social cohesion, and economic functions in terms of food provisioning (Rosol, 2010). Their main aim can differ depending on their contexts. While some mainly function as green spaces for neighbours to meet, others are more focused on food production (Renting et al., 2012; Rosol, 2010). Bródy and de Wilde (2020) mention three benefits that community gardens can bring. Firstly, they can enhance citizen participation, empowering citizens to make choices about their living environment and influence urban planning policies. Secondly, they can cause more inclusive environments by allowing a broad range of citizens to participate and interact with each other, increasing social cohesion. Finally, community gardens can increase access and availability to healthy local food, especially for poor, marginalised neighbourhoods.

Community kitchens are another example of CFIs on the neighbourhood level. They can take different forms, but in general, they can be defined as "community-based cooking programs in which small groups of people (called "kitchens") meet regularly to prepare one or more meals together" (Tarasuk & Reynolds, 1999, p. 13). Often they aim to empower individuals by teaching them healthy cooking skills while also providing a social meeting place for neighbours (Iacovou et al., 2012). They can improve food security by providing cheap accessible meals for low-income households (Furber et al., 2010; Iacovou et al., 2012). They can also have additional benefits, for example in Peru where they have the potential to empower women by increasing their social status within their families and communities as well as leading to increased self-esteem, better leadership capacities and awareness of social and political issues (Immink, 2001). Community kitchens are especially popular in Canada, as can be seen in the literature on community kitchens (e.g. Engler-Stringer & Berenbaum, 2005; Tarasuk & Reynolds, 1999). However, the initiatives are spread all over the world, from Oceania (Lee et al., 2010) to South America (Schroeder, 2006), but also to Europe (A. R. Davies et al., 2019). They can be initiated both by citizens and by governments, however, the latter seems to be less successful and self-sustaining (Immink, 2001).

### Professional food initiatives

Some initiatives take the forms of more professional organisations, such as NGOs or social movement organisations. These can be local, national, or international organisations, but they fit into this category when they have local establishments which try to make changes on the local level specifically. Again this category uses the definition of Duvernoy (2018), who distinguishes professional organisations from community organisations according to their facilitating characteristic whereby they encourage and enable the action of others by offering their skills and resources. Furthermore, they sometimes include paid employers together with volunteers and may receive public funding. Concrete examples relating to food include the Slow Food Movement and De Gezonde Stad (translation: the healthy city), a foundation based in Amsterdam.

Slow Food is an NGO that was founded in 1986 in Italy, as a counter-reaction to the opening of a new McDonald's restaurant in Rome (Jones et al., 2003). The vision of the organisation is based upon three principles: *good* food in terms of quality, flavour and health, *clean* food in terms of environment-friendly production methods and *fair* food in terms of prices for consumers and conditions and income for producers (*Our Philosophy - Slow Food International*, n.d.). It is an international organisation, but some countries have organisational structures at the national level while adhering to the political guidelines of Slow Food International (*Our Structure - Slow Food International*, n.d.). Also, at the local level, there are Slow Food

communities, which are made up of members who organise events and activities within their local areas. Slow Food has multiple networks, one of them being the Slow Food Youth Network. This is a worldwide network especially established for young people to create a better future through food (*Slow Food Youth Network - Slow Food International*, n.d.). They organise all sorts of activities at the local level to raise awareness on food issues, such as in the Netherlands when Slow Food Youth Network initiated the selling of thousands of kilos of potatoes in different cities around the Netherlands to prevent them from being wasted due to a sudden drop in demand (*Duizenden Kilo's Aardappels Redden Op Nationale Aardappelberg Dag - Slow Food Youth Network*, n.d.).

There are also numerous initiatives at the local level which aim to improve the food system for local residents. These initiatives are more professional than community organisations in terms of scale and resources. They might originate from community initiatives, but this is not necessarily the case. An example of a local professional initiative is De Gezonde Stad, which is a foundation that wishes to increase health and sustainability in Amsterdam by initiating sustainability projects and events in Amsterdam as well as supporting initiatives of residents and communities (*Over Ons - De Gezonde Stad*, n.d.). They also started several food projects to increase local food production and reduce food waste, such as the development of a community garden in the city (*De Tropentuin - De Gezonde Stad*, n.d.). De Gezonde Stad receives funding from both the municipality of Amsterdam and the Nationale Postcode Loterij (translation: national postcode lottery). This example clearly shows the facilitating character of the NGO as it supports community initiatives and empowers local residents to realise their ideas.

### Categorising CFIs in relation to food governance

The above-described categories provide a tangible group of the kinds of initiatives that can be referred to when talking about CFIs. However, they can also be subject to various interpretations and still overlap in some cases. For instance, as Renting et al. (2012) also mention, community gardens can have different aims: they can be initiated by neighbourhood residents as a way to connect (community initiative), but they can also be initiated by NGOs operating in the city who wish to encourage educational food activities (professional initiative).

To go beyond the restrictions posed by these categories and to make a stronger connection between the different kinds of CFIs as described above and the concept of food governance, a sub-division is proposed as presented in Figure 1 below. The two axes show different aspects of CFIs according to which they can be sub-divided. On the horizontal axis, the geographical range of the initiative is displayed in terms of establishment and impact. This ranges from the city-level, including neighbourhoods, city districts and the entire city, to beyond the city-level, which includes, in particular, the city-region and the provincial level. The vertical axis shows the manifestations of CFIs as place-based versus not place-based. An initiative is considered place-based when it is fixed to a certain place and when its existence is dependent on this place and its surroundings. For example, a community garden is very much place-based, because the whole community garden depends on the place where it is situated: it is fixed to the area and its surroundings. A community garden in one place can be totally different from a community garden in another place. This relates for example to the geographical location, the type of soil and plants that can grow there, the kinds of people living in the neighbourhood, etc. On the other hand, there are also initiatives that do not necessarily depend on a location. An NGO, for example, can be established anywhere without being fixed to one place. Also, initiatives related to local food labels or brands are manifested in networks, meaning that they are not bound to a certain place and therefore not place-based.

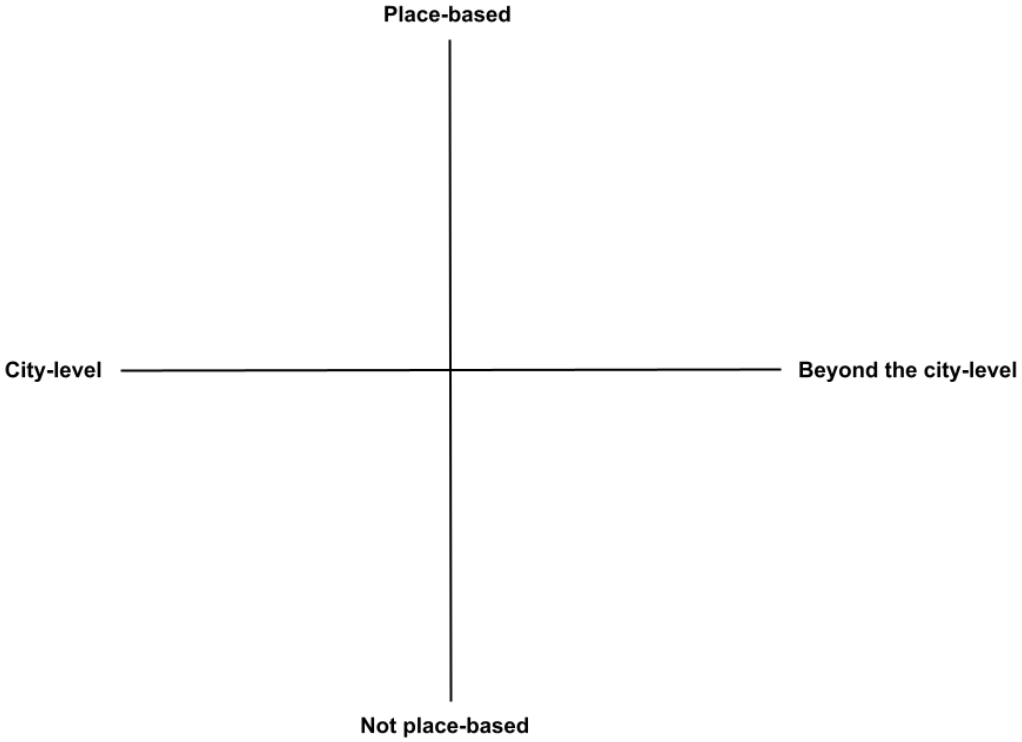


*Figure 1. Mapping of CFIs according to scale and manifestation*

### 3.1.3 What roles of CFIs in urban food governance can be identified?

While much of the literature refers to the increased involvement of civil society actors in food governance, a clear explanation of exactly how they are involved in governance is lacking. This section will therefore elaborate on the different forms that the governing of food by CFIs can take. As a result of the literature review and to provide more clarity, the potential governance roles of CFIs will be sub-divided as follows: their potential roles in broader decision-making processes by participating in newly emerging spaces of deliberation and governance taking place through the existence of the initiatives itself (here referred to as 'governing through CFIs'). After reflecting on these potential roles of CFIs, some criteria will be identified that influence the meaningfulness of their participation in these new spaces of deliberation.

#### *Changing relations between governance actors*

The idea that the relations between civil society, state and market become increasingly blurred in governance can also be applied to the case of food, as is shown by Renting et al. (2012). As visualised in Figure 2 (adapted from (Renting et al., 2012)), they argue that due to the multiple food crises caused by failures of state and market governance, the pressure from civil society is increasing and civil society-based governance mechanisms are developing. The changing relations between civil society and markets - as indicated by the arrow from civil society to the market – are presented in the alternative ways of food provisioning that are developing. An example is community-supported agriculture, whereby producers and consumers are more connected and interdependent. The changing relations between civil society and the government - as indicated by the arrow from civil society to the state - relate to the increased influence that civil society has on public policies, both through opposition and new forms of interaction.

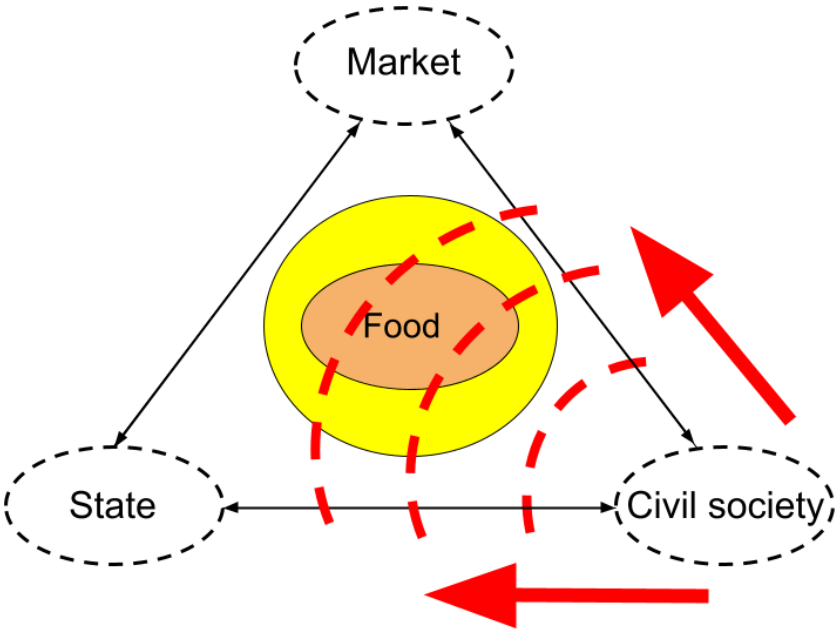


*Figure 2. Adapted and simplified figure that shows how civil society is putting increasing pressure on both state and market actors* (Renting et al., 2012, p. 297).

As this model suggests, CFIs can play a role in governance both by playing an increasingly important role in broader decision-making processes as well as by providing alternatives. This distinction also emerged from the literature review, which is why their roles will be sub-divided the participation in new and emerging spaces of deliberation and the governing through CFIs, as will now be further explained.

#### *Spaces of deliberation*

When looking at the changing relations between government and CFIs, various new modes of governance are evolving, opening up spaces for the involvement of CFIs and other non-governmental actors (Howard & Lever, 2011). These new governance spaces where different actors including civil society actors, local government actors and private actors interact, are also referred to as 'new spaces of deliberation' (Clark et al., 2020; Moragues-Faus & Morgan, 2015; Santo & Moragues-Faus, 2019). These new spaces of deliberation can take the form of local partnerships where multiple stakeholders work together to change

the food system. These food partnerships are broadly defined by Coulson & Sonnino (2019) as "spaces of policy deliberation where multiple actors envisage, develop and seek to enact place-based solutions to complex food-related socioecological challenges" (p. 171). Stakeholders often include actors from the public, private and civil spheres (S. Davies, 2017). According to Clark et al. (2020), CFIs can actively create spaces of deliberation and use this as a strategy to claim new roles in governance and ultimately enact change. They furthermore emphasise that it is not only the instrumental outcomes of these kinds of governance interactions (such as policies) that matter, but also the repositioning of actors within the relational fields, so their changed position in relation to other actors and how this may benefit them in the long run.

These deliberative spaces thus present opportunities for the participation of CFIs. The actual practices of governance actors in these new spaces of deliberation remain, however, rather vague. This is also because the organisational forms of these new governance spaces are varied, fluid and specific to the different socio-spatial contexts of cities (Cretella, 2016; Moragues-Faus, 2020). As becomes evident from the literature, the most common formal spaces of deliberation are food policy councils, urban food strategies and other partnerships. Apart from these more formal spaces of deliberation, a wide range of activities also takes place in "informal" spaces of deliberation outside of meetings rooms (Moragues-Faus, 2020). The empirical case study is meant to give more insight into these informal ways of participation.

### Food policy councils

One of the most important governance structures that are often mentioned in the literature as a way to enhance citizen engagement in food policy development is a food policy council (Dubbeling et al., 2017; Hatfield, 2012; Welsh & MacRae, 1998). Food policy councils are assemblages of stakeholders within a state, provincial or municipal food system that work together to improve the current food system (Mendes, 2016). The idea of food policy councils originated in the US, where the first food policy council was established in Knoxville in 1982 (Harper et al., 2009). One of the oldest and most influential food policy councils is the Toronto Food Policy Council (Mansfield & Mendes, 2013), which is often used as a case of 'best practice' in the literature, while it also provides a model for cities developing food policy (Cretella, 2019). Not only are there different definitions of food policy councils, but the organisational structure also varies between cities to such an extent that it has been said that there are as many varieties of food policy councils as there are cities that implement them (Hatfield, 2012). An important difference is the extent to which food policy councils are collaborating with the government: the food policy council can be part of a government organisation, it can be an independent non-governmental organisation, or it can be a combination of both. The latter presents a hybrid form whereby the food policy council is partly related to the government, for example by receiving funding and resources, while at the same time it is also functioning as an independent advisory body for the government (Harper et al., 2009; Stierand, 2012). Furthermore, concerning membership, some food policy councils try to include representatives from as many different stakeholder groups within the food system as possible to ensure representation, while others consider it more important to include people with expertise who can contribute to knowledge creation (Stierand, 2012). However, what most food policy councils do have in common is their central aim to "identify and propose innovative solutions to improve local or state food systems, making them more environmentally sustainable and socially just" (Harper et al., 2009, p. 16).

Food policy councils bring together citizens, community agencies and government officials and can be seen as "one of the most common citizen-led vehicles for influencing urban food policies and embodying a more participatory approach to municipal governance" (Mendes, 2016, p. 297). When looking at food democracy as the practice of a food citizen, food policy councils present an example of practising food democracy (Hassanein, 2003; Sieveking, 2019; Welsh & MacRae, 1998). They often provide direct connections between public and civil society actors and are also used for direct formal policy development (Hatfield, 2012). Food policy councils can be considered a result of the changing relations between civil society and the state as argued by Renting et al. (2012) since they present a new form of interaction between the two actor groups, where civil society actors can voice their opinions and influence policy.

### Urban food strategies

The development of urban food strategies provides another formal governance space of deliberation that allows for multi-stakeholder collaboration through the creation of a shared vision on the food system development of a city. Urban food strategies describe the policy document itself rather than the process or stakeholders involved in their development (Cretella, 2016). They can result from the efforts of food partnerships, which was the case for example in the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership that drove the development of both a food strategy and an action plan for the city of Brighton and Hove (O'Brien & Nisbett,

2019), but can also be created by other stakeholder groups. There is not one single definition of an urban food strategy. Most literature only describes these strategies in different cities without providing a conceptual explanation (Cretella, 2016). According to Moragues et al. (2013), an urban food strategy can broadly be defined as:

> A *process consisting of how a city envisions change in its food system, and how it strives towards this change. UFS [urban food strategies] aim to place food on the urban agenda, capitalizing on efforts made by existing actors and creating synergistic effects by linking different stakeholder groups. Written milestones in this process can be charters, action plans or full strategies; however an UFS does not directly imply a strategic document. (p. 6)*

So urban food strategies can be used as an umbrella term for various forms of food policy-making, from food charters to food action plans and food strategies (Hebinck & Page, 2017; Moragues et al., 2013). Even though this definition does not see a strategic document as a necessary prerequisite for a UFS, Cretella (2016) argues that the strategic document is an important aspect of urban food strategies. According to her, a document shows the political relevance and the integration of food with governance and planning of municipalities and therefore belongs in its definition.

It becomes clear that the concept of urban food strategies is subject to various interpretations and can therefore result in different kinds of governance spaces. Each urban food strategy is context-specific and different focus points are decided upon for different cities, leading to diverse drivers and approaches (Wiskerke, 2009). Nevertheless, what remains important for all cities developing an urban food strategy is the participation of different stakeholders both from public and private sectors, including civil society, business, policy makers and politicians (Cretella, 2016; Moragues et al., 2013; Rossi & Brunori, 2015). At the same time, however, the notion of the strategies itself should be examined critically, since they are increasingly used as empty motivational slogans with subjective and broad targets (Cretella, 2016, 2019).

Even though the development and implementation of urban food strategies are different in every context, some general stages can be identified as shown in Figure 3 (Calori et al., 2017). The starting phase is often initiated by public actors or civil society actors who put the issue on the political agenda. After that, an analysis of the current food system is conducted by research and consultancy organisations to identify strengths and weaknesses, actors' networks, and the governance dynamics at play. Subsequently, participatory processes are often used to set priorities and goals for improving the food system, which can result in the creation of a vision statement such as a food charter, agenda, or similar document. This in turn leads to the creation of a corresponding food strategy or plan, which describes how to reach the formulated goals through certain actions and how to monitor this. What remains is the actual execution of these strategies and plans, which they refer to as the most advanced step. This requires a legitimate legal and political structure, which coordinates the implementation and monitors the achievements. This could for example be done by a food policy council or a public institution.


*Figure 3. General stages of food strategy development according to Calori et al. (2017).*

According to these different stages, CFIs can first of all play a role in the starting phase, where they can take on a leading role to pressure governments to take action for a more just and sustainable food system (see also Hatfield (2012)). Furthermore, they could become important actors in the setting of goals and priorities for food system transformation, as well as in the creation of the strategies and plans, where they can participate in the vision statement and policy creation. Lastly, they might also be appointed as implementation and monitoring body to make sure that the urban food plan or strategy is executed. Yet, even though the above-mentioned stages present a general framework for the creation of an urban food strategy, this does not mean that these steps are always taken as described above. This differs according to contexts and some stages might not take place at all.

#### Other partnerships

Apart from food policy councils and urban food strategy development, there are also numerous other kinds of food partnerships formed at the local level between different stakeholders. Terms used for these partnerships can range from local strategic partnerships to food networks (S. Davies, 2017).

Within the planning sector, shifts can also be observed, as green space planning in urban areas is increasingly led by civil society initiatives (Molin & Konijnendijk van den Bosch, 2014; Nikolaïdou et al., 2016; Rosol, 2010). Examples are urban gardening initiatives which are transforming public or private space into urban gardens for the community, such as in Geneva where an urban gardening initiative was formed by several civil society actors who proposed a collaborative project on an abandoned park to the local government (Nikolaïdou et al., 2016). This also relates to the shifting relations between state and civil society. It shows how spaces are governed in new ways through collaborative partnerships between public actors and civil society actors.

### *Governing through CFIs*

Apart from being practitioners in the broader arena of food governance, governance can also take place through CFIs themselves. Through their existence, CFIs can play a role in governance. By setting up and maintaining a CFI, citizens are presenting sustainable and alternative ways of food production and provisioning and they use their agency to organize themselves. As they are increasingly putting pressure on the existing food system, CFIs can act as agents of change by "pointing out contradictions and limitations of the mainstream food system and thus fostering new public awareness around food issues and the introduction of new questions on political agendas" (Renting et al., 2012, p. 302). They also present already organised initiatives that municipalities can support (Cretella, 2016) or use as examples to scale up. The potential of involving existing CFIs in food governance is not only acknowledged by scholars but is also emphasised in national and international food policies. For example, the Dutch City Deal mentions the potential of scaling up existing CFIs:

> *With this City Deal, the many local food initiatives, which are sometimes still very project-based in nature but also incite promising innovations, can be lifted to a more strategic level: local solutions for global issues such as providing (mega) cities with food [my translation from Dutch]* (*City Deal - Voedsel Op de Stedelijke Agenda*, 2017, p. 3).

Furthermore, in their recommended actions in the governance domain, the MUFPP refers to the role that CFIs can play with the support of academics, as they advise to: "identify, map and evaluate local initiatives and civil society food movements in order to transform best practices into relevant programmes and policies, with the support of local research or academic institutions" (MUFPP, 2015, p. 3). This demonstrates how existing CFIs can serve as examples and provide models that can be used in the transition towards a more sustainable food system.

### *Meaningful citizen participation*

CFIs can be included in broader food governance processes, but the actual influence they have on the outcome of these processes will depend on the meaningfulness of this participation. This is therefore an important aspect to keep in mind when analysing the involvement of CFIs in urban food governance. Even though not much is written about the meaningfulness of the participation of CFIs, some criteria that influence meaningfulness in food governance can be identified from the literature.

#### Level of government involvement

An important criterion that affects the meaningfulness of participation in the above-mentioned new governance spaces is the level of cooperation with or involvement of the government. Too much government involvement can lead to restrictions on actions that bring about radical change as well as the

risk that CFIs are less involved and do not have much to say in the governance process. When their involvement is limited, they might lack a sense of ownership of the governance outcome and therefore the acceptability of the plan as well as their participation in the realisation will be lower (de Zeeuw & Dubbeling, 2015). Furthermore, too much dependence on the government makes these spaces more vulnerable when they are subject to political change, meaning that when political leadership changes, they will risk losing government support or when budget cuts are made they will be affected (Hebinck & Page, 2017). However, when changes are led entirely by civil society actors, the chance of uptake in local policies, laws, budgets and programmes will be lower and they will often be short on (financial) resources (de Zeeuw & Dubbeling, 2015; Duvernoy, 2018). To make sure that input from new governance platforms is useful and can be translated into action, it is important that it is realistic and based on a reasonable level of expertise concerning both the presented issues and the functioning of the city government (Hatfield, 2012). This expertise might be lacking in a fully independent governance space. Therefore, a cooperative model between both civil society actors and local government actors is often seen as the most promising method, since this incorporates both interests from government and civil society, while at the same time offering sufficient resources for civil society organisations (de Zeeuw & Dubbeling, 2015; Duvernoy, 2018; Stierand, 2012). Furthermore, the relationship with the government and the structure and mission of a new kind of food partnership must be made clear from the beginning, to prevent miscommunications and frustrations between the government and the community (Hatfield, 2012).

#### Short-term versus long-term orientation

The time frame within multi-stakeholder processes can also lead to tensions in relation to their meaningfulness (de Zeeuw & Dubbeling, 2015). Short-term planning refers to programmatic actions which lead to direct changes but are lacking an institutional base, which in turn may not be very sustainable. Long-term planning results in the creation of a longer-term strategy to change the food system, which also includes new policies, laws, regulations, and other institutional arrangements, but this takes longer to develop and show results and it also requires more resources.

#### Inclusion of different views and interests

For citizen participation to be meaningful, different viewpoints and interests must be taken into consideration in decision-making processes. Often stakeholders have conflicting viewpoints and interests, which makes it difficult to produce joint outcomes. This leads to a trade-off, where on the one hand all different viewpoints and interests should be incorporated, while at the same time some sort of agreement must be reached between the different actors to implement change (de Zeeuw & Dubbeling, 2015). Since the inclusion of more different and conflicting viewpoints makes it harder to reach such an agreement, this could lead to the exclusion of certain stakeholders in these participatory processes. This is also reflected in multi-stakeholder food governance processes, where the mainstream food business, farmers and retailers are often under-represented in newly formed food partnerships (Moragues-Faus, 2020). This might cause a lack of input on relevant issues such as the distribution and logistics of food (Mazzocchi & Marino, 2020), and ultimately lead to ineffective solutions. It is therefore important that all relevant stakeholders, including both 'mainstream' and 'alternative' actors, are included in multi-stakeholder decision-making processes (de Zeeuw & Dubbeling, 2015). At the same time, it is important to be conscious of existing power relations and make sure that the less-powerful stakeholders are also able to express their views and interests during the process (de Zeeuw & Dubbeling, 2015).

#### Presence of CFI coalitions

As Hassanein (2003) argues, opportunities for CFIs lie in coalition building. By working together on certain issues, citizen engagement will increase, and achievements can be made by bundling powers and expertise. Furthermore, coalitions create places for sharing knowledge between different organisations and broaden participation. The organisational differences between CFIs can also present opportunities by allowing them to fulfil different kinds of functions, providing different methods of participation and providing new insights and practices within food movements (Hassanein, 2003).

### *Conceptual framework governance roles*

As a result of the literature review, a conceptual framework is developed in which the governance roles of CFIs as well as the criteria influencing the meaningfulness of their participation is presented, as shown in Table 2 below. This framework will now be assessed by applying it to the real-life case study of Almere.

*Table 2. Conceptual framework governance roles of CFIs*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Spaces of deliberation** | Formal spaces | Food policy councils |
| | | Urban food strategy development |
| | | Other food partnerships |
| | Informal spaces *(conversations/actions/networks outside formal decision-making institutions)* | To be identified from interviews |
| **Governing through CFIs** | Goals & values of the initiative | |
| | Organisational structure | |
| **Meaningful participation** | Level of government involvement | |
| | Short-term versus long-term orientation | |
| | Inclusion of different views and interests | |
| | Presence of CFI coalitions | |

## 3.2: The role of CFIs in the food governance of Almere

Different roles attributed to CFIs in the food governance of Almere can be identified. This section will start with elaborating on important events that contributed to the role that food plays in the city of Almere and how it is governed. Then it will provide general information of the CFIs present in Almere as well as more specific information on the CFIs that were interviewed, by placing them in the CFI mapping. After an impression is given of both governance and CFIs in Almere, the roles that CFIs can play in the food governance of Almere are identified. This empirical section will conclude with an analysis of the criteria that influence meaningful participation in the case study of Almere.

### 3.2.1 Food on the urban agenda

By combining academic literature, grey literature, and interview data, this section will review important factors that contributed to the arrival of food on the municipal agenda of Almere. It will do so by elaborating on important events and milestones taking place in Almere related to the role of food for the city. A visual presentation of this is shown in a timeline that ranges from the first plans made for the spatial development of the city to the development of the food strategy (see Figure 4). This section is meant to give context to the food governance processes taking place in Almere.

Almere is a Dutch city situated in the province of Flevoland. It was built on land reclaimed from the sea by the creation of dikes and is, therefore, a new town that became an independent municipality in 1984 (Dekking, 2018). Before this formal establishment of the city, however, the National Spatial Plan of 1958 already laid the foundation of the city, by referring to the need for the urbanisation of both the Eastern and the Southern part of Flevoland (Jansma & Wertheim-Heck, 2021). Almere was originally built as a poly-nuclear garden city, according to the idea of Ebenezer Howard, which entails a spatial build-up of centres within a green-blue framework containing agricultural land, forest and water (Dekking, 2018; Gemeente Almere, 2017a). Due to its location close to the Northern Randstad, Almere became an attractive residential area and quickly grew to become the eighth-largest city in the Netherlands (AlleCijfers.nl, 2021), currently counting 215,164 inhabitants (Gemeente Almere, 2021a). For a large part, the population growth in Almere can also be attributed to migration, with more than 40 per cent of the total population being immigrants (Gemeente Almere, 2020). This makes the city of Almere also a multicultural city with 192 different ethnicities, the largest groups coming from Suriname, Morocco, the Netherlands Antilles and Turkey (Gemeente Almere, 2018).

The unusually fast growth of the city, however, also caused a diminishing quality of the city itself. The idea of the poly-nuclear garden city faded into the background and an increasing amount of land with agricultural purpose was sacrificed for residential areas (Jansma & Wertheim-Heck, 2021). When in 2006 the demand of the national government came for an additional 60,000 houses to be built in Almere in the coming 30 years (Almere 2.0, n.d.), and an expected population increase to 400,000 residents in the coming decennia (Dekking, 2018), a search for the city's identity became important (Jansma & Wertheim-Heck, 2021). It started with the establishment of the 7 Almere Principles in 2008, shown in Table 3 (Gemeente Almere, 2008). This was followed by the approval of the programme of Almere 2.0 in 2010, which presents a future vision of the development of the city. This vision linked back to the ideas about the city when developed in the 70s, with a focus on its pioneering spirit and the poly-nuclear lay-out, and was meant to invest in the quality of the city (Almere 2.0, n.d.; Jansma & Wertheim-Heck, 2021).

*Table 3. The Almere Principles* (Gemeente Almere, 2008)

| | **Principle** |
|---|---|
| *1* | Cultivate diversity |
| *2* | Connect place and context |
| *3* | Combine city and nature |
| *4* | Anticipate change |
| *5* | Continue innovation |
| *6* | Design healthy systems |
| *7* | Empower people to make the city |

The idea of Almere as a garden city with the provision of green and blue spaces in a busy region like the Randstad remains important in the municipal vision nowadays (Gemeente Almere, 2017a). An example

that relates to the pioneering spirit and the importance of agriculture in the city is the project of Oosterwold. In 2012, the Masterplan of Oosterwold was launched (Jansma & Wertheim-Heck, 2021). Oosterwold is a developing neighbourhood in the municipality of Almere and Zeewolde of 4,300 ha, which is planned to deliver 15,000 houses (Gemeente Almere & Gemeente Zeewolde, 2013). Oosterwold is fundamentally different from other housing construction sites. First of all, it is different in the sense that residents get a lot of freedom in choosing how the neighbourhood is developed, not only in terms of housing but also in terms of infrastructures such as energy supply and sanitation (Gemeente Almere, 2012). The idea behind this is that they aim for organic growth in the city which develops in a mostly bottom-up manner instead of a top-down and supply-driven housing system (Gemeente Almere, 2012). Another element that makes Oosterwold unique compared to other neighbourhoods, is the large role attributed to urban agriculture, with 50 per cent of the area's surface being reserved for agricultural land (Gemeente Almere, 2012). In short, on the one hand, Oosterwold originated from a top-down municipal planning process, with certain rules laid down for the residents (including half of their property destined for food production), but on the other hand, it also gives way for bottom-up processes to take place through the development of grassroots initiatives (Interviewee L – expert).

The emphasis on sustainability in the municipal vision is furthermore shown in the 'Duurzaamheidsagenda' (English translation: Sustainability agenda), which is part of the programme Almere 2.0 (Interviewee D – municipality). This implementation programme for sustainability was laid down in 2019 and consists of an overarching programme for sustainability enhancement in the city of Almere (Gemeente Almere, n.d.-b). The Duurzaamheidsagenda is in line with the national climate objectives of lowering CO2 emissions, and one of the six themes within the programme is "healthy food" (Gemeente Almere, n.d.-b). To make a clear vision of the municipal actions regarding this theme, and to allow for increased embeddedness in other municipal policy departments, it was decided that a food strategy needed to be developed (Interviewee D – municipality). Meanwhile, Almere also joined other important food networks, such as the City Deal, which is, as mentioned in section 3.1.1, part of the Dutch national food agenda that unites cities throughout the Netherlands to strengthen urban food policy development (*City Deal - Voedsel Op de Stedelijke Agenda*, 2017). Furthermore, the municipality of Almere became a member of the foundation Voedsel Verbindt in 2019 (Allan, 2019). This is a regional platform that wishes to develop a healthy and regional food system for the metropole region of Amsterdam and its agricultural surroundings (Voedsel Verbindt, n.d.). At the international level, Almere also signed the MUFPP in 2015 (Gemeente Almere, n.d.-a). The participation in these kinds of networks might also have played a role in the agenda-setting of food in Almere (Interviewee P – expert).

Aside from the above-mentioned municipal policies and visions, more factors can be identified that contributed to the appearance of food on the municipal agenda. One of them is the Floriade that will be held in Almere in 2022 for a period of six months (*About Floriade*, n.d.). The Floriade is an international horticultural expo that is organised once every 10 years in the Netherlands. In 2012 it was decided that the next Floriade would be held in Almere, with the motto 'Growing Green Cities' that is sub-divided into the themes of 'feeding, energizing, healthying and greening the city' (*Almere Growing Green Cities*, n.d.). Officially, the Floriade is a private company, called Floriade Almere 2022 B.V., but the municipality is the only shareholder, meaning they play a large role in the entire organisation of the Floriade (Interviewee J – municipality). The motto of Growing Green Cities is also used by the municipality in its municipal vision, where it states that it wants to develop from a 'Garden City' into a 'Growing Green City' by adapting to the future economic and demographic developments that will influence the development of the city (Gemeente Almere, 2017a). It also led to the establishment of a small group of civil servants from different municipal apartments that called themselves the Growing Green City team[1] (Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking). They made an effort to arrange for small budgets and space to do something with food and greening, and to stimulate the development of the food strategy (Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking; Interviewee N – former Flevo Campus representative). The goals of Growing Green Cities are 1) the development of a green and healthy city, and 2) setting up a world stage for Almere during the Floriade in 2022 (*Almere Growing Green Cities*, n.d.). Since the Floriade is about horticulture and farming, food is inevitably one of its main subjects, which is represented in the theme of 'feeding the city' of the Floriade. This helped to get food on the municipal agenda (Interviewee D – municipality; Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking; Interviewee P - expert). That the Floriade is an important factor that accelerates the importance of food for the municipality in Almere is also mentioned by one of the municipality representatives:

[1] The name of this team has recently changed from Growing Green Cities into Groen & Gezond Almere (https://groenengezond.almere.nl/over-ons)

*The Floriade is a great driving force that enables us as a city to release all kinds of energy and initiatives and that makes us attractive for parties and partners to collaborate with. … So that has given a huge boost to the whole movement of this focus on food and health.* (Interviewee J – municipality).

Another important push factor is the Flevo Campus, which is a collaboration between Aeres University of Applied Sciences Almere, Wageningen University & Research, the municipality of Almere and the province of Flevoland. Flevo Campus is a scientific hub that was founded in 2017 and aims to find solutions to (future) urban food issues by connecting research, education and entrepreneurship (Flevo Campus, n.d.). It is one of the projects within the municipal programme of work and learning environment and is therefore financed by the Urbanisation fund connected to the municipal vision of Almere 2.0 (Interviewee D – municipality). The Flevo Campus has a strong connection to the Floriade since it is meant to come up with innovations for urbanisation issues to show at the Floriade in 2022 (Flevo Campus, 2017), and also uses the theme of 'feeding the city' of the Floriade as its main focus of research (Interviewee M – municipality; Interviewee O – former councillor). The existence of the Flevo Campus contributes in important ways to the importance of food for the municipality. An example is the important role that it played in the decision to make food one of the themes in the Duurzaamheidsagenda (Interviewee M – municipality). The Flevo Campus also organised one of the first real debates with the city council on the topic of food, by which it contributed to its agenda-setting (Interviewee N – former Flevo Campus representative). Furthermore, the Flevo Campus played a significant role in the initiation of the food strategy development (Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking).

As can be seen in the timeline of Figure 4 below, the last 15 years has seen an increase in factors that relate to the importance of food and agriculture for the city of Almere. This build-up of factors, in combination with the increased interest in local food policies by municipalities throughout the Netherlands, played an important role in the establishment of a favourable environment for the creation of the food strategy (Interviewee P – expert; Interviewee L – expert). This can also be derived from the fact that some initiatives that were taken earlier to put food on the urban agenda, are now suddenly starting to gain importance. In the case of the Growing Green City team, their ideas and actions regarding the development of the food strategy only started to be adopted when the civil service and the politics were "ready for it" (Interviewee N – former Flevo Campus representative). Also, some of the CFIs that have been lobbying for a municipal food policy for many years, have the idea that in the past they did not succeed because they were running ahead of things, and that now the times are finally changing and the interest in and urgency for food policy is increasing (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere; Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking).

*Well, of course we already wanted to bring them to that idea [of a food strategy] more than 10 years ago, but things are moving very slowly, and you see that now all of a sudden all kinds of things are being invented which we were already thinking about 20 years ago. Apparently, we were running a bit ahead of the game, but now slowly, which is very nice, there is more interest and the urgency of being aware of food becomes more tangible.* (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere)

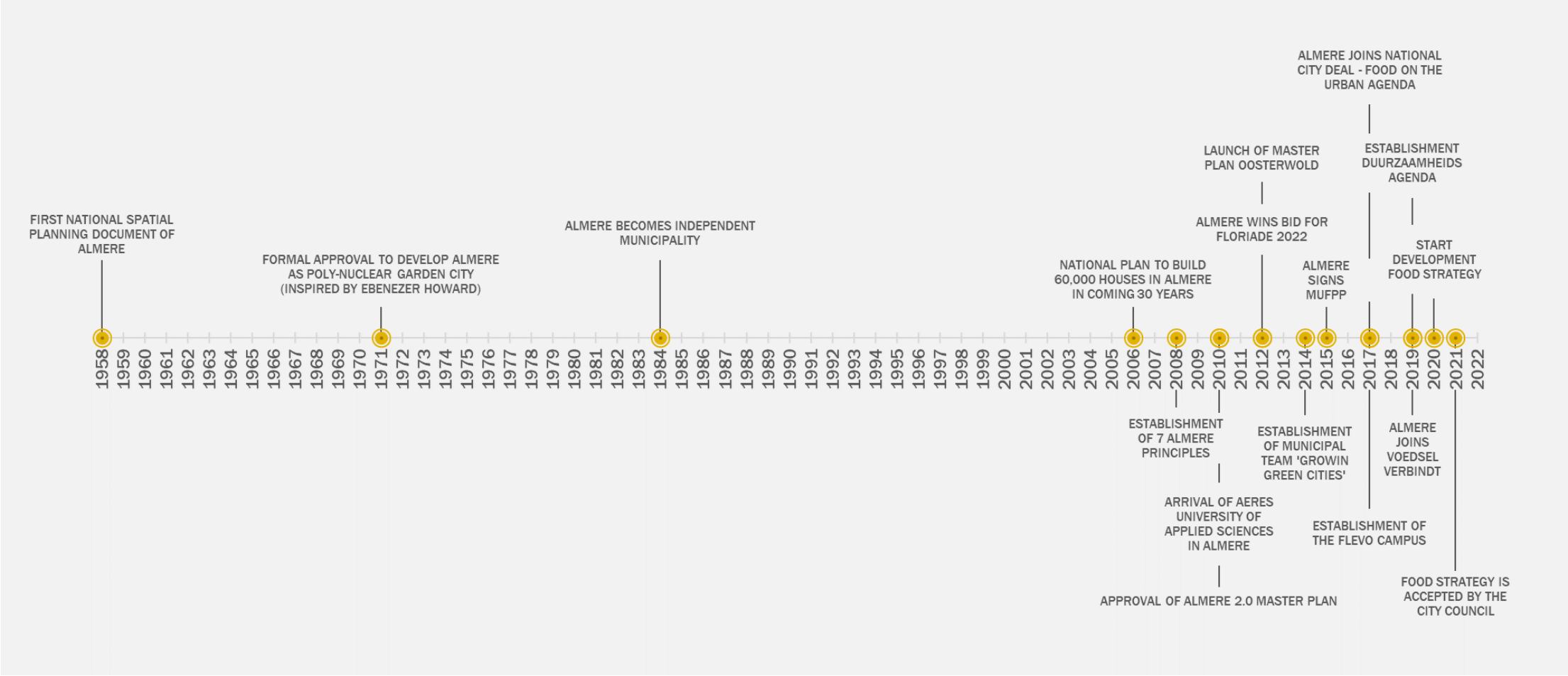


*Figure 4. Timeline of events related to food governance in Almere*

### 3.2.2 CFIs in Almere

In 2018, a report was written by Dekking (2018), which provides relevant information on the CFIs in Almere. Since the scope of the report is much larger, including more than 140 initiatives in Almere, it is a useful addition to the empirical data collected for this research to provide more general background information on the CFIs present in Almere. The initiatives in the report are referred to as urban agriculture initiatives, however, the range of initiatives included is much larger than only that related to food production or agriculture. Dekking (2018) defines urban agriculture as "everything that is part of the local food web" (p. 15), and thereby includes all initiatives that produce, process or distribute local food, or are active in the areas of experience and education concerning local food. This description relates very much to that of CFIs as used in this research. Furthermore, all the CFIs that were interviewed for this research and existed at the time the report was written, are also mentioned in the report. Therefore the data presented on the initiatives in the report of (Dekking, 2018) will be a useful addition to this research.

The report shows the rapid development of the number of CFIs from roughly 35 in 2010 to more than 140 in 2017, as shown in Figure 5 (Dekking, 2018).

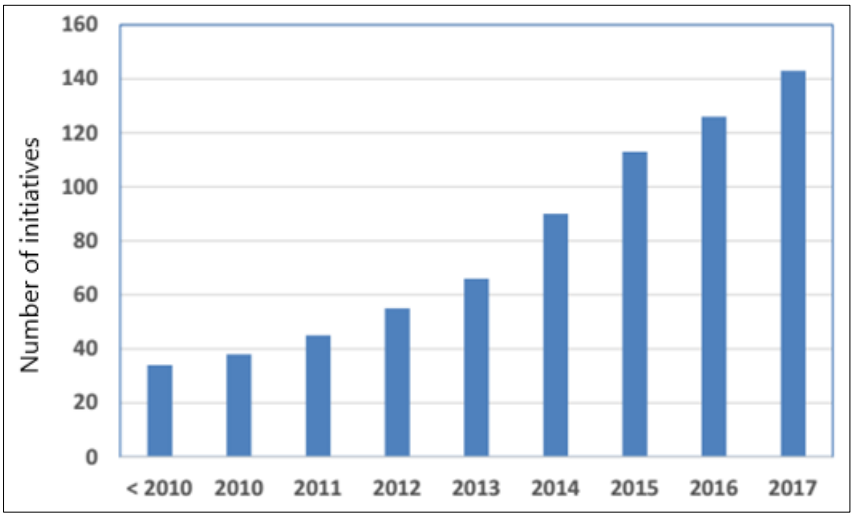


*Figure 5. Development of the number of initiatives in Almere [Figure is translated from Dutch]* (Dekking, 2018)

All these initiatives fulfil different functions, often multiple ones at the same time. A list of their diverse functions as well as how often these functions are fulfilled is shown in Figure 6.

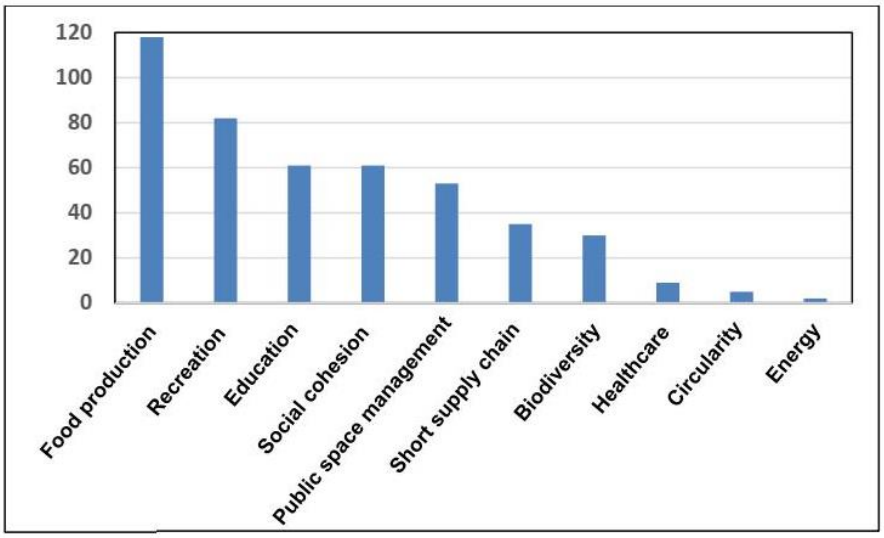


*Figure 6. The functions of CFIs related to urban agriculture in Almere [Figure is translated from Dutch]* (Dekking, 2018, p. 16)

When the CFIs that were interviewed for this research (see Table 1) are positioned in the mapping that was developed in section 3.1.2, as shown in Figure 7, it becomes clear that the division of place-based versus not place-based is rather equal. The division between city-level and beyond the city-level, however, is not evenly divided. Most of the initiatives are operating at the city level. Flevofood is the only initiative that falls under the category of 'beyond the city-level', as they are operating on the provincial level of Flevoland. Apart from close collaboration with the province of Flevoland, they also form a consortium with Local to Local Utrecht, the municipality of Amsterdam, the province of Noord-Holland and the Rabobank to work on the connection between the producers, infrastructures and consumers of local food and they also participate in two European projects (Interviewee E – Flevofood). This shows the broader network and impact that they have as an initiative compared to the ones that are mainly focussed on the city of Almere itself. The finding of these unequal scales is also confirmed by the report of 2017, which showed that by far the largest part of the initiatives was microscale as opposed to meso- and macroscale (Dekking, 2018).

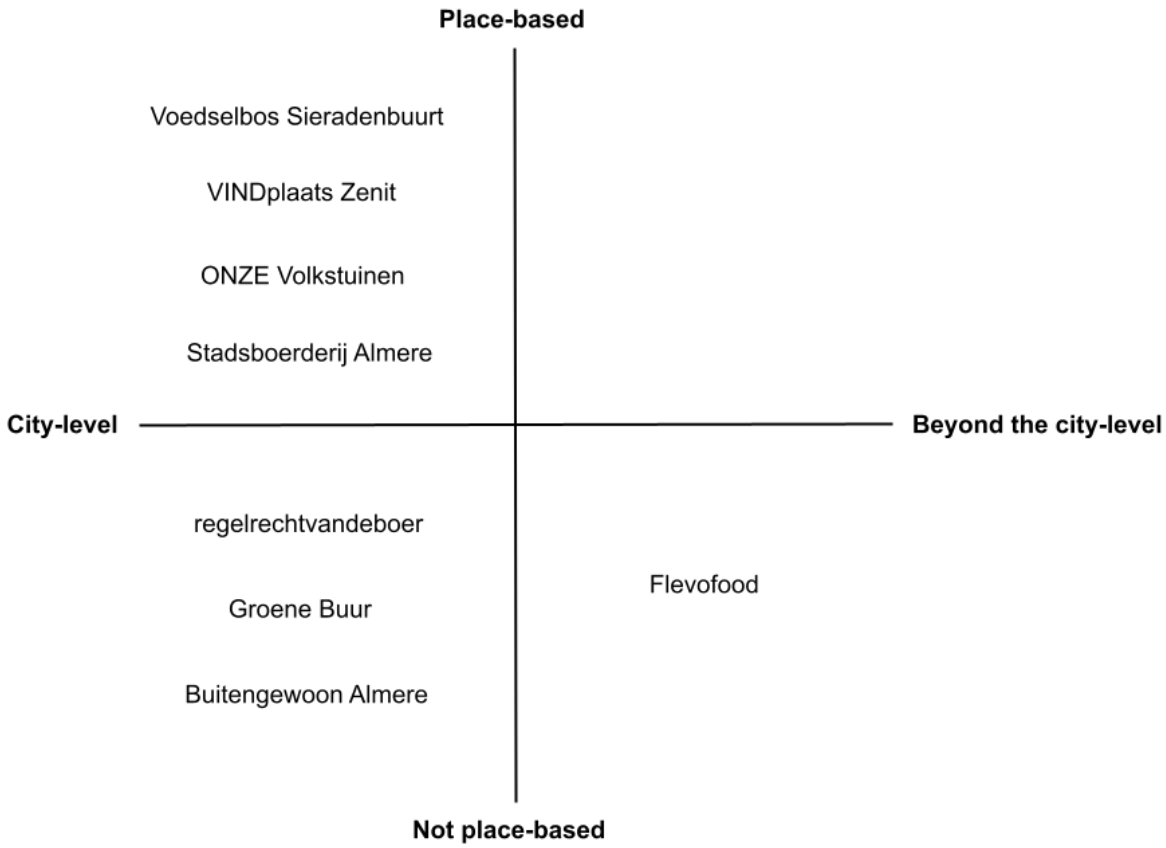


*Figure 7. Interviewed CFIs mapped according to scale and manifestation*

### 3.2.4 Governance roles of CFIs

The factors summarized in the timeline in section 3.2.1 can be regarded as formal events. These are events that are publicly shared with everyone and have clear dates. They present a visible sequence of documented events. The informal line of events around how food entered the urban agenda, however, turned out to be much more difficult to identify. It was found to be impossible to identify the informal processes by using the interview data since most of these processes take place in everyday life below the radar and were therefore often not explicitly mentioned by the participants. In addition, even though studying the actions and networks of CFIs gives an impression of how broad their orientations and possible influences are, it does not show the specific effects of these actions and networks on developments like the food strategy in Almere. Apart from positioning the potential contributing factors on a timeline that shows the sequence of the events or milestones taking place in the food governance domain as was done in section 3.2.1, it is impossible to show direct causal links between them. This fuzziness makes it very difficult to attribute certain roles to CFIs in the process since their influence cannot be traced back to certain actions or events. Furthermore, it became clear that the division between formal and informal spaces of deliberation, as defined in the criteria presented in the theoretical section, is not so clear in reality. For example, the development of the food strategy itself can be regarded as a formal process, but there might be all kinds of invisible informal processes, such as informal and everyday conversations between stakeholders during the development, that might also have influenced the food strategy. Another limitation relates to the emphasis placed on deliberation. The interview data shows that governance roles do not necessarily have to be related to deliberative spaces but can also take form in the actions of CFIs themselves through which they can indirectly influence governance processes.

Using the criteria developed in the theoretical chapter of formal and informal spaces of deliberation and the role of CFIs within these spaces thus presents multiple difficulties, because the informal spaces are often invisible. An alternative division might prove to be more useful for analysing the empirical results of this research. Therefore, instead of sub-dividing the governance roles of CFIs into formal and informal, they will be sub-divided into direct and indirect governance roles. This sub-division allows for a certain distinction between the level of influence between the roles while taking into account the uncertainty of causal relations. Furthermore, even though direct and indirect might also overlap in some cases, using this terminology avoids to a large extent the fuzziness that resulted from the distinction between formal and informal spaces of deliberation.

#### *Direct governance roles*

Different governance roles for CFIs can be identified that aim to directly influence decision-making and policies regarding food. In Almere, these can be sub-divided into the development of the food strategy and through lobbying meant to directly influence municipal decisions and policy.

##### Food strategy development

The development of the food strategy is one of the most relevant actions regarding food policy in Almere, in which CFIs can play a direct governance role. Even though the food strategy is not defined as a food policy (Interviewee D – municipality), the food strategy comes closest to any kind of formal municipality document regarding food. As a municipality member explained, it is deliberately called a food strategy instead of a food policy, because a food policy would be broader and more fundamental, more embedded in existing municipal policies, and would require more consultations with citizens (Interviewee D – municipality). As she explained:

> *Actually, it is more of an investment strategy. Like how we are going to use the resources we have for further development. So that would be the distinction I think [between the food strategy and food policy]. We did not so much want to make a pedantic food policy.* (Interviewee D – municipality)

The development of the food strategy was (officially) initiated by the municipality of Almere (Interviewee P – expert) and, as explained before, is meant to give guidance to the municipality regarding the theme of food in the Duurzaamheidsagenda, as well as to improve integration in other municipal policy departments. The decision to make food one of the themes in the Duurzaamheidsagenda was, however, much debated within the municipality. This was due to two reasons: firstly, it was questioned what the role of food was in relation to sustainability, and secondly, it was questioned what the role of the local government should be with regards to the topic of food (Interviewee Q – high local government official).

> *Look, the waste collection has traditionally been a municipal task. And that we are now doing this in a circular way is very nice, but everyone understands that it is a municipal task. Biodiversity too, because*

*we plant trees or we cut them down, to put it simply. But food, I mean, until a few years ago, of course, there were no municipalities that talked about food. Because that was national policy, or European policy when it came to regulations. It was an international market when it comes to, well, production and things like that. So, all municipalities did, I think, was to allow a supermarket to be established somewhere or not and that was about it. … So, we discussed that [the presumed role of the municipality] for a very long time.* (Interviewee Q – high local government official)

Finally, also with the coming of the Floriade and its theme of 'feeding the city' in mind, it was decided that food should be a theme in the Duurzaamheidsagenda (Interviewee Q – high local government official). An external organisation based in Amsterdam (Food Cabinet), was hired to develop the food strategy for the municipality. The role of CFIs in this development emerges in three different ways as will now be explained.

For the development of the food strategy, a construction was used consisting of two kinds of advisory boards: the supervisory committee and the expert panel. The supervisory committee was meant to support the guidance of the development process by giving critical and constructive advice, using their knowledge on the political and administrative context of Almere (Interviewee P – expert). The committee consisted of three members: someone from Flevo Campus, a researcher from Aeres University of Applied Sciences and a board member of the Almere Economic Board (Gemeente Almere, 2021b). The expert panel was meant to be a group of people that knows the situation regarding food in Almere and contributed to the content delivery for the food strategy (Interviewee P – expert). This panel consisted of three researchers from Wageningen University & Research and/or Aeres University of Applied Sciences (including Arjan Dekking), someone from the Rabobank, and a board member of Flevofood (Gemeente Almere, 2021b). All members of these two advisory boards were living and/or working in the city of Almere (Gemeente Almere, 2021b). Next to these advisory boards, around 10 interviews were done by Food Cabinet with different actors in the city who were put forward by the expert panel, including some CFIs (Interviewee P – expert). In addition to the advisory boards and the interviews, a stakeholder meeting was organised at the city farm in August, to which also various CFIs were invited, such as Stichting Buitengewoon Almere (Interviewee F – Stichting Buitengewoon Almere).

At first sight, the direct involvement of CFIs in the development process of the food strategy seems to be very limited. Flevofood was the only CFI who had a seat in the expert panel and was able to directly influence the content of the food strategy. However, the roles of the expert panel members cannot be so clearly defined. For example, Arjan Dekking is apart from a researcher also a very important player in the facilitation of CFIs. He has a very broad network in Almere and has played an important role in the initiation of multiple CFIs within the city. This makes him not only a researcher but also a representative of multiple CFIs. The Rabobank also plays an important role in the support of local food production and urban agriculture in Almere (A. Dekking, personal communication, January 19, 2021) and the sponsoring of various initiatives (Interviewee C – Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt). Therefore, it cannot strictly be said that no CFIs were represented in the actual development of the food strategy. Apart from the advisory boards, a few CFIs might have been able to deliver input through the interviews held with them during the process. Furthermore, the CFIs that were present at the stakeholder meeting might have been able to influence the food strategy during the meeting as well as afterwards when a report of the meeting was sent to all participants with the ability to provide feedback and other additional input (Interviewee P – expert). To what extent CFIs were able to influence the food strategy therefore remains uncertain.

### Lobbying

There are also CFIs directly involved in the governance of food through lobbying. This can be done by already existing CFIs, or through the establishment of CFIs especially for this purpose. In Almere, several CFIs have been lobbying for a municipal food policy for a long time already, trying to get the municipality to act (Interviewee P – expert). In 2018, Arjan Dekking took initiative together with Stichting Buitengewoon Almere and Flevofood to get the municipality to formulate a food strategy (Interviewee L – expert). They were even appointed as a task force for this subject, but this initiative was discarded when it was decided that food would become part of the Duurzaamheidsagenda (A. Dekking, personal communication, April 4, 2021). The city farm in Almere has also put in much effort to put food and agriculture on the municipal agenda: "you could give a lobbyist a full-time job here, who just goes to city hall every time to explain things again, to get acquainted again, to invite councillors…" (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere).

Apart from existing CFIs that take a role in generating broader change, there have also been CFIs that were set up especially for lobbying and generating broader change. For example, the foundation Vrienden van de Stadsboerderij (friends of the Stadsboerderij), which was set up as a response to the lack of land

for the city farm. It was initiated by Arjan Dekking, who wanted to help the city farm to get enough land for its existence (Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking). The city farm was renting temporary fields from the municipality that were increasingly withdrawn from them to fulfil other purposes without providing new land in return. The need for the development of such a foundation emerged when they realised that the public support for the city farm needed to be organised:

> *One time we were talking to a councillor at a harvest festival [at the city farm], and we were discussing the land issue of the city farm, and he said 'well, as long as you have no support from within the city, I cannot help you'. And [initiator city farm] and I look at each other, astonished, because we were surrounded by 1,000 people, like how much support do you want to have? But we continued to talk and well, it turned out that the public support was not organized. And then I went into action mode and I founded the Vrienden van [de Stadsboerderij] foundation.* (Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking)

Apart from Arjan Dekking and the city farmer, the members included some people from Almere with a certain status, such as former councillors and managers. The foundation was meant to show the municipality that the city farm had important societal value and that there was public support for its existence in Almere. The foundation started to organise meetings with the municipality about the problem, and within two years they reached their goal, and the city farm had secured a sufficient amount of land again (Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking).

The Vrienden van de Stadsboerderij foundation then became part of another association that was active between 2010 and 2018: Vereniging Buitenstad. This association aimed to create awareness amongst citizens about the green environment of Almere and all its related opportunities. They did this by organising excursions and meetings that showed the connection between greenery and topics like art, sports etc. The connection between greening and food was also one of the main themes of the association because this was found to be a strong tool for connecting citizens with their green surroundings. The association had numerous meetings with the municipality, in particular with the Growing Green City team (formed within the municipality when the Floriade became more important, as mentioned before) and was thereby able to secure some funding and other support for its projects (Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking).

Another important network that was set up was the Kenniskring Buurtmoestuinen (translation: Community of Practice in community gardens), which connected all CFIs related to community gardens, school gardens and food forests to share knowledge and support each other (Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking). Apart from strengthening and speeding up these CFIs, this network also fulfilled an important role in the representation of the CFIs in the communication with the municipality. This was related for example to the existing barriers such as the access to and maintenance of public space (Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking). The network, therefore, played a direct governance role by organising meetings with the municipality about policy barriers that needed to be changed for these initiatives to thrive.

The abovementioned examples show initiatives operating at the city level. At the same time, lobbying can also take place at the neighbourhood level. Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt provides an example of how neighbourhood residents that unite themselves can influence municipal decision-making related to food, in this case regarding the development of public space. It started with a vacant lot in their neighbourhood where an illegal football field had formed, and the municipality wanted to move that field to a place in the forest. The neighbourhood residents did not agree with the municipality, because they wanted to keep the football field in the vacant plot and did not want the trees in the forest to be cut down for no reason. The communication with the municipality was difficult because they had no contact person within the neighbourhood for the municipality to address and they were not taken seriously. As a result, they decided to set up a foundation for their neighbourhood through which they contacted the municipality. They found out that the municipality wanted to plant 10,000 oaks and ash trees on the vacant plot of which maybe 300 would survive. The neighbourhood residents criticised this plan, also in relation to sustainability, so the municipality asked them what they would like to have there instead. They began with making a mood board and the idea of the food forest gradually started to take form. It was further developed during monthly meetings organised by neighbourhood residents, where the municipality was also invited. The municipality was also facilitating the development by bringing along a landscape architect and a permaculture expert, and by financing the CFI with the budget that would otherwise have been used for the oak and ash trees (Interviewee C – Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt).

### *Indirect governance roles*

Apart from the direct governance roles of CFIs as described in the previous section, CFIs can also participate in food governance through indirect roles that result from their actions. At first sight, it might seem as if some CFIs do not have any role in governance, especially when they are mostly focused on their own initiative and not actively participating in formal decision-making processes within the broader food governance domain. However, it can also be argued that by fulfilling certain functions and providing alternatives, the CFIs challenge existing systems and thereby play an indirect role in food governance by putting pressure on existing policies and structures within society. The CFIs in Almere fulfil different functions as was shown in Figure 6. Some of these functions also emerged from the interviews and uncover indirect governance roles.

#### Public awareness creation and education

Through awareness creation and education, CFIs spread their goals and values, such as sustainability, organic food production and improving biodiversity. When a larger number of people become aware of these goals and values, this can start to influence the way people think about food and its production. This could lead for example to a change in practices of participants as they learn new skills and gain new knowledge.

Several CFIs in Almere organise educational activities such as guided tours for school children (e.g., Stadsboerderij Almere), or they provide land for schools to grow crops and to teach children how to grow food (e.g., ONZE Volkstuinen and VINDplaats Zenit). But even without the organisation of these educational activities, CFIs create more awareness about food and its origins, as can be derived from these quotes:

> *I do notice that many people who are a customer at my place [renting allotments] are much more conscious about vegetables and also attach much more value to products. Because I always give as an example: in the summer, the tomatoes in the supermarket can, of course, be really cheap, one euro a kilo or something, and then the customers come to me and say: "how can tomatoes be so cheap in the supermarket when we see how much work you need for a tomato plant?" Yes, well that is an appreciation that people- Yes, that they get for the products, and I think that is nice to see.* (Interviewee I - ONZE Volkstuinen)

> *[An important value for Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt is] a little more attention to nature. Children see that strawberries do not grow in a tray at Albert Heijn, but on a mountain and from a plant [at the food forest]. You also see a lot of grandfathers and grandmothers with their grandchildren who explain that to them and that is really nice.* (Interviewee C – Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt)

> *I think that there is also a kind of education, an educational goal behind it [sharing the fun of the city farm], that when people become more aware of where their food comes from, how it is produced, that they will also make more conscious choices in for example the kind of products they want to buy.* (Interviewee B - Stadsboerderij Almere)

When more people become aware and change their practices related to food, this can slowly change the prevailing norms and values within society and thereby indirectly influence the way that food is governed.

#### Management of public space

Some CFIs, such as Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt and VINDplaats Zenit, fulfil the function of public space management by the means of food production. Normally the management of public space is something done by the municipality, but these initiatives provide an alternative way of governing public space. Instead of the municipality being responsible, in this case, it is the citizens that bear responsibility for these public spaces. Furthermore, these spaces that were previously not used or had a different purpose, are now used for food production. These kinds of initiatives open up new governance spaces and change the practices of the municipality.

An example of how public space is managed innovatively through a collaboration between a CFI and the municipality is shown by VINDplaats Zenit, who made a task division with the municipality for the area:

> *We have a management agreement with the municipality. … So, we get the land, and we have to manage it ourselves, but part of it is also done by the municipality. For example, we have been hoeing paths for 6 years now. And now we said, "okay those paths, the municipality must take care of them*

*now". … We have made a list of tasks that says what the municipality does and what we do.* (Interviewee G – VINDplaats Zenit)

Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt played a direct role in governance when setting up the initiative by lobbying at the municipality for a different destination of the place and thereby directly influencing municipal decisions. At the same time, it also plays an indirect governance role by managing the public space in a different way than usual. This in turn opens up opportunities and changes municipal ruling of public space. According to the interviewee, more is possible at Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt than in other public areas:

*Now there are nesting boxes for owls as well, and then another neighbourhood resident comes who is interested in bats, so he has made two bat boxes. And everything is allowed, which is also really nice you know. Normally you have to have permission and a permit for everything and here, well, they turn a blind eye.* (Interviewee C – Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt)

### Providing alternatives

In the case of food production and provision, CFIs can influence what types of products are available. This provision of alternatives might indirectly influence governance processes since it can change ideas about more conventional forms of food production. Furthermore, it increases the individual agency of citizen-consumers by providing them with more choices for healthy and sustainable food.

An example is illustrated by a citizen that took initiative to increase the supply of organic food in Almere:

*While the children were growing up I thought 'Okay, something must be done about the food supply in Almere'. It was very difficult to get organic food in Almere and so at one point I just started something myself and now after 7 years, I have a very small- I am the smallest organic greengrocer in Almere. … It is not like this will become the next Albert Heijn, because that will of course never be the case you know. It is really a kind of service to the people in Almere Buiten who are determined to eat organic.* (Interviewee H – regelrechtvandeboer)

Almeerse Weelde is another example of an initiative that provides alternative products. It is formed by farmers and citizens in Almere who harvest, produce and sell products made with resources of Almere including the use of wild-harvested crops (Almeerse Weelde, n.d.).

An initiative that not only sells alternative food products but also allows for alternative production of food by citizens themselves by renting allotments is ONZE Volkstuinen. This CFI is situated within a greenhouse, meaning that it also allows for more tropical crops to be grown, attracting multiple ethnic groups from within Almere that want to grow their traditional crops. The fact that everything has to be grown organically also adds to the alternativeness of these crops:

*All tropical crops that you could buy in the Toko are cultivated traditionally and they come from Suriname or the Dominican Republic, and they contain quite a lot of pesticides. … And we grow them organically, so it is not allowed to spray chemicals, which actually works quite well. And because of that, you attract a large group of people who like that.* (Interviewee I – ONZE Volkstuinen)

### Networking

Through the networks formed between CFIs and the municipality of Almere, indirect governance can also take place. For example, in the case of public space management, frequent communication with the municipality is needed to divide the maintenance tasks of both actors, as mentioned earlier (Interviewee G – VINDplaats Zenit). Furthermore, multiple CFIs, such as Stadsboerderij Almere, Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt, VINDplaats Zenit and ONZE Volkstuinen mention the frequent visits of municipality members where they function as showcases and inspiration for others, including (local) government administrators.

*The municipality really appreciates us because we are very often visited by all kinds of people. So, the municipality often shows VINDplaats Zenit as an example of community participation and green land-use planning, how that can be done and implemented, the planning of archaeological sites, how that can be implemented.* (Interviewee G – VINDplaats Zenit)

*Well, I have to say it has been less busy the past year, but the first years, well, no international [or] municipal councils of other cities or other parts of the world would come by [to visit the municipality] without them showing our place.* (Interviewee I – ONZE Volkstuinen)

These visits create spaces through which CFIs can play an indirect role in food governance by informal conversations as well as the presentation of their goals, values, and actions. This can in turn influence municipal policies, as is also acknowledged by the Stadsboerderij Almere:

> *I think the policy, when it comes to urban agriculture or agriculture and the food strategy, is very much in line with what the city farm has been doing so far. I think that the city farm in fact also, yes, has kind of sparked the idea for the municipality. And we are always a kind of showcase for Almere when it comes to greenery and food production. … We are also frequently visited by municipal administrators with guests, who want to show the nice things that happen in Almere.* (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere)

Another way in which networks between CFIs and the municipality can be built is through municipal programmes related to food. A current example is the Making of Floriade, which takes place in the years prior to the Floriade between 2017-2021 and is led by the municipality. In the Making of, the municipality works together with citizens, industry, societal organisations and other partners to strengthen and increase the visibility of existing initiatives and to support new initiatives (Gemeente Almere, 2017b). An example of increasing the visibility of existing initiatives, which is organised by the Making of, is the nomination of Growing Green Spelddragers at which all kinds of green and healthy initiatives in Almere are put in the spotlight (Almere Groen & Gezond, n.d.-b). To support new initiatives, they established the Floriade Parade, through which four initiatives each month that relate to one or more of the four themes of Growing Green Cities (feeding, greening, healthying and energizing) and meet certain conditions, can receive a kickstart of up to 1000 euros (Interviewee J – municipality). The Making of can be seen as a kind of programme with actions that are a combination of governance both by the municipality and the grassroots. The municipality initiated the Making of, but the content and success of the programme are dependent on the grassroots.

This is also shown in another project that is part of the Making of: the Groene Buur (Green Neighbour). This project originated from a meeting about the 'week of the insect' initiated by the programme manager of the Making of, which included all kinds of green organisations in Almere such as environmental organisations and other smaller organisations related to the topic (Interviewee K – Groene Buur). They wanted to include more citizens in the greening of the city and that is how the idea of the Groene Buur was born. Neighbourhood residents can sign up and receive a starter kit to become a Groene Buur in their neighbourhood, which means that they will take action to green their neighbourhood and make it more insect-friendly (Almere Groen & Gezond, n.d.-a). The municipality plays an important role in this project because it is funding the project as it is part of the Making of. At the same time, it also gives a lot of space for development at the grassroots level, since the green neighbours can decide themselves which kind of green initiatives they want to start, according to their interest and expertise (Interviewee K – Groene Buur).

These kinds of projects from the Making of where citizen initiatives become a central point of focus are appreciated, as some of the interviews with CFIs showed:

> *[The Floriade] is something in which the municipality plays a major role, especially the entire program up to the Floriade, say, where they really want to stimulate citizen participation and citizen initiatives. And that is something that I have always seen as the most beautiful part of the Floriade in Almere.* (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere)

> *And I must say, what the municipality has always done … I do not know whether that is the municipality, but that is that at the Floriade in the city they have a kind of market let's say, where all green initiatives with a Growing Green Speld can also be found. I find that very stimulating … and it also has a real feel of food policy.* (Interviewee G – VINDplaats Zenit).

But also everyday conversations between CFIs and local government officials might influence food governance processes. The representative of Flevofood, for example, mentions his frequent conversations with a member of the Growing Green Cities team of the municipality (Interviewee E – Flevofood). He also ascribes his direct involvement in the development of the food strategy as a result of his large network within the municipality (Interviewee E – Flevofood).

Apart from governance through direct relations with the municipality, it might also occur through networks with other actors that are in turn related to local municipal governance, such as the province of Flevoland. These indirect relationships are, however, hard to identify.

### Facilitation of other CFIs

Another important function that some of the CFIs fulfil, is the facilitation of other CFIs. Some of the CFIs provide meeting places for like-minded people and are therefore a breeding place for new initiatives. An important example is the city farm of Almere, where a lot of different initiatives were created, such as Almeerse Weelde. They also facilitate childcare on the farm, a care workplace, a flower and vegetable picking garden, a local beekeeper, and a bakery (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere). Also, the interviewee of ONZE Volkstuinen mentions that he always makes time for people who want to start a new initiative, or a new business related to food, to provide them with information and answer their questions (Interviewee I – ONZE Volkstuinen). The facilitation of other CFIs can also be regarded as an indirect governance role, as it increases the overall amount and strength of CFIs in Almere and therefore indirectly influences the governance domain through the governance functions that these new CFIs might provide.

All the above-mentioned functions can thus indirectly influence food governance processes by challenging existing systems and structures in society. At the same time, it must be noted that this influence can also be a side-effect, as some CFIs use food as a tool to reach other goals and the topic of food might not be their primary focus. For example, food is frequently used as a way to enhance social cohesion between citizens (Interviewee K – Groene Buur). This can also be seen in the case of Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt, where one of the main values of the food forest is the connection between neighbourhood residents (Interviewee C – Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt). Also, for VINDplaats Zenit, food production is not used solely for the goal of provisioning food, but is also used to preserve the area:

> *It really has a community function and as long as that community function is in place, in combination with greenery, the prehistoric place will also be preserved. After all, you never know what the municipality will do. It is expensive land, so we have to remain active, that is important, so in that sense, food production is also a means of preserving the place.* (Interviewee G – VINDplaats Zenit)

### 3.2.5 Meaningful citizen participation

In the literature review on meaningful citizen participation in food governance, four criteria were identified that influence the meaningfulness of participation: the level of government involvement, short-term versus long-term orientation, the inclusion of different views and interests, and the strength of CFI coalitions. These criteria will now be applied to the case study of Almere. Furthermore, two additional criteria that emerged from the case study will also be elaborated upon: the availability of resources and the communication between municipal departments.

#### *Level of government involvement*

As mentioned in the literature review in chapter 3.1.3, a combination of top-down and bottom-up in food policy development is desirable (de Zeeuw & Dubbeling, 2015; Duvernoy, 2018; Stierand, 2012). This was also acknowledged in one of the expert interviewees when talking about the development process of the food strategy in Almere:

> *It [food policy] will only really work if grassroots and policy, so top-down and bottom-up, are able to find each other. Just grassroots doesn't work and just policy coming from the municipality doesn't work either. They have to find each other, that is what I am trying to say. … And there are enough grassroots movements and initiatives in Almere, that is not the problem, but try to unite them [policy and grassroots], bring them together in the development of such a food strategy, only then it will start to work.* (Interviewee L – expert)

The level of government involvement in the food strategy can be considered rather high, as it was formally initiated by the municipality and the involvement of CFIs in the process is for a large part dependent on invitations by the municipality. Furthermore, apart from Flevofood as a member of the expert panel, the influence of CFIs was mainly indirect through representatives in the advisory boards or participation in the stakeholder meeting and interviews. How exactly this affected the final document of the food strategy is difficult to trace, and therefore the effect of the high level of government involvement cannot be determined. However, the interviews revealed that multiple CFIs did not feel like they were involved (enough) in municipal policy development (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere; Interviewee F – Stichting Buitengewoon Almere; Interviewee G – VINDplaats Zenit; Interviewee H - regelrechtvandeboer).

A side-effect of the strong role of the municipality is that it creates dependencies of food governance processes on the political climate, which changes after every election. This makes it difficult for steady relationships to develop and for the establishment of strong agreements between CFIs and the municipality. Sometimes agreements are made, or collaborations are developed with one councillor, and when the next one arrives things might be completely different, connections have to be built all over again and agreements that were made before might not be valid anymore (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere; Interviewee F – Stichting Buitengewoon Almere). Apart from the effects this had on the food strategy, which is also dependent on the budget made available for implementation, which can change according to the national and local political climate, it also leads to uncertainties for the existence of CFIs themselves:

> *The municipality is very facilitating because they are very much involved, but we are also very aware that if the wind blows in a different direction, it can be different. Of course, we have a management agreement for a certain period and after that, we hope of course that it will be extended, but the land is not ours. So that means it is always uncertain whether it will stay that way.* (Interviewee G – VINDplaats Zenit)

#### *Short-term versus long-term orientation*

The tensions between short-term, programmatic goals versus the development of longer-term policy frameworks can also be seen in Almere. A recurring theme from the interviews was the idea from CFIs that their participation in decision-making processes did not lead to change.

> *There is a lot of talking and a lot of thinking and very little is done. And that is one of the things that in the early years I was very busy getting into a network. And that worked out quite well, but at a certain point the networks revolved solely around networking and talking to each other, and if I- I'm okay with talking, but then you also have to get results after six months and then you should move on. And that is- So, there is a lot of talking and I am totally done with that. … So, I stopped with a lot of networks because there was just too much talking.* (Interviewee I – ONZE Volkstuinen)

*For a while, I participated in the consultations of the Buitenvaart. … But that is also just talking and talking and some roundtables, and then again an advisor of the municipality participates that earns I don't know how many tons per year and blah blah and then a report is written and then they move on from it. And I've seen that happen so many times, that cycle, I don't participate in that anymore. … And I really had a time when I [participated in] everything I encountered, you know, and then I thought oh nice, nice, now it's going to happen. But it does not happen, which is really a pity.* (Interviewee H – regelrechtvandeboer).

This feeling of a lack of results might result from the governance process being focussed too much on the longer-term rather than on short-term and visible results. This in turn discourages the CFIs to participate again in multi-stakeholder governance like stakeholder meetings and other participative methods of decision-making. It also led to some scepticism among CFIs regarding the food strategy, wondering if it will really be executed this time, instead of being just another report that disappears into a drawer or on a pile (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere). Project-based action, as shown for example by the Making of Floriade, shows how visible action and short-term interventions are appreciated by the CFIs and can therefore be considered a valuable addition to the development of longer-term strategies and plans.

### *Inclusion of different views and interests*

Conflicting viewpoints between 'mainstream' and 'alternative' actors in the food system were also highlighted in some of the interviews. Some of the CFIs would like the food system to change radically, which causes tensions with the conventional food system. This might lead to the exclusion of some of these more radical views in decision-making processes. Stadsboerderij Almere, for example, does not feel like their wish for alternative ways of food production based on organic principles is being heard by the municipality:

*Well, if only half of my view on how to manage the green spaces in Almere had been implemented, Almere would look very different. [Our actions are] based on a vision on agriculture and food that should actually also form the foundation of the food strategy … and that can also be about related things like do not use pesticides in Almere's public spaces, that is where it starts because if you want to produce good food and you want the health of your citizens to improve, you have to start with things like that. … I find those kinds of principles very fundamental, but for some reason, well I would not know how things like this would find their way in Almere at the moment. I really have the feeling that I do not have access to that.* (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere)

Also, regelrechtvandeboer mentions its wish for a shift to organic production methods:

*It is ridiculous that men, as species so to speak, is the only one who consciously feeds his children poison. That is weird, isn't it? Everyone knows and everyone says, "well but it is not dangerous". No, but it is poison. We think that is normal. … in the 40 years that we have used Flevoland commercially, that we have agriculture there, in these 40 years we have totally messed it up. If you look at the nutrients present in fruit and vegetables, they only go down. And everyone knows why, and nobody acts upon it.* (Interviewee H – regelrechtvandeboer)

These wishes for radical change might conflict with the interests of other more dominant or powerful stakeholders and therefore become trivialised in governance processes. This can in turn form a barrier to the meaningfulness of participation when a lack of attention is given to these wishes for radical change and when the CFIs do not have the idea that their input is really used.

*I am always invited to citizen meetings about the content of a new land-use plan for Almere or, you know, you are allowed to participate at information evenings … and I do go there and then I give my opinion, but it is always just as if that is only used for a thin layer of polish to make it look better.* (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere)

Not only do these CFIs feel like their views are not included, but also the inclusion of the more mainstream market actors seems to be lacking in the development of the food strategy. These actors were initially not included in the development process, even though it was written in the food strategy that they wanted to reach an agreement with the supermarkets to increase the supply of local and fresh food (Gemeente Almere, 2021b). Only at the end of the process, as an additional request from some councillors, a meeting was held with five retailers of Almere to see if they were actually interested in such an agreement (Interviewee P – expert; Interviewee Q – high local government official).

These examples show the difficulty of combining the viewpoints and interests of different actors and the resulting tendency to ignore these conflicting viewpoints. However, these must be listened to when trying to formulate an effective food strategy (de Zeeuw & Dubbeling, 2015).

### *Presence of CFI coalitions*

In Almere there used to be some coalitions between or including CFIs as mentioned in section 3.2.4, such as Vereniging Buitenstad and Kenniskring Buurtmoestuinen. However, these coalitions ceased to exist or are currently inactive. As many CFIs are spending most of their available time on their own initiative and money for the organisation of these kinds of coalitions is lacking, building coalitions is difficult. The importance of the establishment of such a coalition in Almere to connect policy makers and grassroots actors is, however, acknowledged by one of the expert interviewees:

> *Such an association [as Vereniging Buitenstad] is very much needed and can also be a very important instrument for a municipality because such an association is formed by hundreds of people, all of whom are involved inhabitants of the city who would all like to think along about how one can further develop such a city and what kind of policy needs to be developed to keep the city lively and vibrant. … I think that now it is increasingly timely and important for such an initiative to be reintroduced. And it will also be able to fulfil a role in that sandwich [of both policy and grassroots], to make sure that the policy stays connected to the needs of the city. … But you cannot do that solely with unpaid volunteers. At a certain point, a part of the budget should be made available to give at least a few people within such an association that role in which they function as antennae in the city and also as a conduit towards the municipality or towards the food policy* (Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking).

### *Availability of resources*

A criterion for meaningful participation that emerged from the interviews that influenced the meaningfulness of the participation of CFIs was the availability of resources. A lack of time was found to present a barrier for both the municipality and the CFIs to find each other and to create meaningful participation. When CFIs participate in broader decision-making processes, this often has to be done in their free time, which they often lack. The Stadsboerderij Almere says they are trying their best to contribute to food policy and also do this by inviting municipality members on the farm and organising meetings, but they also say, "I only have two hands and 24 hours and there is just not more that I can do" (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere). ONZE Volkstuinen mentioned this as a problem as well:

> *Every meeting I attend is in my own time and I could have spent that on working as well. It doesn't get me anywhere and the professional talkers talk for a living and I don't. I think that's really a thing.* (Interviewee I – ONZE Volkstuinen)

Often CFIs are busy focussing on their own initiative and lack the time to think about broader policy change as explained by one of the experts:

> *Many of those citizen initiatives are very much focused on their own initiative. There are very few who are looking at the bigger picture. A citizen initiative such as VINDplaats Zenit, well, they're happy when they are able, and they are already busy enough with that, to keep their own initiative going, let alone that they make time and have the ambition to support other initiatives as well. Because well, of course when you say that you want to participate in policy-making, you also have to start thinking along with all kinds of other initiatives and, well, many of those citizen initiatives just don't have the time and space to do that. So, then you need some of those fools like me who say "well, I think the common interest is actually more important than my individual interest and I am going to commit myself to that".* (Interviewee A – Arjan Dekking)

The role that money plays and how it can enhance meaningful participation by the inclusion of CFIs in the process is also mentioned by Stichting Buitengewoon Almere:

> *I think that if you become an interlocutor at various meetings based on a daily allowance, you will have a lot more to say. Now 98/99 per cent of the invitations I receive are during working hours during the week. And whether I would like to make my knowledge and skills available for free? Well, you know, who will pay my rent? Who will pay my bills? Who will pay for my parking ticket? If you go to the city hall you have to pay I don't know how much per hour. You have been there for two hours and pay 6 euros. You can say what does it matter? No, because this happens every time.* (Interviewee F – Stichting Buitengewoon Almere)

However, the municipality is also restricted by time and money when it comes to its effort of involving CFIs in decision-making processes. Participative methods of decision-making often take time and cost money, which is not always available to municipalities (Interviewee L – expert). This problem also arises when it comes to the food strategy, where Food Cabinet was restricted in the number of interviews they could do with relevant stakeholders in the city:

> *It was quite a search for us from the start since we did not have unlimited time for our mission of course, so … on the one hand, we were encouraged to talk to individual stakeholders, but we were also asked to keep it limited, just in terms of hours. So, they said, 'well, choose ten [stakeholders to interview] and think carefully about who they should be, but don't do individual interviews with 40 or 50 stakeholders', because that simply was not in the budget.* (Interviewee P – expert)

### *Communication between municipal departments*

Another additional criterion regarding meaningful participation uncovered by the interviews was the quality of the communication between municipal departments. This refers both to communication between policy makers and executive civil servants and to the communication between different policy departments. The former can create barriers in the actual implementation of municipal policy. An example in Almere is the promotion of greening the city by handing out seeds to citizens to sow in public green spaces in their neighbourhoods, which are in turn removed again by civil servants of the green maintenance team (Interviewee H – regelrechtvandeboer). This forms a barrier because it discourages citizens to participate again in these kinds of projects in the future (Interviewee K – de Groene Buur). Additionally, the lack of communication between different policy departments is an issue, because this leads to barriers to effective communication between CFIs and the municipality.

> *I have the feeling that for the past 20 years I have had to explain to new councillors, new civil servants, new mayors, who we are, what we do, why we do it… And that I also come across the fact that in one department of the municipality they know what is going on and in another department, they do not know at all, they have never heard of urban agriculture before.* (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere)

Apart from the informal group of municipality members that call themselves the Growing Green City team, there is no formally established group of people within the municipality that is committed to the topic of food. Since the topic of food is part of a lot of different policy departments, it is hard for CFIs to find the right contact persons within the municipality.

> *What I find difficult is that "the municipality" does not really exist. I once even heard a councillor say: 'the municipality, yes, that is a many-headed monster, that is a hopeless case'. And well, that is what I always experience, that it is quite difficult to talk to "the municipality". So, I am curious if that will get better in the future, but I wouldn't really know how because it's also getting bigger and more distant I think.* (Interviewee B – Stadsboerderij Almere)

# Chapter 4: Discussion & conclusion

This chapter will provide an answer to the research questions of this research. It will do so by analysing the findings presented in chapter 3 of both the theoretical and empirical study. Furthermore, it will reflect on the strengths and limitations of the research and state the implications of the results for further research and practice. It will end by giving a concise conclusion of the research.

## 4.1 Reflection on the results

This research aimed to answer the question: *To what extent and in what ways are citizen food initiatives involved in urban food governance?* As the results of this research show, this question has no straightforward answer. The empirical results show that food is indeed increasingly subject to governance instead of government and has increasingly made its way to the urban agenda, as suggested in the theoretical section. However, it also becomes clear that there is no straightforward answer to the extent and ways in which CFIs are involved in these governance processes. The following reflection is structured along the three main points identified from the research question: the concept of CFIs, the extent to which CFIs are involved in urban food governance, and the ways in which CFIs are involved in urban food governance.

### 4.1.1 Reflecting on the concept of CFIs

Dividing CFIs into 'place-based' versus 'not place-based' and 'city-level' versus 'beyond the city-level' as shown in the mapping in Figure 1 (p. 18), was meant to contribute to an understanding of CFIs in terms of their manifestation as well as their scale. However, when applying this mapping to Almere, it becomes apparent that trying to classify CFIs according to their characteristics in relation to governance leads to multiple problems.

First of all, the characteristics used in the mapping do not suffice when categorising CFIs in relation to governance. As emerged from the empirical results, there are additional characteristics of CFIs that play a role when it comes to their participation in governance. For example, the extent to which CFIs are internally or externally focussed influences their role in governance. When they are more internally focussed, they are primarily concerned with their own initiative and their governance roles will revolve mainly around actions that can indirectly influence decision-making processes. When they are more externally focussed, they are, apart from their own initiative, also focussed on the collective good and on generating broader change. Apart from this being reflected in their goals, it will also manifest itself in their actions. For example, when they are externally focussed, they will put more effort into active participation in decision-making processes that go beyond the interests of their own initiative. The difference between external and internal focus became evident in the case study of Almere, as it showed how some CFIs were set up especially to generate broader change (e.g., Vereniging Buitenstad), while others are more concerned with managing their own initiative (e.g., VINDplaats Zenit). Rather than being simply externally or internally focussed, CFIs will often be a combination of the two where one of the two is more prevalent than the other. Another characteristic that plays a role in the participation of CFIs in governance is their degree of institutionalisation. This relates to the two categories of CFIs of community and professional initiatives as elaborated in section 3.1.2, where the professional initiatives are often more institutionalised than community initiatives. Since the results show that the more institutionalised initiatives are more inclined to have a direct role in governance (e.g., Flevofood), this is something that should be considered in reflecting further on the potential roles of CFIs in governance.

The second problem that arises from the CFI mapping, is that the divisions proposed are not as black and white in reality. When looking at the scale of CFIs, for example, a strict division into city-level or beyond the city-level provides limitations, as in reality the scale of CFIs is much more diffuse. It could be argued that more scales can be added to allow for more precise classification, such as the neighbourhood level. However, the scale of a CFI depends on many aspects and is therefore not easy to define. For example, Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt can on the one hand be classified as a CFI on the neighbourhood level because it is situated within the neighbourhood of the Sieradenbuurt, where it also originated. On the other hand, when looking at the participants, it can be argued that the initiative reaches beyond the neighbourhood level since there are also active participants coming from other neighbourhoods. Another example is VINDplaats Zenit, which on the one hand operates at the neighbourhood level, but the funding they receive connects the initiative to a much large scale, including the provincial level. Furthermore, some aspects of CFIs might be interlinked. For example, the degree of institutionalisation of CFIs is also related to their scale and these characteristics should therefore not be regarded separately.

Finally, when trying to identify and classify CFIs, tension arises between the concept of CFIs and more business-oriented initiatives. The boundary between these two kinds of initiatives can be blurry when business-oriented initiatives also originated locally and use alternative or sustainable methods for food production or provision. Due to their economic focus, it can be debated whether these entrepreneurial initiatives can really be regarded as CFIs. In the case of Almere, Flevofood is an example of an initiative that can also be regarded as a commercial enterprise, as they also have a clear economic goal when promoting local food and short food supply chains. The extent to which Flevofood can be defined as a CFI can therefore be subject to discussion. Since market actors are often more powerful in terms of money and other resources than citizen actors, this might cause them to have more influence on governance processes. It is therefore important to keep this tension and the related possible power imbalances between these kinds of initiatives in mind when analysing the role of CFIs in urban food governance.

These examples show how the analysis of CFIs as actors in food governance can be difficult since they should be analysed in relation to multiple characteristics that influence their role in governance. These characteristics are not easily defined as they are subject to various interpretations and often overlap.

### 4.1.2 Reflecting on the extent to which CFIs are involved in food governance

The question of the extent to which CFIs are involved in urban food governance does not have a straightforward answer. As the literature review showed, governance processes can be different due to varying contexts. The extent to which CFIs are involved in these processes is dependent on both the active participation of the CFI themselves in food governance as well as the meaningfulness of their participation.

As the results showed, the extent to which CFIs actively engage in the governance of broader decision-making processes differs. This relates to the concept of food citizenship and food democracy introduced in section 3.1.2. According to these theories, food citizens should aim to establish more democratic and transparent governance institutions (Lozano-Cabedo & Gómez-Benito, 2017). While there are some CFIs in Almere that take initiative to change the governance system of the municipality, as was done for example by the proposition of a kind of food strategy a few years ago, most of the CFIs in Almere turned out to be mainly focussed on their own initiative. Therefore, it is debatable whether all CFIs qualify as a collective of food citizens. At the same time, according to the theory of food citizenship, food citizens engage in practices that are meant to increase sustainability in the food system (Wilkins, 2005). The case study revealed how the actions of CFIs can indeed contribute to the sustainability of the food system, even when this is indirect, for example by influencing people's practices around food. This would mean that CFIs can indeed be considered a collective of food citizens, even though some might be more actively engaged in broader governance practices than others. The term CFIs as compared to food citizens, therefore, shows how citizen collectives can also be involved in food governance in an indirect (and sometimes unconscious) way, by initiating change in the current food system.

Apart from the involvement of CFIs in food governance, the meaningfulness of the participation of CFIs can be used to judge the extent to which CFIs can potentially be involved by evaluating the following six criteria: level of government involvement, short-term versus long-term orientation, the inclusion of different views and interests, presence of CFI coalitions, availability of resources and the quality of communication between municipal departments, as shown in Table 4 below. The latter two criteria were added as a result of the analysis of the interview data, as it turned out that a lack of resources and a lack of communication between different municipal departments in the municipality of Almere were seen by CFIs as important barriers to meaningful citizen participation.

Another issue here is that the roles of certain governance actors cannot always be clearly defined. For example, Arjan Dekking, who was part of the expert panel, is a researcher at Wageningen University & Research, but at the same time, he is also one of the most important initiators of many CFIs in Almere and has been an inhabitant of the city for a long time. This fuzziness of roles leads to uncertainty related to the conclusions one can draw on the involvement of CFIs. While his role in the expert panel was officially described as a researcher, he could also be referred to as an important representative of the CFIs, or as a citizen with a broad network in Almere. The same might be the case for other members of the advisory boards. The possibility that single actors can play multiple roles, therefore, has to be kept in mind when concluding on the extent to which CFIs are involved in food governance.

### 4.1.3 Reflecting on the ways in which CFIs are involved in food governance

In the last part of the literature review, roles for CFIs in food governance were identified. According to Renting et al. (2012), civil society is putting increasing pressure on the state and market as a result of the

multiple food crises worldwide. The case study of Almere shows how relations between CFIs and market indeed change in relation to alternative ways of food provisioning, as shown for example by Voedselbos Sieradenbuurt where food is grown by the community in a public area. The increased influence of civil society on public policies through opposition as well as new forms of interaction is also shown in Almere, for example by the lobbying of the association Vrienden van de Stadsboerderij or by the involvement of Flevofood in the development of the food strategy.

The theory suggested that governance roles of CFIs take place in formal and informal spaces of deliberation (Moragues-Faus & Morgan, 2015; Santo & Moragues-Faus, 2019). When applying this to the case study, however, it turned out to be almost impossible to identify these different types of spaces of deliberation in reality. The exact difference between these two spaces is unclear, and the relation between those two spaces as well as to governance outcomes is difficult to determine. For example, while the representative of Flevofood participates in the expert panel of the food strategy development, meaning a formal space of deliberation, he also frequently talks to a municipality member of the Growing Green Cities team in an informal space of deliberation. But how these two relate to each other or influence each other and the decisions that are made remains unclear. Furthermore, spaces of deliberation provide only one way in which governance can be exercised. It does not reflect on the actual actions of CFIs through which they can also indirectly influence governance by changing societal norms and values that underpin existing rules and regulations. The theoretical section already shortly touched upon the governance through CFIs as agents of change (Renting et al., 2012), and the case study shows how this takes form through the actions of CFIs.

Following these results, a different division is proposed to classify the roles of CFIs in governance, as shown in Table 4. Instead of distinguishing between formal and informal spaces of deliberation, the division into direct and indirect governance roles provides more analytical value. Even though indirect governance roles also do not allow for the identification of causal links between these roles and governance outcomes, they do acknowledge relevant powers at play that can influence governance processes. Therefore, to answer the question of the ways in which CFIs are involved in urban food governance: they can be involved both directly and indirectly. Direct governance roles are presented through the participation in food policy councils, urban food strategy development, other food partnerships and through lobbying by the CFIs. Indirect governance roles are presented in the actions of CFIs. Within this new conceptual framework, the criterion of "governance through CFIs", as identified in the theoretical section, is integrated into the indirect governance roles, as this is part of how food is governed in an indirect way.

*Table 4. Adjusted conceptual framework of the governance roles of CFIs with incorporated findings from the case study of Almere (the adjustments are shown in red)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Governance roles** | Direct governance roles | Food policy councils |
| | | Urban food strategy development |
| | | Other food partnerships |
| | | Lobbying |
| | Indirect governance | Actions |
| **Meaningful participation** | Level of government involvement | |
| | Short-term versus long-term orientation | |
| | inclusion of different views and interests | |
| | Presence of CFI coalitions | |
| | Availability of resources | |
| | Quality of communication between municipal departments | |

## 4.2 Strengths and limitations

Before diving into the implications for research and practice, some strengths and limitations of this research are presented here.

First of all, the situation as a result of COVID-19 influenced the methods used as well as the outcomes of this research. With regards to the data collection, it meant that everything had to be done online. Conducting the interviews online presented some advantages. They were less time-consuming for both the researcher and the participants since no travelling was needed. Presumably, this also lowered the barrier to participate for the interviewees, as the interviews could be done from any place preferred and the only things required from the interviewees to participate were technologies that they often already have and a working internet connection. At the same time, however, the lack of real-life interaction also led to some limitations. Both video and audio were used during the interviews, meaning that it still allowed for some observations of non-verbal communication alongside the things that were said. However, this did not fully cover the visual interpretations and contextualisation that real-life interviews could have provided. It also meant that conversations outside of the formal interview space were limited and therefore possible relevant information given in conversation before or after the interview was lacking. In a normal situation, participant observation would have been considered as an appropriate additional research method, for example by joining relevant meetings regarding the food strategy development or participating in the actions of some CFIs. However, this was impossible due to the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore observational data is lacking.

Additional to the limitations that COVID-19 provided for the methods used in this research, it also influenced the results of this research, since it changed the development process of the food strategy. Food Cabinet was asked to make the food strategy around March 2020 when the virus broke out in the Netherlands. Before COVID-19 became an issue, they had a totally different plan for developing the food strategy. In this plan, time was reserved for multiple meetings with stakeholders from within the city as well as for a food tour organised for the city council visiting multiple CFIs to increase political support for the food strategy (Interviewee P – expert). This plan had to be changed entirely since it was no longer possible to see people in real life. The expert panel was invented as a solution to the lack of real-life meetings with citizen initiatives. This shows how much effect COVID-19 had during the development of the food strategy, and how it complicated the inclusion of CFIs. This should therefore be considered when interpreting the results on the role that CFIs played in the development of the food strategy.

To increase the reliability and internal validity of this research, triangulation of methods was used (Boeije et al., 2009). This was done by combining a literature review with semi-structured interviews, for example when investigating the food governance context of Almere. The combination of literature with interview data allowed for a more comprehensive representation of the situation in Almere. It strengthened the results since some data from the literature was validated by the interviews and the other way around. Furthermore, the empirical results section was reviewed by one of the experts who was also interviewed at the beginning of the data collection phase. This was done to see if the stated facts were correct and if no important aspects were missing in the analysis.

The literature review was meant to identify the most significant publications related to the topic of this research rather than provide a complete overview of all articles relevant to the topic. A limitation to this literature review approach is that it was not done in a strictly systematic way. Since there is no predefined or single search strategy used, this makes it difficult to reproduce the results, leading to restrictions of the external reliability (Bryman, 2004). This might also have led to a bias in terms of the literature that is chosen since the perceived importance of the literature is based on the interpretation of the researcher. The backward and forward snowballing used to collect additional articles potentially led to a bias concerning the literature used, as some researchers tend to cite their own works and works that confirm their own research. This could for example have caused the emphasis on food policy councils and urban food strategies rather than other governance mechanisms as important governance spaces.

The purposive and snowball sampling led to relevant information from the participants with regards to the research questions. At the same time, the lack of random sampling, together with the relatively small sample number, means that they do not present a representative sample of all CFIs in Almere and therefore the outcomes cannot be generalized to all CFIs in Almere.

The use of a case study allowed for an in-depth examination of the food governance domain in Almere. The semi-structured interviews held with different actors furthermore provided detailed information needed

to explain the complex governance processes taking place. At the same time, the deepening of knowledge on a single case study makes it hard to generalise the findings for their use in other studies and therefore poses some limitations on the external validity (Bryman, 2004). To increase the value of the results of the case study, the context in which it took place is therefore described in detail. This allows for a better overview of the results in relation to the context of the case study and the possible effects related to this. Furthermore, a detailed description is given of how the research methods were used and how the data was analysed in the methodology section in chapter 2. This helps the reader to understand how the researcher came to the results presented in this research.

Finally, it is important to consider the position of the researcher, as this may have affected the research process and the outcome. Since both the ideological perspectives as well as the background of researchers is reflected in their actions and construction of the world, this may influence the results as well as the interpretations of the research (Berger, 2015). For example, the position of the researcher might have played a role in this research during the conduction of the interviews where certain expectations in the mind of the researcher could have steered the direction of the interviews. To limit this influence, the researcher tried to be aware of her influence and to use the same formulation of questions in every interview, even though this was not always possible due to the flexibility in the semi-structured interviews.

## 4.3 Implications for research and practice

This research contributes to knowledge on the role of CFIs in urban food governance. It also presents innovative theoretical foundations with regards to food governance and CFIs, a novel term used to describe the collection of food initiatives originating from civil society with a certain role in governance. The framework shown in Table 4 presents a conceptual framework that can be used and tested by future researchers when investigating the roles of CFIs in urban food governance. The framework can also be useful for policymakers, especially the criteria identified that affect the meaningfulness of citizen participation. By keeping these criteria in mind, policymakers willing to apply participative methods can make certain trade-offs as to what criteria should be prioritised given their often limited available time and budget. Recommendations for research and practice will now be provided.

### 4.3.1 Recommendations for future research

This research suggests that CFIs can also play an indirect governance role by their actions and networks, for example by changing discourses on food. An example of how this can take shape is the influence that Flevofood might have had on the emphasis on local food production in the food strategy. Flevofood actively promotes a discourse of local food production and short food supply chains. Their members are local and regional food producers and therefore this is in line with their aim to increase the demand for local and regional food products. At the same time, food system localisation fits into the vision of the municipality, which becomes evident for example through the theme of 'feeding the city' that is part of the motto 'growing green cities' used by the municipality. Through their networks with the municipality of Almere as well as their direct participation in the expert panel in the food strategy development, Flevofood was able to steer the outcome in a certain direction. While at the beginning of the development process economy and health were set as the two most important pillars, this was later changed to incorporate a third ambition: the promotion of local and regional food and initiatives. The interviewee of Flevofood states that their input is incorporated in the food strategy and that the most important goals of Flevofood are represented in terms of local food and a reduction of food miles (Interviewee E – Flevofood). They are also mentioned a couple of times in the food strategy when referring to local food, giving meaning to the ambition and presenting an example of how this ambition can be implemented. To investigate whether and how the discourse of local food and short food supply chains that was promoted by Flevofood permeated into the food strategy was beyond the scope of this research and therefore remains an important topic for further research. To further investigate the discursive power as well as other powers that CFIs might use in relation to governance, it might be useful to apply a framework of power as is also done for example in the chapter written by Andrée et al. (2019), who elaborate on the instrumental, discursive and structural powers used by food movements in governance.

Future research is needed to further identify factors that define the concept of governance. As this research showed, the division between formal and informal spaces of deliberation is not an appropriate classification to apply to a case study, as the informal spaces are not easily traceable. It therefore proposes the classification into direct and indirect governance roles instead. As the identification of governance roles turns out to be difficult due to their fuzziness, a further refined governance framework would be useful to better understand how governance takes place and what the position of CFIs is and perhaps should be in urban food governance. This includes further investigating the role of market actors in food governance, as this might provide insights into how the role of market actors and CFIs relate to each other and how this can influence governance outcomes.

The food strategy of Almere is recently accepted by the city council. When it is executed, future research can provide more information on its actual impact on the food domain of Almere and whether it reflects or adds to the goals and values of the CFIs that are present in Almere. This way the roles of the CFIs in relation to the actual outcomes of the governance processes can be investigated.

Finally, another topic for future research is the extent to which CFIs play an indirect governance role by contributing to the change in food practices. This research shows how participants or members of CFIs gain more knowledge on certain aspects of the food system, for example on how food is produced. Their increased knowledge and skills can cause them to change their practices also in everyday life. For example, the individuals that rent an allotment at ONZE Volkstuinen and grow their own tomatoes become more aware of the effort it takes to grow tomatoes, and question how the tomatoes at the supermarket can be so cheap. They become more aware of how much work it is to grow tomatoes and start to question existing norms such as the low price of the tomatoes at the supermarket. This might cause them to change their shopping practices as they are more aware of the value of the products they buy. This is relevant because

in some way it can also influence governance processes. How this influence takes place remains a subject for further research.

### 4.3.2 Recommendations to enhance meaningful citizen participation in Almere

The results of the empirical case study and especially the evaluation of the criteria which impact meaningful participation led to some recommendations on how meaningful citizen participation in Almere can be enhanced.

#### *Establishing a CFI coalition*

First of all, an opportunity to improve meaningful participation in Almere would be to create a coalition between the CFIs in Almere, as also mentioned by Arjan Dekking. This could be something like the Kenniskring Buurtmoestuinen that existed before, but might also include a broader range of initiatives, such as entrepreneurial initiatives. Since there are many small initiatives in Almere, a coalition can provide an opportunity to serve as a representation of all these smaller initiatives. It would be difficult or maybe even impossible for the municipality to directly include all these different initiatives in decision-making processes. Therefore, a coalition with a few appointed spokespersons would make it easier for the municipality to reach the initiatives. This would mean that participation is not dependent on a limited number of CFIs in the city, and it would save the municipality time and money in finding and reaching out to all the other initiatives present in the city.

When a coalition is in place, the interests and needs of CFIs can be advocated more efficiently by the spokespersons, saving the initiatives time as they do not have to participate directly in broader governance processes. Furthermore, actions and efforts are combined and therefore the results of participation in such a way might be further-reaching and more influential (Hassanein, 2003).

The establishment of such a coalition could also take the form of a food policy council as a way of direct governance as explained in section 3.1.3. Such a food policy council can consist of different stakeholders including CFIs, which can serve as an advisory board in future decision-making related to food policy and as a monitoring body of the food strategy. This way a stronger connection can be made between policy-makers and the grassroots, leading to an increased feeling of ownership of the policies by the grassroots and better participation in the implementation (de Zeeuw & Dubbeling, 2015).

#### *Improve (financial) incentives for participation*

An important barrier to meaningful citizen participation in Almere is related to the lack of resources in terms of time and money for both the municipality and the CFIs. Since participation in broader decision-making often costs time and money for the CFIs, they do not see it as a priority. This would mean that better incentives should be in place to stimulate their participation. This can for example be in the form of financial compensation for participation. The difference in participation when compensation is provided is also seen in the development of the food strategy, where Flevofood was able to reserve some of the budget that they got from the municipality to pay for a few hours that they put in the meetings with the expert panel (Interviewee E – Flevofood). When CFIs are paid for participating, this can increase the time they make available.

At the same time, however, the municipality is also struggling with budgets and therefore they might not have enough money available to pay for a large number of participating CFIs. The above-mentioned opportunity of a CFI coalition can help with this problem. When there is a limited number of spokespersons for all the CFIs, this will mean that only they will have to receive compensation. Furthermore, such a network can fulfil an important role for the municipality as well, and when it represents many initiatives it will become more eligible for municipal funding.

## 4.4 Conclusion

This research aimed to provide more insight into the ways in which CFIs are involved in urban food governance and to what extent. Based on a literature review and an empirical case study on the roles of CFIs in urban food governance, it can be concluded that many aspects play a role when identifying these roles. Not only is the concept of CFIs subject to various interpretations and difficult to define, but their roles in governance are also hard to identify as informal spaces of deliberation are often invisible and causal links between governance actions of CFIs and governance outcomes are hard to identify. The research showed that analysing CFIs as groups of actors in food governance poses multiple difficulties. Therefore, it might be more useful to analyse the types of actors that are actually involved in food governance, rather than taking CFIs as the subject of analysis. Analysing the types of involved actors will lead to more information on how they are involved and what their relationship is to CFIs. This can in turn provide more insight into the ways in which CFIs can be involved in urban food governance and the extent to which they are involved, both directly and indirectly.

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# Appendix I: Interview guides

## Informed consent format

Toestemmingsformulier via de mail:

- Ik begrijp dat mijn deelname aan het onderzoek op vrijwillige base is en dat ik vrij ben om mij elk moment terug te trekken zonder daarvoor een reden te hoeven geven.
- Ik begrijp dat de informatie die door mij gegeven wordt gebruikt kan worden voor toekomstige verslagen, artikelen of presentaties door de onderzoeker.
- Ik geef mijn toestemming om het interview op te nemen.
- Ik begrijp dat mijn naam niet zal worden genoemd in verslagen, artikelen of presentaties.
- Ik ga akkoord met deelname aan het onderzoek.

Zou je via een antwoord op deze mail aan willen geven of je akkoord gaat met bovenstaande punten?

## Interview guides specific actors

**General introduction:**

Heb ik uw toestemming om het interview op te nemen?

Ten eerste natuurlijk heel erg bedankt dat u mij te woord wilt staan. Ik zal even kort iets over mijn scriptie en jouw rol hierin vertellen: ik ben Nora Stein en zit momenteel in het tweede jaar van mijn master Milieuwetenschappen aan de Wageningen Universiteit. Ik ben bezig met het schrijven van mijn scriptie die gaat over de rol van burgerinitiatieven in de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid. Als casus heb ik Almere gekozen, omdat mijn begeleiders beide ook actief zijn bij de Aeres Hogeschool en mij vertelden dat Almere op het moment bezig is om voedselbeleid te ontwikkelen. Om meer te weten te komen over de praktijk zal ik een aantal interviews doen met verschillende relevante actoren in Almere met betrekking tot dit onderwerp. Jouw rol in dit interview wordt gezien als expert/burgerinitiatief/gemeente.

Dan voor het formele gedeelte zal ik je straks nog vragen om een toestemmingsformulier in te vullen of goed te keuren via de mail, waarin bijvoorbeeld staat dat je vrijwillig deelneemt aan het onderzoek en dat je volledig anoniem zult blijven.

### ***Questions for CFIs***

**Introductory questions**

- Zou u uzelf willen voorstellen?
- Wat is uw rol binnen het initiatief?

**Organisational structure**

- Wat houdt uw initiatief precies in?
  - Hoe lang bestaat het initiatief al?
- Hoe wordt het initiatief bestuurd?
- Hoeveel leden/deelnemers heeft het initiatief en wat zijn de randvoorwaarden van lidmaatschap?
- Hoe wordt het initiatief gefinancierd? (Ontvangt het initiatief ondersteuning van de overheid en zo ja in wat voor vorm?)

**Goals & values**

- Wat zijn belangrijke waarden voor uw initiatief?
- Wat zijn de korte- termijn doelen van het initiatief?
  - Op welke manieren probeert het initiatief deze doelen te bereiken?
- Wat zijn de lange- termijn doelen van het initiatief?
  - Op welke manieren probeert het initiatief deze doelen te bereiken?
- Heeft u ook als doel om op te schalen/te groeien in de toekomst? Waarom wel/niet?

- Heeft u het idee dat het huidige beleid in Almere wel of niet bijdraagt aan de hiervoor genoemde doelen? In hoeverre en op wat voor wijze?
- Heeft u het idee dat uw doelen bijdragen aan de vorming van het beleid in Almere? In hoeverre en op wat voor wijze?

**Networks**

- Werkt het initiatief samen met andere initiatieven en/of maatschappelijke organisaties? Zo ja, welke en op welke manier? Wat zijn de voor- en nadelen van deze samenwerking?
- Werkt het initiatief samen met de overheid/gemeente? Zo ja op welke manier? Wat zijn de voor- en nadelen van deze samenwerking?
    - Op welke overheidsniveaus vindt samenwerking plaats? (nationaal, provinciaal, gemeentelijk?)
- Werkt het initiatief samen met bedrijven/commerciële organisaties? Zo ja op welke manier? Wat zijn de voor- en nadelen van deze samenwerking?

**Meaningful participation & (informal) spaces of deliberation**

- Als het gaat over de ontwikkeling van beleid, wat zorgt er in uw ogen dan voor of burgerparticipatie succesvol is? (Wat maakt participatie mogelijk en wat zijn eventuele obstakels?)
- Bent u van mening dat uw initiatief voldoende betrokken is bij de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid in Almere? Waarom wel/niet?
- Wat doet uw initiatief zelf om bij te dragen aan de ontwikkeling van het voedselbeleid?
- Op welke andere manieren wordt u (door anderen/externe partijen/de gemeente) betrokken bij de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid?
- Wat zou uw initiatief kunnen bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid?

**Meaningful participation & (formal) spaces of deliberation (UFS development)**

- Bent u ervan op de hoogte dat Almere een voedselstrategie aan het ontwikkelen is?
- Zijn jullie als initiatief betrokken bij de ontwikkeling van de voedselstrategie in Almere? Zo ja, op welke manier?
    - Onderschrijft u de huidige concept-voedselstrategie?
      (met belangrijkste punten zoals beschreven in de conceptversie: 1. EEN GEZONDE STAD VOOR ÉN DOOR BEWONERS: gezond eten toegankelijk, bereikbaar en betaalbaar maken voor iedereen én een groter voedselbewustzijn creëren bij bewoners. 2. EEN AANTREKKELIJKE VOEDSELSTAD VOOR ONDERNEMERS, STUDENTEN EN PIONIERS: een aantrekkelijke voedseleconomie (leer- en werkomgeving) creëren voor werknemers, voedselondernemers, foodprofessionals, foodstudenten en foodpioniers. (Dit biedt kansen voor de werkgelegenheid, de economische ontwikkeling van de stad en het vergoten van de aantrekkelijkheid van Almere voor nieuwe inwoners)
        - Zo ja: waarom denkt u dat dit de belangrijkste punten zijn?
        - Zo niet: waarom niet?
        - Zijn er nog andere belangrijke punten volgens u?
        - Vindt u het belangrijk om betrokken te worden bij deze voedselstrategie? Waarom wel/niet?

**Closing questions**

- Zijn er nog andere belangrijke dingen die ik zou moeten weten?
- Heeft u misschien nog andere contacten die relevant zouden zijn voor mij om te interviewen?

## *Questions for government actors*

**Introductory questions**

- Zou u uzelf willen voorstellen?
- Wat is uw rol binnen de gemeente met betrekking tot voedsel?
- Hoe zou u de lokale politieke context van Almere karakteriseren?

    - Wat voor stad is Almere? Wat voor soort burgers zijn er?
    - Hoe zou u het politieke klimaat omschrijven?

**CFIs in Almere**

- Ondersteund de gemeente van Almere burgerinitiatieven in de vorm van financiële middelen of andere middelen?
    - Zo ja: wat zijn de voorwaarden voor het krijgen van deze steun?
    - Zo niet: waarom niet?

**Spaces of deliberation & meaningful participation**

- Hoe zou u het huidige voedselbeleid in Almere omschrijven?
- Hoe wordt het huidige voedselbeleid in Almere ontwikkeld?
- Welke partijen zijn er betrokken bij de ontwikkeling van de voedselstrategie?
    - Waarom worden deze partijen betrokken? Wat zijn de voordelen?
    - Worden er ook burgerinitiatieven (zoals bijv. Buitengewoon Almere, de Stadsboerderij, voedselbossen etc.) betrokken bij de ontwikkeling?
        - Zo niet: waarom niet?
        - Zo ja:
            - Welke initiatieven? En waarom deze?
            - Hoe worden zij betrokken?
                - Wat doet de gemeente om ze te betrekken?
                - Wat doen ze zelf om betrokken te worden?
            - Waarom worden zij betrokken/wat zijn de voordelen?
- Wat zijn de belangrijkste partijen volgens u om betrokken te worden bij de vorming van de voedselstrategie? En waarom deze?
- Heeft u het idee dat er bepaalde actoren zijn die domineren in de ontwikkeling van de voedselstrategie, die meer macht hebben dan anderen?
- Heeft u het idee dat er nog belangrijke actoren missen bij de ontwikkeling van de voedselstrategie? Zo ja: hoe komt het dat deze actoren niet betrokken zijn?
- Heeft u het idee dat burgerinitiatieven het voedselbeleid in Almere beïnvloeden? Op welke manier?
- Hoe ligt de verhouding tussen burgerinitiatieven en de gemeente als het gaat om voedselbeleid, vanuit wie komt het?
- Welke rol speelt de (eerdergenoemde) lokale politieke context in de vorming van het voedselbeleid in Almere?

**Networks**

- Zijn er nog andere manieren (behalve de voedselstrategie) en eventuele subsidies waarbij de gemeente samenwerkt met burgerinitiatieven met betrekking tot voedsel?
- Gebruikt de gemeente de bestaande initiatieven ook als voorbeeld/om op te schalen?

**Closing questions**

- Zijn er nog andere belangrijke dingen die ik zou moeten weten?
- Heeft u misschien nog andere contacten die relevant zouden zijn voor mij om te interviewen?

## *Questions for experts*

**Introductory questions**

- Zou u uzelf willen voorstellen?
- Wat is uw rol met betrekking tot het voedselbeleid in Almere?
- Hoe zou u de lokale politieke context van Almere karakteriseren?
    - Wat voor stad is Almere? Wat voor soort burgers zijn er?
    - Hoe zou u het politieke klimaat omschrijven?

**CFIs in Almere**

- Bent u bekend met burgerinitiatieven in Almere met betrekking tot voedsel?
- Hoe zou u deze burgerinitiatieven met betrekking tot voedsel karakteriseren?

**Meaningful participation & (formal) spaces of deliberation**

- Wat zijn volgens u relevante stakeholders in de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid in het algemeen?
- Zijn volgens u al deze relevante stakeholders betrokken bij de ontwikkeling van het voedselbeleid in Almere?
    - Zo niet: wie wel en wie niet?
        - En hoe komt dit?
- Hoe ziet u de rol van burgerinitiatieven met betrekking tot voedsel in de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid in Almere?
    - Wat is hun huidige rol?
    - Wat zouden zij kunnen bijdragen?
- Op welke manier worden burgerinitiatieven betrokken (wanneer niet betrokken: zouden ze betrokken kunnen worden) door de overheid?
- Nemen burgerinitiatieven zelf ook initiatief om betrokken te worden bij de vorming van het beleid?
- Heeft u het idee dat er bepaalde actoren zijn die domineren in de ontwikkeling van de voedselstrategie, die meer macht hebben dan anderen?
- Heeft u het idee dat een bepaald soort burgerinitiatieven meer wordt betrokken/meer invloed heeft op beleid dan anderen? Zo ja, waar ligt dat aan?
- Welke rol speelt de (eerdergenoemde) lokale politieke context in de vorming van het voedselbeleid in Almere?

**(Informal) spaces of deliberation**

- Spelen volgens u informele vormen van participatie ook een rol in Almere? Zo ja: op welke manieren vindt dit plaats?
  *(voorbeelden informele participatie: informele gesprekken/samenkomsten, persoonlijke netwerken gebruiken om bijv. een wethouder of raadslid te benaderen, participatie wat niet per se van tevoren is gedefinieerd als zijnde participatie (zoals bv een discussiegroep speciaal hiervoor wordt georganiseerd) maar wat uiteindelijk wel invloed kan hebben op de vorming van het beleid.)*

**Networks**

- Wat is denkt u de rol van netwerken in Almere als het gaat om de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid?
- Zijn er behalve de ontwikkeling van de voedselstrategie nog andere belangrijke netwerken en/of samenwerkingsverbanden op het gebied van voedsel die een rol spelen in Almere?

**Closing questions**

- Zijn er nog andere belangrijke dingen die ik zou moeten weten?
- Heeft u misschien nog andere contacten die relevant zouden zijn voor mij om te interviewen?

# Appendix II: Codebook

| Code Category | Code | |
|---|---|---|
| **CFI ACTIONS** | CFI ACTIONS-facilitation | |
| | CFI ACTIONS-food supply | |
| | CFI ACTIONS-greening | |
| | CFI ACTION-societal value | |
| | CFI ACTIONS-policy influence | |
| **CFI BARRIERS** | CFI BARRIERS-knowledge | |
| | CFI BARRIERS-lack of land | |
| | CFI BARRIERS-lack of participants | |
| | CFI BARRIERS-lack of time | |
| | CFI BARRIERS-money | |
| | CFI BARRIERS-policy | |
| | CFI BARRIERS-scale | |
| **CFI GOALS** | CFI GOALS- sustainability | |
| | CFI GOALS-existence | |
| | CFI GOALS-other | |
| | CFI GOALS-scaling up | |
| | CFI GOALS-societal | |
| **CFI STRUCTURE** | CFI STRUCTURE-business | |
| | CFI STRUCTURE-finance | |
| | CFI STRUCTURE-governance | |
| | CFI STRUCTURE-participants | |
| | CFI STRUCTURE-relation to government | |
| | CFI STRUCTURE-scale | |
| | CFI STRUCTURE-volunteers | |
| **CFI VALUES** | CFI VALUES-connection | |
| | CFI VALUES-government | |
| | CFI VALUES-local | |
| | CFI VALUES-organic | |
| | CFI VALUES-sustainability | |
| | CFI VALUES-transparency | |
| **DELIBERATION** | DELIBERATION-formal | |
| | DELIBERATION-informal | |
| **GOVERNMENT ACTIONS** | GOVERNMENT ACTIONS-facilitation | |
| | GOVERNMENT ACTIONS-Floriade | |
| | GOVERNMENT ACTIONS-food strategy | |
| | GOVERNMENT ACTIONS-other | |
| | GOVERNMENT ACTIONS-policy | |
| **MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION** | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-barrier | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-barrier: bad communication |
| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-barrier: budget |
| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-barrier: corona |
| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-barrier: lack of action |

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| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-barrier: lack of influence |
| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-barrier: lack of support |
| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-barrier: lacking connection between city and government |
| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-barrier: political change |
| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-barrier: voluntary |
| | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-opportunity | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-opportunity-CFI union |
| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-opportunity-deliberation |
| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-opportunity-other |
| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-opportunity-policy |
| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-opportunity-support |
| | | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-opportunity-using resources in the city |
| | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-stakeholders | |
| | MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION-connection to the city | |
| **NETWORKING** | NETWORKING-businesses | |
| | NETWORKING-citizen initiatives | |
| | NETWORKING-citizens | |
| | NETWORKING-government-municipality | |
| | NETWORKING-government-other levels | |
| | NETWORKING-research institutions | |
| | NETWORKING-societal organisations | |
| | PUSH FACTORS-Flevo Campus | |
| **PUSH FACTORS** | PUSH FACTORS-Floriade | |
| | PUSH FACTORS-food champions | |
| | PUSH FACTORS-policy | |
| | PUSH FACTORS-timing | |
| | Almere background info | |
| | Facilitation | |
| | Government goals | |
| | Pionier | |
| | Political barriers | |
| | Role of food | |
| | UFS-opinion | |