

# Co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam

*The interplay of politics, formalization and finances*

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## Abstract

Increasingly, food system challenges are being addressed at the level of the local government, for instance by means of food policy councils (FPCs) and food policies. A focus herein lies on collaboration between stakeholders of multiple sectors and multiple levels. In Amsterdam, such developments are also taking place: the municipality has developed three food policies. One of these, the 2014 one, was formulated collaboratively. Additionally, there are currently two FPCs operating in Amsterdam. One concept to assess collaboration is co-creation: the multi-stakeholder collaboration to create strategies, agendas, and actions to reach policy aims. Yet, studies on co-creation in the food policy domain are scarce.

To address this research gap, the present study aimed to assess stakeholder perception of co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam. Here, food policy development refers to agenda-setting and policy formulation and adoption. To study this, a conceptual framework was constructed, consisting of actors' roles during co-creation and their willingness and ability to co-create. Semi-structured interviews with municipal actors, FPC actors, and civil initiative representatives revealed that perceptions of co-creation differ. Whereas in the opinion of the municipality, food policy development in Amsterdam is very much about collaborating, other actors do not have a similarly optimistic perception of this. Non-governmental actors perceive the ability to co-create to be determined by the formalization of an organization (and relatedly, its availability of financial resources) and perceived ability to co-create. The latter is determined by the willingness of the municipality and the extent to which non-governmental actors represent a niche. The willingness of the municipality is determined by the political context of Amsterdam (the attitude of the coalition towards food policy development).

Furthermore, it was found that several entities wanted to play the role of connector during food policy development, raising the question of the existence of a 'connection saturation point' wherein there are no niches to work on anymore, and connecting entities start to compete for funding as well actors to add to their network.

Since the commitment of the municipality is the decisive factor for both food policy development and co-creation, several recommendations for the municipality are proposed. Lastly, because the factors in the conceptual framework are interrelated, but not reciprocal, a recommendation for future research is to study the entire food policy process to assess whether reciprocal relationships between stakeholders' willingness and ability will arise during policy implementation and adoption. However, conducting studies on co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam might not be feasible in the upcoming years.

**Keywords:** food policy development, food policy council, co-creation.

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## List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full term
AMS Institute	Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions
CEO	Chief executive officer
CI	Civil initiative
DMP	Data management plan
FC MRA	Food Council MRA
FPC	Food policy council
GRQ	General research question
HvA	Hogeschool van Amsterdam
MRA	Metropolitan region Amsterdam
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SFA	Slow Food Amsterdam
SFYN	Slow Food Youth Network
SLA	Stichting Stadslandbouw Amsterdam
SRQ	Sub-research question
SSI	Semi-structured interview
UA	Urban agriculture
UvA	Universiteit van Amsterdam
VAB	Van Amsterdamse Bodem
VU	Vrije Universiteit
WUR	Wageningen University & Research

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## 1. Introduction

Increasingly, cities are reported to be the loci for the emergence of food governance arrangements that aim to address food system challenges (Giordano et al., 2017; Halliday, 2019; Moragues-Faus & Morgan, 2015). This is beneficial because local food governance arrangements take local knowledge into account more than their larger-level counterparts, resulting in more efficient policy solutions (Sibbing, 2021). These local governance arrangements include food policy councils (FPCs) and urban food policies (Blay-Palmer et al., 2016; Sonnino & Spayde, 2014; Webb et al., 1998; Zerbian & de Luis Romero, 2021). While the pioneering cities for installing such governance arrangements are located in North America and Canada, the Netherlands has recently also seen a surge in the emergence of FPCs and urban food policies (Burgan & Winne, 2012; De Cunto et al., 2016; Sibbing, 2021).

Urban food policies are strategies and regulations that are designed to guide and shape food-related activities within cities and address food-related challenges (Fassio & Minotti, 2019). Thus, urban food policies can be understood as decisions at the level of the local government that concern how food is produced, distributed, and consumed (IPES-Food, 2017). These decisions are recorded in a document. In principle, local governments can develop food policies independently. However, a recent trend shows that food policy development is increasingly being done in collaboration with FPCs (Puerari et al., 2018; Sonnino & Spayde, 2014).

FPCs are groups of individuals and organizations that collaborate to create networks between food system stakeholders, help the local government in identifying local food system problems, and influence, monitor, and evaluate policies (Matacena, 2016; Scherb et al., 2012; Zerbian & de Luis Romero, 2021). Ideally, members of the council originate from multiple sectors (i.e. the public, private, and civil society sectors), as well as multiple levels (i.e. local, regional, and national levels) (De Cunto et al., 2016; Matacena, 2016; Moragues et al., 2013). Thus, members of the council may include civil initiative (CI) representatives, farmers, entrepreneurs, and governmental actors (Burgan & Winne, 2012; Moragues et al., 2013). Including a wide variety of stakeholders in an FPC is beneficial because this leads to a broad knowledge base and a larger combined vested interest. In turn, this enlarges the change of the FPC to reach its goals (Burgan & Winne, 2012; Cohen & Ilieva, 2021; Sonnino & Spayde, 2014).

The collaborative nature of FPCs, as well as the collaborative development of food policies, is believed to be crucial for the success of urban food policies (Carey, 2011; Dubbeling et al., 2017; Halliday, 2019; IPES-Food, 2017; Sonnino et al., 2019). Namely, collaboration aids the identification of local food system challenges as well as finding well-tailored solutions to them, builds legitimacy, improves the connection between the involved sectors, and ameliorates citizen support for food system interventions (Moragues-Faus, 2020; Peterson, 2013; Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021).

One concept to assess multi-stakeholder collaboration in food policy development is co-creation. There is no common definition for co-creation, but generally speaking, it entails the multi-actor process of developing a solution, product, or service together (Puerari et al., 2018; Voorberg et al., 2015). This solution, product, or service ideally reflects the interests and needs of all stakeholders. In the scientific literature, most co-creation studies have been conducted in the public service domain, education- or health care policy sectors. This is because in these settings, there is a direct relationship between providers and end-users (Voorberg et al., 2015).

However, the food policy sector is evolving, which leads to new, more direct relationships between the public sector (the so-called provider) and civil society actors (the so-called end-users) (Burgan & Winne, 2012; IPES-Food, 2017). Thus, the concept of co-creation can now also be applied to the food

policy domain. Based on a synthesis of the definitions for co-creation in the food policy domain as provided by Puerari et al. (2018) and Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021), co-creation can be understood as the **multi-stakeholder collaboration to create strategies, agendas, and actions to reach policy aims.**

Because collaborative food policy development is a relatively new concept, there is a dearth of articles that apply the concept of co-creation to the food policy domain. Several co-creation authors have recognized this research gap, and are now stressing the relevance of conducting co-creation studies in the food policy sector (Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021; Voorberg et al., 2015).

To begin to fill this scientific research gap, this study's aim is to assess the perspectives on co-creation of stakeholders involved in food policy development in Amsterdam. This is done qualitatively by conducting semi-structured interviews (SSIs). More specifically, stakeholders' roles in co-creative food policy development are investigated, as well as their willingness and ability to engage in the process. To define these three dimensions (roles, willingness, and ability), contributions from the co-creation- and collaboration literature were assessed, as well as previous research on the topic of food policy in Amsterdam (Allan, 2019; Kuhlmann, 2017; Puerari et al., 2018; Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021).

In the present study, the perceptions of three stakeholder groups are assessed. Namely, those of FPC actors, municipal actors, and civil initiative (CI) actors. The rationale behind including the aforementioned three stakeholder groups in this study is as follows. To start, in this era where policy-makers are experimenting with collaborative approaches to tackle (local) food system challenges, the role that FPCs play in policy development is growing (Matacena, 2016; Puerari et al., 2018; Scherb et al., 2012; Sonnino & Spayde, 2014). An example of this is the FPC of Toronto, which plays an influential role in food policy development in Toronto (De Cunto et al., 2016). Therefore, it is deemed valuable to assess the perspective of FPC actors on food policy development and the potential process of co-creation within this *in the context of Amsterdam*.

The motivation behind including CI actors in this research is similar. According to the literature, citizens (whether associated with an initiative or not), are increasingly being included in food policy development (De Cunto et al., 2016; IPES-Food, 2017).

The reasoning for selecting the municipality as the third stakeholder group for this study is based on the fact that it is the primary authority responsible for local food policy development. Additionally, it is the role of the municipality to determine who is allowed to participate in co-creative processes (Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021). By means of the latter role, the municipality essentially pulls the strings, even though co-creation is purportedly an open, collaborative process. Also, combining or offsetting the perceptions of the FPCs and CIs with those of the municipality can aid to place them in perspective and explore possibly rival views (Fossey et al., 2002).

The city of Amsterdam is believed to be an interesting case study for this thesis for the following reasons. Firstly, there are many different food-related stakeholder groups present in the city (Kuhlmann, 2017). Examples are supermarket chains, CIs, and small entrepreneurs. Ideally, these stakeholders should all participate in co-creative food policy development. This would ensure that the food policy suits their needs and interests. Also, it would enlarge the combined vested interest in the food policy, amplifying its chance for success. Yet, incorporating the needs and interests of such a wide variety of stakeholders into a food policy is a challenging task.

A second reason for choosing Amsterdam as the case is the fact that there are currently two FPCs operating in Amsterdam. At the moment, there are only two other cities in the Netherlands in which a food council is operating (Ede and The Hague), making it quite distinctive that Amsterdam has two



(Stadslandbouw Nederland, 2022). Since FPCs are described to have a growing influence during food policy development (see above), it was deemed interesting to assess the perspective of stakeholders on this potential influence (and thus co-creation) in Amsterdam.

Thirdly, Amsterdam was deemed to be an interesting case because the degree to which co-creation has been employed during food policy development has varied (Allan, 2019). To date, the municipality of Amsterdam has published three food policies (in 2007, 2014, and 2019) (Allan, 2019; Gemeente Amsterdam, 2014; Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019). To develop the 2014 food policy, a *netwerkbijeenkomst* (henceforth referred to as ‘network meeting’) was organized on behalf of the municipality. During the network meeting, attendees identified local food system issues and proposed solutions to these. The outcomes of the meeting were used to draft the 2014 food policy. Attendees included citizens, small- and large-scale processing companies, innovators, academics, shop owners and restaurant owners, which signals multi-stakeholder collaboration (Kuhlmann, 2017; Studio HB, 2013a). However, for the development of the food policy that Amsterdam published in 2019, such a network meeting was not organized.

Lastly, the municipality of Amsterdam is currently updating its 2019 food policy (Frank Bakkum – municipality, personal communication, 25 November 2022). This allows for real-time assessment of stakeholder perspectives on co-creative food policy development.

The insights of the present study can be used to inform future co-creation research in the food policy sector. Furthermore, this thesis adds to the relevant scientific field by investigating the role of citizens (in this case, united in CIs) in co-creation processes, which has been called for by for instance Voorberg et al. (2015).

Regarding the societal relevance, by means of this thesis, it can be assessed how to improve co-creation processes for food policy development in Amsterdam. These findings can also be extrapolated to other (Dutch) cities, potentially leading to more efficient, effective, and legitimate policies thither. Additionally, the findings can be used to make comparisons with other case studies to discern best practices and transfer knowledge from one setting to another.

## 1.1 Research questions

To guide the present research, the following general research question (GRQ) was drafted: *“How do stakeholders perceive co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam?”*

Additionally, four sub-research questions (SRQs) were drafted:

1. What is the process for developing food policy in Amsterdam?
2. What roles do stakeholders play during co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam?
3. What are the factors that determine the ability of stakeholders to co-creatively develop food policy in Amsterdam?
4. What are the factors that determine the willingness of stakeholders to co-creatively develop food policy in Amsterdam?

## 1.2 Reading guide

In the next chapters, the body of this thesis is presented, starting with an explanation of the key concepts for this thesis: food policies, food policy development, FPCs, and co-creation (**chapter 2**). Subsequently, a conceptual framework of the dimensions that influence co-creation is laid out before the reader (**chapter 3**). Next, the process for developing food policy in Amsterdam is delineated

**(chapter 4)**. Thereafter, the methodology is presented, which consisted of three steps: stakeholder identification and selection, data collection by means of conducting SSIs, and data analysis (**chapter 5**).

Following this, the results are described in **chapter 6**. The results are structured according to the roles that stakeholders play during co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam, the factors that determine their ability to co-creatively develop food policy, and the factors that determine their willingness to do so.

In the subsequent section (**chapter 7**), the main findings are analyzed. Also, this thesis' contribution to co-creation theory in the food policy domain is presented. Additionally, the methodological limitations of this thesis are highlighted. Chapter 7 also contains recommendations for policy-makers and a suggestion for future research. The final section of this thesis contains the concluding statements (**chapter 8**).

## 2. Key concepts

### 2.1 Food policies

In this section, the concept of a food policy is explained. First, a definition of the concept is provided. Thereafter, the authority of local governments to develop food policies is discussed. Next, the applications of food policies are delineated. Then, the challenges that they are associated with are laid out before the reader. Lastly, a demarcation of the concept of food policies is presented.

As mentioned in the introduction, urban food policies are strategies and regulations that are designed to guide and shape food-related activities within cities and address food-related challenges (Fassio & Minotti, 2019). Thus, they are decisions, made by the local government, about how food is produced, distributed, and consumed (IPES-Food, 2017). As the present research focuses on the city context only (as opposed to for instance a national context), urban food policies will henceforth be referred to as ‘food policies’. Because more than half of the world’s population now lives in cities, the political center of gravity for food policy-making has shifted from the (supra)national to the local level (Moragues-Faus & Morgan, 2015). Indeed, as Fassio & Minotti (2019) argue, *“urban environments will be the central point for systemic change, rippling through from local to a global change”* (p. 2). This shift from national- to local level food policy-making is beneficial, since local governments can develop more effective food policies than their larger-level counterparts. This is because local governments are more knowledgeable of the place, are closer to the citizens, have a larger possibility to engage said citizens, and can develop better-tailored solutions through a more place-based approach (Blay-Palmer et al., 2016; Sibbing, 2021; Sonnino et al., 2019).

Yet, local governments generally do not have ‘carte blanche’ to develop food policies. The extent to which local governments have to answer to their larger-level counterparts differs between countries. As Halliday (2019) explains, in some countries, local governments have full authority over the policies that affect the local domain, in other countries the local government has the authority to implement policies that are not the specific responsibility of another level of government, and in other countries still, the local government mainly carries out the policies that have been dictated by the national government.

In the Netherlands, local governments do not have explicit food-related competencies. However, they are responsible for issues that influence food systems, such as urban planning, social policy, and (food) waste collection (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2012; Sibbing et al., 2021). Moreover, local governments are allowed to address any issue they desire, as long as it is compatible with national-level policy (Sibbing et al., 2021). An example of a city-specific policy initiative is that Haarlem has announced that it will prohibit meat advertisements from 2024 onwards. It is the first city ever to undertake such an action (Van Gestel, 2022).

Regarding the Amsterdam situation, the province of Noord-Holland has mentioned that it will not concern itself with the food policies of municipalities that fall within its territory (Interviewee C – FPC researcher, personal communication, 23 November 2022). This gives Amsterdam some freedom to develop food policy, although the policies should be compatible with national-level policies. An example of a food policy initiative that the municipality has taken is that it has banned fast food advertisements targeting children from the metro system (Sibbing et al., 2021).

Local governments develop food policies to achieve goals relating to urban agriculture (UA), transport, local food production, distribution and consumption (a local food system), health, urban planning, animal welfare, and economic viability of the city(-region) to achieve food system change (Halliday, 2019; Scherb et al., 2012; Sonnino & Spayde, 2014; Webb et al., 1998). The goals of food

policies as well as ways to achieve these goals differ per city. More specifically, the goals of the food policy depend on what is feasible considering the city's historical, cultural, economic, geographic, environmental, and political context (Cohen, 2022; De Cunto et al., 2016).

For the food policy to achieve its goals, scholars stress that it should be integrated into multiple sectors (i.e. mobility, health, and urban planning) and multiple levels (i.e. the local, regional, and national levels) (De Cunto et al., 2016; IPES-Food, 2017). Since food system challenges are interconnected, the integration of a food policy into multiple sectors and levels allows for the creation of synergies (Sibbing & Candel, 2021). Also, commitment from multiple departments and levels of the government can be ensured, which in turn increased the potential success of the policy (De Cunto et al., 2016; Minotti et al., 2022). Food policies that are integrated into multiple sectors and levels are called integrated food policies.

In the available literature, several challenges associated with (developing) food policies are described. A first example of such a challenge has to do with the political context: cities can face jurisdictional difficulties at higher levels of government (De Cunto et al., 2016; Halliday, 2019; IPES-Food, 2017). For instance, national-level policies might obstruct the development of progressive policies at the local level. This is also why the integration of food policies into multiple sectors and levels is important, as this allows for streamlining the goals of the policies.

Next, insufficient financial resources are reported to be a limiting factor for food policy development and especially implementation (IPES-Food, 2017). Oftentimes, the shortage of financial resources is caused by a lack of political support from the elected politicians that constitute the municipal board (this will be explained further in **chapter 4**). While political support might be present during policy development, it can be lost after elections. This poses challenges if the newly elected politicians do not allocate a budget to the implementation of the policy (De Cunto et al., 2016; IPES-Food, 2017).

To end this section, it is necessary to clarify the distinction between food policies and food strategies. The two are closely related, but the difference lies in their concreteness. Food strategies are commonly referred to as the more concrete visualizations of how the food policy aims are going to be achieved (Moragues et al., 2013). As such, food strategies are formatted as vision statements, action plans, charters, 'road maps', and indicators (Kuhlmann, 2017; Matakana, 2016; Sonnino & Spayde, 2014). Thus, food strategies can be considered a more developed, or sub-form of food policies. Even though it is possible to explain the concepts of policies and strategies separately, practice shows that the two terms are often conflated. This is underwritten by the following example. Minotti et al. (2022), when introducing their working definition of a policy, cite the definition used by Mansfield & Mendes (2013). However, in the latter article, this same definition is used to delineate the concept of a strategy. For the sake of clarity, the concept of a 'food policy' will henceforth include both food strategies and food policies in the present study. Amsterdam has published both food strategies and policies, but both will be termed 'policy' in this research.

## 2.2 Food policy development

In this section, the meaning of the concept of food policy development for the present study will be introduced. According to Knill & Tosun (2020), any policy process consists of four stages: problem definition and agenda-setting, policy formulation and adoption, implementation, and evaluation (see **figure 1** below for a graphical overview). In the present thesis, the concept of 'food policy development' will not allude to the complete policy process, but only comprise the first two stages. This was firstly chosen because the municipality of Amsterdam is currently developing a new food policy (or rather, updating the 2019 one) (Frank Bakkum – municipality, personal communication, 25

November 2022). This policy has not yet reached the implementation and evaluation stage. Therefore, assessing stakeholder perception of the co-creation during the two last stages of the current policy process is impossible. This was secondly chosen because the potential influence of citizens throughout the policy process is largest during the first two stages (Hu, 2015). Resultingly, the potential for co-creation is also the largest during these stages. To gain an understanding of what falls within and what falls outside of the scope of the present research, the entire policy process is explained below.

During the first stage, problem definition and agenda-setting, an overview is created of which issues merit public attention and thus will be put on the policy-making agenda. An important concept within this first stage is framing: the selective use and provision of knowledge to frame a situation as a problem. Only when a situation is successfully framed as a problem will it be put on the agenda. For instance, the amount of UA land in a city can be framed as a problem during the problem-definition stage. Not only elected officials, but also citizens, interest groups and CIs can use the framing strategy. The extent to which citizens are *allowed* to participate in problem definition and agenda-setting varies. In some cases, policy-makers will actively consult citizens, while in other cases, citizens are left to advocate their needs from the outside inward. They can do so by lobbying or attracting media attention to their cause. As such, the extent to which these citizens are *able* to influence the agenda-setting process depends on their access to the political process, (media) support, and (human or financial) resources.

After it has been determined which issues will be put on the agenda, policy formulation (also called policy design) and adoption take place. During this second stage of the policy process, the policy draft is made more concrete by determining what the exact goals of the policy are, what the courses of action to reach these will be, and which policy instruments will be used to reach them. Continuing the UA example, during the policy formulation stage, it will be determined what the goal of the policy is (i.e. increasing the amount of UA land with a certain percentage), how this will be achieved (i.e. establishing a norm for the amount of UA land in a city), and by means of which policy instruments (i.e. installing zoning laws).

Procedural restrictions have to be taken into account: some policies are heavily dependent on (or restricted by) policies at a higher governmental level. Similarly to the first stage, interest groups, citizens and CIs can play a role in this stage of the policy process by providing policy-makers with knowledge and framing problems and solutions in a certain way. Furthermore, during this second stage, the effectiveness, efficiency, acceptability, and equity of the policy should be determined to maximize the positive results of the policy.

After the policy has been adopted, the implementation stage follows. During this stage, the necessary organizational arrangements to implement the policy are set up, such as task forces, committees, and clear lines of communication. Continuing the UA example, a task force could be set up to coordinate the drafting of the zoning law and its communication to project developers or the urban planning department. Determinants of the success of the implementation are for instance choosing the right policy instruments, the clarity of the policy's design, the control structures that make sure the policy's effects do not deviate from its original goal, adequate

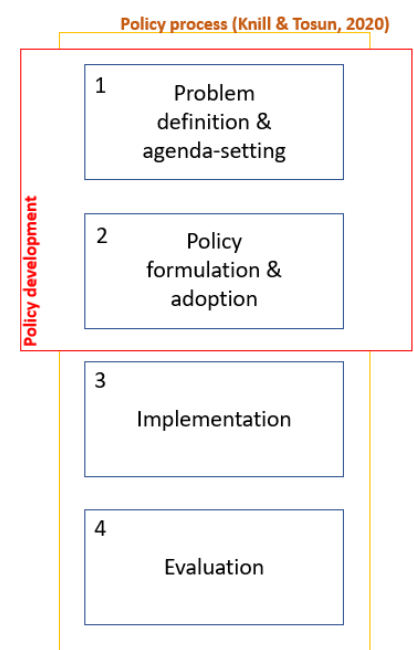


Figure 1: stages of the policy process and delimitation of policy development within this

administrative capacities within the institution and the social acceptance of the policy in general. Also, the institutional design of the government influences the success of the policy. This includes the creation of formal and informal rules, norms, and procedures that shape the behavior of organizations and individuals involved in implementing the policy.

The last stage of the policy process is policy evaluation. This can serve to improve the policy itself or inform future policies. Commonly used tools for policy evaluation are performance indicators. Using these indicators, the policy can be evaluated according to whether it is judicially correct, achieves or achieved the intended objectives, whether it is cost-effective, and whether it matches the values and direction of the government. A simple performance indicator for the UA example is the previous percentage of UA land in the city versus the percentage after the implementation of the policy.

### 2.3 FPCs

In this section, the concept of an FPC is explained. First, a definition of the concept is provided. Thereafter, the main activities of FPCs are delineated. Lastly, the challenges that they are associated with are laid out before the reader.

FPCs are groups of food-related individuals and organizations that collaborate to alleviate local food system challenges (Zerbian & de Luis Romero, 2021). The types of individuals and organizations that collaborate vary, and can include local governmental actors, farmers, CI representatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private business actors (Minotti et al., 2022; Moragues et al., 2013; Scherb et al., 2012). FPCs can be instigated both top-down (like in Manchester) or bottom-up (like Food Council MRA in Amsterdam), or a combination of top-down and bottom-up efforts (like in London) (Halliday, 2019; Matakacena, 2016; Van der Valk, 2019). Also, an FPCs' level of integration into the institutional structure of the local government can vary. For instance, it can be part of a municipal department (i.e. the health department, as is the case in Toronto), or operate as an independent entity that nevertheless involves local governmental actors (like in Bristol) (Halliday, 2019).

Typically, the more different types of stakeholders there are involved in an FPC, the larger the combined vested interest and commitment of the FPC is. In turn, this increases the chance of the FPC to achieve its goals (Burgan & Winne, 2012; Cohen & Ilieva, 2021; Sonnino & Spayde, 2014). However, for this to happen, the stakeholders must align their goals and interests and reach consensus (Webb et al., 1998). This is because a broad stakeholder base also brings along a wide variety of (conflicting) opinions that are potentially hard to align.

The most commonly reported activity of an FPC is to influence food policy development and evaluation. FPCs can promote coordination across sectors due to their (ideally) broad stakeholder base, leading to more integrated food policies (Zerbian & de Luis Romero, 2021). FPCs can function as advisory entities or as concrete policy formulators (Scherb et al., 2012). The extent to which FPCs formulate policies partly depends on the councils' ties to the public sector. If the council has strong ties to the public sector, it is more likely to play a role in policy formulation than when it is a non-formalized or non-legal FPC. This is due to differences in access to government staff and public accountability and legitimacy (Burgan & Winne, 2012). After the food policy has been adopted, FPCs can provide funding to projects that align with food policy aims (Sonnino & Spayde, 2014). By means of funding that does not originate from the municipality, continued political support for the respective food policy can be ensured. This prevents discontinuation of the policies after elections (Halliday, 2019).

Another activity of FPCs is to provide other food system stakeholders with information (Burgan & Winne, 2012; Sonnino & Spayde, 2014; Webb et al., 1998). FPCs (ideally) consist of a wide variety of local actors, meaning that the council has elaborate knowledge of the city-specific food context. As such, the council can propose topics that merit attention, potentially leading these topics to be placed on the policy-making agenda. The mandate for proposing topics originates from the FPCs' desire to alleviate food system challenges. Furthermore, FPCs' knowledge can be used for educatory purposes (Scherb et al., 2012; Sibbing & Candel, 2021). In the latter case, awareness can be created about the urgency of instigating food system change that transcends electoral cycles, further enlarging the chance that this indeed happens (Sonnino & Spayde, 2014).

Despite their potential benefits, FPCs face challenges. Most often, these have to do with a lack of time and/or resources. When the actors involved in an FPC perform their functions unpaid, a lack of time can lead to discontinuation of the council's activities. This challenge can be mitigated by the FPC becoming a legal entity, which makes applying for funding easier and can help to offer actors paid positions. However, if the funding originates from the municipality, it is dependent on electoral cycles and might not be continued after elections. Another challenge is the lack of policy skills among the actors involved in the FPC (Scherb et al., 2012). Next, FPCs can face jurisdictional difficulties: they might not have the authority to implement food policy and are left to merely advise policy-makers (Burgan & Winne, 2012; Scherb et al., 2012). Lastly, some authors argue that FPCs can reproduce existing power inequalities in the food system when they do not accurately represent all the relevant stakeholders within the local context (Zerbian & de Luis Romero, 2021). For instance, farmers might already have a more marginalized position in the food system, and when they also are not part of FPCs, their marginalized position is exacerbated. The risk of reproducing existing power inequalities is especially prevalent for FPCs that have been instigated top-down (Halliday, 2019).

## 2.4 Co-creation

This section explores the concept of co-creation. First, the working definition of the concept is elaborated on. Thereafter, benefits of co-creation are presented. Lastly, the conditions for achieving these benefits are laid out before the reader.

Definitionally similar to co-production, co-creation refers to the process of active involvement of end-users in various stages of a production process (Voorberg et al., 2015). The concept can be applied in multiple settings, such as management, service provision, and policy-making (Mitlin, 2008; Roser et al., 2013; Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021). As mentioned previously, in the current thesis, co-creation in the policy domain is understood as the **multi-stakeholder collaboration to create strategies, agendas, and actions to reach policy aims** (Puerari et al., 2018; Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021).

The stakeholders involved in co-creation should originate from at least two different sectors of society (i.e. public, private, and/or third sector). Thus, a collaboration between e.g. different departments of a municipality is not considered co-creation. Examples of co-creation formats are public meetings, workshops, advisory committees, and urban living labs (Eckerd & Heidelberg, 2020; Puerari et al., 2018).

According to the available literature, co-creation can generate a multitude of benefits. To start, co-creation can produce innovative ideas and solutions, as stakeholders have differing understandings of how problems are viewed, approached, and solved (Peterson, 2013; Selin et al., 2017; Skelcher & Torfing, 2010). The example that Selin et al. (2017) provide of this is the use of a more conversational presentation set-up as opposed to a conventional set-up wherein a PowerPoint presentation is given



and attendants passively take up information. Also, problem-solving activities can be conducted using post-its and pitches. Next, co-creation can lead to the better tailoring of policies to the needs of their stakeholders, as these needs are taken into account more elaboratively than during non-collaborative policy development processes (Voorberg et al., 2015). Co-creation can also lead to better-tailored policies because the specialized knowledge and expertise of the stakeholders are used to design the policies (Halliday, 2019). Co-creation can furthermore “offer resilience in the face of electoral change” (Halliday, 2018, p.63), as non-governmental participants can potentially pressure the governmental actors to remain committed to food policy development. Lastly, actors involved in co-creation can acquire new knowledge and skills. For instance, they can learn about the language, procedures, and protocols of the local government (Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021).

In summary, several benefits of co-creation are generating innovative ideas and solutions, creating better-fitting policies, ensuring sustained commitment to food policy development, and acquiring new knowledge and skills.

For co-creation to be successful, the following key factors are important. Firstly, the participating stakeholders should be committed to the process. Especially, the commitment of the government is important, as the government is most often the one to initiate and manage the process (Sibbing, 2021; Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021). The government determines whether co-creation will take place, what the process will look like, and which actors are allowed to participate (Eckerd & Heidelberg, 2020; Sillak et al., 2021). Also, the commitment of elected officials (higher-level government) can motivate public officers (lower-level government) to engage in the co-creation process (Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021). Furthermore, political commitment ensures that a sufficient co-creation budget is available (although this can be lost after electoral cycles).

Secondly, the co-creation process should be set up in such a way that the participants feel comfortable enough to contribute, while at the same time, are willing to “shed their prejudices and preconceived ideas, testing their own thinking enough to learn to imagine a new collective horizon with the other actors” (Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021, p.7). Thus, a ‘safe enough space’ should be created, in which actors trust each other, are willing to view problems and solutions in a different light, where there is mutual recognition, and an understanding of actors’ needs and capacities (Sibbing et al., 2022; Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021). The creation of a safe enough space can be complicated by adverse outcomes of previous attempts at co-creation (Sibbing et al., 2022). Therefore, actors involved in co-creation (and especially the initiator, which is often the government) should ensure that there is trust in the other actors as well as in the process itself (Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021; Voorberg et al., 2015).

A third key factor is to involve a diverse group of stakeholders that accurately represents the actors in the local food system (Sibbing et al., 2022; Sillak et al., 2021; Turnhout et al., 2020; Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021). When this is not the case, co-creation can reproduce existing power asymmetries and lead to less well-fitting policies (Peterson, 2013; Turnhout et al., 2020; Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021). Also, this variety of stakeholders should be accurate for solving the problem at hand (Peterson, 2013). For instance, to collaboratively develop a food policy focusing on UA, the responsible municipal department, urban farmers and urban planners should participate in the collaboration.

A fourth key factor is the effective management of the co-creation process and the expectations that participants have of it. Prior to starting the collaboration, it should be clearly defined what role actors play during the process, what the process will look like, and whether its outcomes will be binding (Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021; Zerbian & de Luis Romero, 2021). This aids to prevent disappointments.



The last key factor is to define a shared goal at the start of the process (Sibbing, 2021). During co-creation, actors have to reach consensus on how to reach this goal, which is facilitated by the alignment of values between actors (Moragues-Faus, 2020).

Summarizing the key factors, collaborating actors need to ensure that the co-creation process is a safe enough space, that actors are and remain committed to the process, that there is a diversity in participants, that the process and the expectations that participants have of it are managed carefully and that the actors work towards a commonly defined goal.

### 3. Conceptual framework

To assess stakeholders' perception of co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam, a conceptual framework for co-creation was constructed. At present, only one study on co-creation in the food policy domain has been published (the work of Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021)). In their article, Vara-Sánchez et al. aim to explore food policy co-creation by assessing the roles that actors play during co-creation, the tools and factors that shape the emergence and development of co-creation processes, and the challenges that hinder co-creative food policy development. However, the framework of the aforementioned authors was deemed partially unfitting for the present case, necessitating the creation of a new one. The tools and factors were deemed unfitting because Vara-Sánchez et al. consider FPCs a 'factor' that can facilitate co-creation, while in the present study, FPCs are one of the stakeholder groups. However, Vara-Sánchez et al.'s conceptualization of co-creation into 'roles' and (to some extent) 'challenges' was deemed fitting for the present research. For the roles, this is because actors were often described to play a certain role during co-creation according to the available literature (see for instance Puerari et al. (2018)). Regarding the challenges, Vara-Sánchez et al. contend that these mainly consist of an (un)willingness or (in)ability of the government to co-creatively develop food policy. An assessment of the available literature on food policy development in Amsterdam (regardless of co-creation) showed that the main challenges in the Amsterdam context are also related to an unwillingness of the municipality (Allan, 2019; Kuhlmann, 2017). Thus, because roles and willingness were recurring themes between the paper of Vara-Sánchez et al. and Allan (2019), Kuhlmann (2017), and Puerari et al. (2018), it was decided to incorporate them into the conceptual framework for the present study.

To identify additional factors that influence co-creation, and to further deepen the understanding of the roles- and willingness dimensions, a review of the literature on co-creation and other collaborative approaches was conducted. It was necessary to include contributions from the collaboration literature at large because as mentioned previously, there is a dearth of articles studying co-creation in the food policy domain. Furthermore, it was warranted to include contributions from the collaboration literature at large because Puerari et al. (2018), Sillak et al. (2021), Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021) and Voorberg et al. (2015) contend that co-creation is a type of collaboration, and therefore related to concepts like public participation, collaborative governance, and co-management.

To select contributions, a Google Scholar search was conducted on the topics of 'collaborative policy-making', 'collaborative food policy-making', 'participatory policy-making', 'food policy co-creation', and 'food policy co-production'. Based on the screening of their abstract, contributions were checked for relevance. This assessment of relevance was based on whether the articles contained one of the aforementioned collaboration concepts, whether the study was conducted in the public service, urban planning, or policy domain, whether the abstract touched upon the roles and/or willingness of actors, contained the perspective of the government or citizens on collaboration or a combination of the aforementioned. The delimitation to the public service, urban planning, or policy domain was chosen because these domains were thought to be most similar to the food policy domain or have the most influence on urban food systems. Also, the 'end-users' in these domains (citizens) were deemed to be most similar to those in the food policy domain (food system stakeholders). This is less the case for the education or health domain, where the 'end-users' are patients or pupils. In addition to the Google Scholar search, a snowball sampling approach was taken. This is a sampling method that takes one unit (in this case, an article) as the starting point and from there, finds other relevant units. The starting unit was the article of Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021). The subsequent selection of relevant articles was based on the same criteria as for the Google Scholar search.

Lastly, the article library that was built up by the researcher as a result of compiling information for **chapters 1 and 2** was re-assessed to find useful contributions. All in all, this literature search resulted in the selection of six contributions, which are listed in **table 1**.

*Table 1: overview of the contributions that were assessed to construct the conceptual framework*

Contribution	Title	Type of collaboration research
Eckerd & Heidelberg (2020)	Administering Public Participation	Public participation
Puerari et al. (2018)	Co-Creation Dynamics in Urban Living Labs	Co-creation
Sillak et al. (2021)	Assessing co-creation in strategic planning for urban energy transitions	Co-creation
Skelcher & Torfing (2010)	Improving democratic governance through institutional design: Civic participation and democratic ownership in Europe	Civic participation
Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021)	The co-production of urban food policies: Exploring the emergence of new governance spaces in three Spanish cities	Co-creation
Voorberg et al. (2015)	A Systematic Review of Co-Creation and Co-Production: Embarking on the social innovation journey	Co-creation

In addition to actors' **roles** and **willingness**, a recurring theme in the contributions listed in **table 1** was actors' **ability** to collaborate. Thus, these three themes formed the main dimensions of the conceptual framework. In the following paragraphs, actors' roles, willingness, and ability are further explored.

Starting with the **roles** that actors play during collaboration, Sillak et al. (2021) contend that actors can be assigned to roles by other actors, can take on roles without having specific intentions, or purposefully take on roles to pursue their own goals. Different actor groups tend to have different roles. Actors' roles are not set in stone; co-creation can serve to reconstruct the assigned roles, transcending existing power relations.

One of the roles that Sillak et al. (2021) ascribe to governmental actors is that they are typically the ones to initiate and coordinate the co-creation process. Also, governments are often the ones to determine what role other actors (especially citizens) will play during co-creation. The role of the government to initiate and manage participatory processes is furthermore underwritten by Eckerd & Heidelberg (2020), who state that public actors have discretion over *"not only how participation is carried out but also who participates and whether and how that participation will affect the decision"* (p. 145).

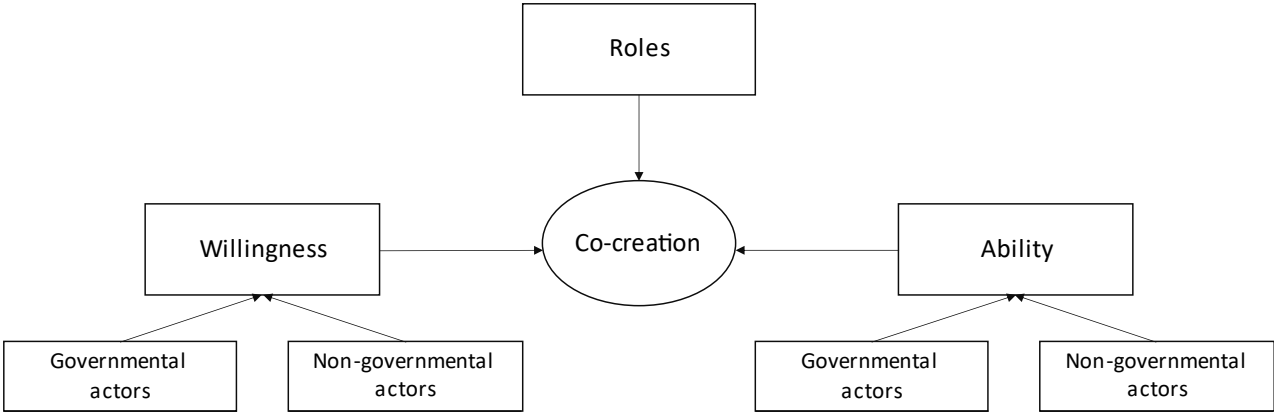
Other actors, such as private businesses and civil organizations, have been shown to play the role of giving feedback or comments, lobbying, and advising on policies (Sillak et al., 2021). In the research of Eckerd & Heidelberg (2020), citizens also played the role of providing knowledge and advice.

**Table 2** provides an overview of the roles that local governments and civil society food movement actors played during food policy co-creation in the study of Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021). The aforementioned authors actually included a third actor group in their research: social movement actors within the local government. However, this is not one of the stakeholder groups included in the present research. Moreover, the actors that are part of the FPCs included in the present research (see **chapter 5**) cannot be considered social movement actors within the local government, as neither of the FPCs was instigated by the municipality. Therefore, only the roles that the local government (here: municipality) and civil society food movement actors (here: CIs) played during co-creative food policy development in the study of Vara-Sánchez et al. are depicted in **table 2**.

*Table 2: the roles that the local government and civil society food movement actors played during food policy co-creation in the study of Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021)*

Actor	Role
Local government	Expediting processes and facilitating resources by means of mayoral commitment
	Overcoming political and technical resistance
	Giving actions and processes greater energy
Civil society food movement actors	Providing knowledge and participatory methodologies
	Facilitating methodological agility and flexibility
	Creating linkages with a wider network of social actors

Now, let us further explore the factors that determine the **willingness** and **ability** of actors to engage in collaboration. In their paper, Voorberg et al. (2015) distinguish between two actors groups; governmental actors and non-governmental actors. For both of these actor groups, the aforementioned authors list several factors that influence co-creation, either because they determine actors’ willingness, or their ability to co-create. Distinguishing between governmental and non-governmental actors for the dimensions of willingness and ability was also deemed suitable for the present research since the FPCs cannot be considered part of the government (they were not instigated by the municipality). Thus, their willingness and ability are estimated to be influenced by similar sub-dimensions as the willingness and ability of the CIs. Based on the aforementioned, a conceptual framework arises that looks as follows:



*Figure 2: conceptual framework thus far that distinguishes between governmental and non-governmental actors’ willingness and ability*

For governmental actors, Voorberg et al. (2015) state that the **willingness** to collaborate is firstly influenced by governmental actors' attitudes. A negative attitude towards co-creation arises when governmental actors consider co-creation to be unreliable because they believe citizen behavior to be unpredictable or when governmental actors exert a political and professional reluctance to lose status and control. Secondly, the presence or absence of clear incentives for co-creation influences the willingness of the governmental actors to co-create. Governmental actors might be hesitant to engage in co-creation because they are uncertain whether the policies will indeed be of a better quality if co-creation is employed. Additional incentives that influence governmental actors' willingness to co-create are the potential to increase citizens' commitment to the issue and the potential financial benefits. This financial cost-benefit analysis is also mentioned by Puerari et al. (2018). Namely, Puerari et al. state that the willingness and ability of actors (Puerari et al. do not distinguish between specific stakeholder groups) to co-create is determined by the required resource contributions. Namely, actors dedicate their time, (financial) resources, and effort to the co-creation process. Before or during co-creation, actors compare the costs (invested resources) with the benefits of participating. The outcome of this cost-benefit analysis determines actors' willingness and ability to get or remain involved in the co-creation process. In summary, the factors that determine the willingness of governmental actors to co-create are attitudes, incentives, and resource contributions.

About the **ability** of governmental actors to co-create, Voorberg et al. say that this is determined by *"the absence of inviting organizational structures and procedures within the government or the presence or absence of a decent infrastructure to communicate with citizens"* (p. 1342). Such organizational structures and procedures include the hierarchy of positions, the roles and responsibilities of each position, and the policies and procedures that guide policy-making (Faris, 2019). The 'communication infrastructure' is about the systems and technologies used to manage the communication with non-governmental actors (Pitagorsky, 1998). To these factors, Puerari et al. (2018) add the influence of the required (financial) resources. Summarizing the factors that determine governmental actors' ability to co-create are the organizational structures and procedures, communication infrastructure, and required (financial) resources.

Regarding non-governmental actors' **willingness** to engage in co-creation, Voorberg et al. (2015) contend that this is determined by non-governmental actors' personal characteristics. Such characteristics are intrinsic values, beliefs, interests, education level, income, and age. Voorberg et al. explain that the education level also determines the administrative skills that non-governmental actors have to collaborate. However, it was chosen to put 'skills' under ability, as will be explained in the next paragraph. Non-governmental actors' willingness to co-create is furthermore determined by their feelings of responsibility for solving the problem at hand. Skelcher & Torfing (2010) also contend this, but term it the 'sense of political obligation and duty' that non-governmental actors have. If non-governmental actors feel like government processes and decisions reflect their needs and interests, they will feel more political obligation to participate. Puerari et al. (2018) furthermore add that the required (financial) resources determine non-governmental actors' willingness. This is also underwritten by Skelcher & Torfing. Recapping the above, non-governmental actors' willingness is determined by their characteristics, required (financial) resources, and a sense of responsibility for solving the problem at hand.

The **ability** of non-governmental actors to engage in co-creation is firstly described by Voorberg et al. to be determined by the degree to which the non-governmental actors believe that the government will allow them to participate in co-creation. Additionally, the (financial) resources non-governmental

actors have at their disposal to collaborate are a determining factor, both according to Voorberg et al. and Puerari et al.. To these two factors, Skelcher & Torfing add the skills that non-governmental actors have. These skills include the competency of non-governmental actors to formulate their opinion on different issues. Subsequently, skills relate to whether the non-governmental actors can engage in discussions on a specific topic to formulate a solution that takes into account the needs and interests of the general public. The topic of skills has also been addressed by Voorberg et al., but as a determinant of non-governmental actors' willingness. However, in the present research, skills will be put under the dimension of ability. This is more logical since skills are generally associated with ability (regardless of the domain in which the skills are (not) present). In summary, the factors that determine non-governmental actors' ability to co-create are the perceived ability, required (financial) resources, and skills.

Taking all of the aforementioned into consideration, the framework depicted in **figure 3** was constructed.

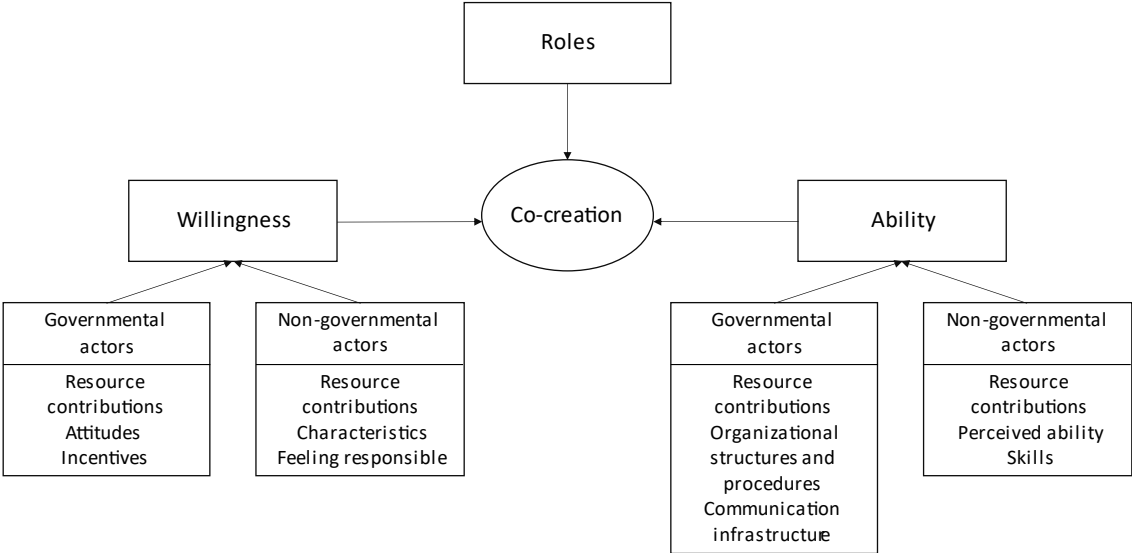


Figure 3: conceptual framework for co-creation

Since the government is most often the one to initiate and manage the co-creation process, an arrow could also be added to this framework that directly connects governmental actors' willingness with non-governmental actors' ability. This serves to show that the dimensions are interrelated. This is a recognized fact in the co-creation literature (Voorberg et al., 2015). For instance, in their article on the five common elements of co-creation, Puerari et al. (2018) state that these elements “do not completely stand alone, they interact, relate, and influence each other. They should be regarded as a basis for understanding co-creation in practice.” (p.6). As such, the framework presented here will serve a similar purpose.

#### 4. The process for developing food policy in Amsterdam

This chapter explains how policies are developed at the Dutch municipal level. This general process is illustrated with a description of previous food policy development processes in Amsterdam. Together, these two parts serve to answer SRQ1 (“*What is the process for developing food policy in Amsterdam?*”).

The municipal elections can be seen as the starting point for policy development. The municipal elections take place every four years. During these elections, citizens cast their vote to divide the seats in the municipality’s city council (*gemeenteraad*). The parties that have received the most votes then form a coalition that should hold more than half of the available seats. The remaining parties are the opposition (Tweede Kamer, 2023).

Next, the coalition starts drafting a coalition agreement, which contains the most important objectives for the next four years (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2014). This is an agenda-setting activity: the coalition determines which issues merit attention. These issues can be new ones or a continuation of last term’s topics. If a topic is not in the coalition agreement, it will most probably not be put on the policy-making agenda for the next four years. The coalition agreement also lists the portfolio distribution (*portefeuilleverdeling*) among the coalition parties and contains a financial section.



Figure 4: coalition agreement of May 2022 (PVDA et al., 2022)

After the portfolios have been distributed among the coalition parties, the appointing of aldermen (*wethouders*) starts. Each coalition party proposes candidates for the portfolios it is responsible for. The entire city council debates which candidate-alderman should get which portfolios. After the aldermen and their portfolios have been determined, the mayor and the aldermen form the municipal board (*College van B&W*). The municipal board carries out the decisions of the city council (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2010).

Next, policy development continues from agenda-setting to policy formulation. Municipal officers collect information about the topics the city council wants to work on. An example of data collection is the sending out of surveys to the stakeholders of the future policy or an alderman bringing work visits to said stakeholders. During data collection, citizens can be invited to share their opinion or contact the municipality on their own initiative. In the latter case, citizens can alert the media to frame issues as meriting attention or have a say at council meetings (*raadsvergaderingen*). To have a say at council meetings, citizens have to book a slot for a specific issue, which grants them three minutes of speaking time (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023a). Alerting the media or having a say at council meetings cannot be considered collaboration, as they are one-sided methods of influencing. Citizens can become members of a political party to propose policy topics from that angle (Hu, 2015). This can be considered co-creation, as exemplified in the study of Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021), where civil society food movement actors entered into the local government to co-create food policies. During data collection, the municipality can also invite citizens to influence the policy process (Hu, 2015). In principle, this cannot be considered co-creation. However, it can lead to co-creation, if the data is collected during collaborative meetings where simultaneously, strategies, agendas, and actions to address urban (food) challenges are generated.

Using the collected data, the municipal board proposes a policy to the city council, which can agree, adjust, or reject it. Finally, the city council determines the implementation budget (Hu, 2015). Finances thus play a role twice. During agenda-setting, the budget that is allocated to an issue in the coalition agreement determines whether it will be worked on by municipal officers. Finances also play a role in policy implementation.

Having delineated the general process of policy development at the Dutch municipal level, this process can be illustrated with the process for food policy development in Amsterdam. The year 2010 is taken as the starting point for this illustration because in that year, the coalition was elected that was still in power when the 2013 network meeting (a co-creation format) took place. The 2010-2014 coalition did not regard food as an important issue, which meant that it was not included in the coalition agreement (PVDA et al., 2010). Despite this, driven by its own motivation and societal pressure, one of the parties in the municipal board proposed to develop a new food policy in 2011 (Kuhlmann, 2017). This proposal was honored by the municipal board.

Since 'food policy' was not a portfolio during the 2010-2014 coalition term, an alderman was made responsible for the development of the food policy in an ad-hoc fashion. He decided to develop the food policy in a bottom-up manner (Allan, 2019; Kuhlmann, 2017). For this, the municipality organized an event in Pakhuis De Zwijger<sup>1</sup>, which was attended by private parties, citizens, small- and large-scale processing companies, innovators, academics, shop owners, and restaurant owners. The purpose of the network meeting was to *"jointly shape the food agenda and to bring focus to the broad municipal perspective on food"* (Studio HB, 2013, p.1). Because of its multi-stakeholder nature and agenda-creation goal, this network meeting can be considered co-creation. Prior to the network meeting, five discussion themes had already been determined by the food policy program team. These themes were 'food in the neighborhood', 'food at school', 'food as profession', 'food in the chain', and 'food and agriculture' (Studio HB, 2013a). During the network meeting, workshops were held on the topics of these five themes. In addition to the network meeting, an *ambtswoninggesprek* (conversation in the mayor's residence) was organized in 2013. The purpose of this meeting was also to jointly shape the food agenda, but the attendees were slightly different: the conversation was attended by four aldermen, a provincial executive member (*gedeputeerde*) and representatives from the private sector, education sector and social initiatives (Studio HB, 2013b).

As a result of the network meeting and the *ambtswoninggesprek*, the 2014 food policy contained a set of progressive goals (Allan, 2019; Kuhlmann, 2017; Studio HB, 2013a). These included for instance the promotion of UA, encouraging citizens to consume healthy and sustainable foods, pursuing a sustainable food cycle, and facilitating the exchange of food-related knowledge. The food policy was not structured according to the five discussion themes mentioned in the previous paragraph but the themes recurred in the food policy (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2014).

However, prior to the implementation of the food policy, municipal elections took place. Once again, a coalition was elected that did not perceive food as an issue meriting attention. Resultingly, the 2014 coalition agreement listed main themes with which all but one of the goals of the already drafted food policy were not compatible. In fact, the word 'food' is not mentioned at all in the 2014 coalition agreement (D66 et al., 2014). Resultingly, no budget was allocated to the

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<sup>1</sup> A platform that fosters creativity and social innovation and strives to be an approachable, independent, and secure public forum for everyone. The space serves as a venue for discussions and collaborative efforts to set ambitious goals, share diverse perspectives, and generate innovative solutions to pressing and complex societal challenges (Pakhuis de Zwijger, 2023).



implementation of the topics that were in the 2014 food policy. Of all the aforementioned aims, only the encouragement of the consumption of healthy and sustainable food was compatible and thus implemented. Namely, the municipality wanted to promote healthy lifestyles, encourage citizens to play sports and eat healthily (Allan, 2019). To achieve these aims, the municipality provided renovation subsidies to sports facilities and worked together with schools to develop education materials and sports programs (D66 et al., 2014; Gemeente Amsterdam, 2017). The non-implementation of the other goals led to disgruntled feelings among the attendees of the network meeting (Allan, 2019; Kuhlmann, 2017).

In 2018, the next round of municipal elections took place. This coalition was slightly more oriented to the topic of food. This is reflected in the 2018 coalition agreement, where food is mentioned in relation to urban agriculture, and it is also stated that the 2014 food policy would get a continuation (GroenLinks et al., 2018). This continuation was published in 2019. It consists of six action lines, namely 'the social function of food', '(food) waste', 'a healthy food environment', 'regional production', 'entrepreneurship', and 'animal welfare and the protein transition' (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019). No network meeting or other format of co-creation was employed to develop this food policy.

The most recent municipal elections took place in March 2022, after which the coalition agreement *Amsterdams Akkoord (Amsterdam Agreement)* (see **figure 4**). The *Amsterdams Akkoord* focuses on four main themes: (1) 'a solidary city with opportunities for everyone', (2) 'a sustainable future', (3) 'responsible growth', and (4) 'collaboration and organization'. Thus, food is not a main theme. However, 'food' is addressed under theme two, as the coalition expresses the desire for healthy, sustainable, and seasonal food, and its ambition to diminish food waste. Furthermore, food is mentioned in relation to children's health in theme one. Lastly, 'food policy' is a new portfolio, which has been allocated to Zita Pels (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023b).

Thus, in the *Amsterdams Akkoord*, 'food' is mentioned more frequently than in the previous ones. However, the contents of the coalition agreement do not necessarily match those of the 2019 food policy, since the *Amsterdams Akkoord* only partially addresses the healthy food environment and regional production topics.

Regarding the finances, the 2022 coalition agreement also shows an increase in attention to the topic of food compared to the previously discussed ones, since those did not include a separate budget for a food policy. In the *Amsterdams Akkoord*, it is stated that there is a budget of four million euros available for 'food policy' on an 'incidental' basis. This means that the four million euros will be spent in irregular increments between 2022 and 2026 on updating the 2019 food policy (Frank Bakkum - municipality, personal communication, 25 November 2022; PVDA et al., 2022).

The information provided in this chapter serves to show that for the successful development and implementation of a food policy, the contents of the coalition agreement are highly important. If a municipal board is elected that does not view 'food' as a pressing issue, it will not be a topic in the coalition agreement. Resultingly, the chance that the topic will be addressed in the next four years is small. Even if 'food' is addressed in the coalition agreement, and a food policy is developed, this policy can be non-implemented if the next elected municipal board does not view it as an issue that merits continued attention. Also, difficulties can arise if the topics of the food policy and the contents of the coalition agreement do not match. Thus, this results in non-implementation of the food policy.

## 5. Methodology

To assess how stakeholders perceive co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam, a qualitative study design was employed. Since the aim of this thesis was to create an in-depth understanding of the case of Amsterdam by assessing perceptions, rather than quantifying for instance the degree of co-creation for food policy development, such a design was deemed most suitable (Fossey et al., 2002).

More specifically, a case study design was employed. Case studies have been described as suitable for studying policy developments because such a design allows for studying complex phenomena within their specific context (Baxter & Jack, 2015; Crowe et al., 2011). Since these phenomena are studied in (and bound to) their context, the findings of a case study are not wholly generalizable to other settings. However, the findings of the present thesis can serve to inform future co-creation theory in the food policy domain and to make comparisons with other case studies to discern best practices and transfer knowledge from one setting to another.

While selecting Amsterdam as the case for studying co-creative food policy development can provide valuable insights (see introduction), it also has several limitations. Namely, the findings of the present study might not be generalizable to other cities, since the political, economic, and social context of Amsterdam may be unique. For instance, Amsterdam has a flourishing tourist industry as well as a lucrative harbor, both of which influence the city's policy decisions (Bunschoten, 2022; Kuhlmann, 2017). As mentioned by Kuhlmann (2017), these two contextual factors have led the municipality to make policy decisions based on economic interests (social or environmental ones) in the past. Furthermore, focusing on a single city rather than comparing the developments between cities might diminish the possibility of investigating whether the findings of this study can also apply to other cities. Also, since the procedures behind food policy development in the Netherlands might differ from those in other countries, generalizability is lowered.

To collect the data, it was chosen to conduct SSIs. The set-up of an SSI is inherently flexible (Adams, 2015). It is possible to first address the main themes of the study by means of general questions and thereafter zoom in on concepts that are of importance for the interviewee (and the researcher) by means of follow-up questions and probes. These follow-up questions and probes can be both prepared in advance or allowed to arise spontaneously, both of which were the case in this study (Kallio et al., 2016). Additionally, the researcher utilized non-verbal probing, namely staying silent or raising an eyebrow to elicit answers.

SSIs are suitable for assessing the unique perspective of each individual in a group. The perspectives can be explored thoroughly by means of the aforementioned follow-up questions and probes (Adams, 2015). Furthermore, SSIs enable for perception assessment, as they can be used to gather information about individuals' beliefs and opinions. An additional rationale for using SSIs in the present research is that it is a commonly used method in policy research (Harrell & Bradley, 2009)

A limitation of SSIs is that they have lower reliability than structured interviews. To still maximize the reliability of this study, the researcher familiarized herself with the interview guide thoroughly to ensure that the topics addressed during each of the interviews were as similar as possible. To maximize the validity of the interview guide, said guide was revised by the researcher's supervisor, signaling an expert assessment (Kallio et al., 2016). The interview guide was not field-tested, since it was deemed too demanding for an interviewee to be interviewed for sixty minutes, twice. However, the interview guide was modified during the field work period, for instance after one of the interviewees (who is a researcher) provided improvement points for the interview guide.

In principle, group discussions can also be employed to assess perceptions. Yet, they were deemed less suitable for the present study for several reasons. Firstly, this would entail getting all of the identified stakeholders together at the same time, which was expected to be unfeasible due to participants' work schedules. Secondly, some participants might not feel comfortable expressing their opinions during such a group discussion because the recipient of the potential criticism would also be present. Thirdly, group discussions are often lengthier than SSIs, thus demanding even more of the participants' limited time (Adams, 2015)

The first methodological step for this research was to develop an interview guide. Thereafter, the stakeholders to be interviewed were selected (sampling). Subsequently, the field work took place between November 2022 and January 2023 in Amsterdam and Haarlem (which is where the office of one of the FPCs, Voedsel Verbindt, is located). Lastly, the interview data was coded and analyzed. Below, each of these steps is explained.

### 5.1 Developing the interview guide

The second, third, and fourth SRQs of the present research formed the backbone of the interview guide (stakeholders' roles, willingness, and ability). In addition to this, the sub-dimensions of the conceptual framework were added as topics. To further gain inspiration for the interview guide, the following contributions were consulted: FAO et al. (2018), Sillak et al. (2021), Stein (2021), Van der Valk (2019), Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021) and Webb et al. (1998). These articles were read, and relevant concepts for the dimensions of co-creation as depicted in **figure 3** were isolated. Subsequently, questions for this study's interview guide were formulated.

One of the inspiration sources for the interview guide was the MUFPP evaluation framework, which is an evaluation framework for food policies in general (and not for the assessment of (co-creative) food policy *development*). Because of this, not all indicators mentioned in the MUFPP framework were relevant (only indicators 1-4, 23, 26, and 43). These addressed for example multi-stakeholder food policy structures (i.e. FPCs, food partnerships, and food coalitions) and the presence of a food policy.

All questions included in the interview guide were open-ended questions. Furthermore, care was taken to ensure that the interview questions were participant-oriented, not leading, clearly worded, single-faceted, open-ended, mostly started with 'who', 'what', 'where', 'when', 'how', 'why', and were not harmful to the participants (Kallio et al., 2016).

Interview guides were developed in Dutch and English and tailored toward the respective stakeholder groups (e.g. FPC-, municipal- or CI actors).

The interview guides can be found in **Appendix 1** (English) and **2** (Dutch).

### 5.2 Stakeholder identification and selection

To select the relevant individual actors within the stakeholder groups of FPCs, the municipality, and CIs, a combined approach of quota-, purposive- and snowball sampling was employed. In this section, the employment of these sampling approaches is further explained.

Quota sampling firstly entails the division of the research population (in this case, stakeholders of food policy development in Amsterdam) into subgroups (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Then, participants are selected based on their membership of said subgroups (Parker et al., 2019). In the present study, these subgroups were the municipality of Amsterdam, FPCs, and CIs. Generally, the subgroups are then quantified according to their relative size (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). However, this was not done for the present study. Instead, a sample consisting of equal numbers of municipal-, FPC-, and CI actors

was strived for. This was done in the light of the temporal feasibility of the study for which the time frame was six months; interviewing an equal sample in terms of relative numbers was simply unrealistic.

Several benefits are ascribed to quota sampling. Namely, it does not require a strict sampling frame and is therefore much quicker than for instance probability sampling (Sharma, 2017). Additionally, quota sampling gives the researcher more control over the sample (Acharya et al., 2013). However, there are also certain disadvantages to the employment of quota sampling. Firstly, quota sampling is associated with sampling bias, as the researcher divides the research population into certain subgroups that might not be a perfect fit. Relatedly, there is the problem of placing individuals into subgroups; each individual can only belong to one subgroup. Also, the sample often cannot be generalized to the population at large, reducing the external validity of the study (Sharma, 2017).

Often, quota sampling is combined with snowball sampling. Quota sampling serves as the base for selecting groups and reaching out to initial participants, after which snowball sampling is employed to identify and contact further participants (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Combining quota sampling with snowball sampling was also done in the present study because some originally intended interviewees were hard to reach and did not respond to repeated emailing. Through other interviewees, new interviewees could be reached out to via phone or more private email. Also, the fact that snowball sampling is based on interviewees' judgment of who is a key actor was valuable because of the researchers' newness to the field of food policy development in Amsterdam, which could lead to a less well-informed judgment of who to reach out to. Snowball sampling lastly proved to be useful to verify the researcher's judgment that formed the basis for the purposive sampling (which will be discussed below).

Although snowball sampling was considered a suitable method for the reasons given above, it must be admitted that this sampling method is associated with a few limitations. After the selection and accessing of initial participants, the selection of further research subjects is dependent on whether they are in the network of the first participants and whether the first participants are willing to cooperate in suggesting new participants (Cohen & Arieli, 2011; Parker et al., 2019). Thus, this sampling method can give rise to selection bias. Furthermore, if an individual does not have a strong social network, he or she is less likely to be suggested as a potential participant by others (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). This reduces the validity and reliability of the research. Next, snowball sampling can also be associated with 'gatekeeper bias'. This means that the initial participants have certain reasons for (not) recommending new participants, leading to a less representative sample. Lastly, snowball sampling heavily relies on the willingness of individuals to participate. As a result, the sample might be more biased toward cooperative individuals (Cohen & Arieli, 2011).

Summarizing the above, snowball sampling is associated with lowered generalizability, representativeness, and external validity (Parker et al., 2019).

Yet, considering that the current research required entering into a quite specific network of actors that were furthermore hard to reach, snowball sampling was deemed a fitting strategy. At the end of each interview, interviewees were asked to recommend other relevant actors. Interviewees also mentioned other actors that they perceived to be of relevance spontaneously. If they were also perceived relevant by the researcher, they were subsequently reached out to. This judgment was based on the researcher's knowledge of the case and the questions that the present research aimed to answer.

Below, an introduction to the two FPCs that are present in Amsterdam is provided, as well as the sampling method for selecting study participants. Thereafter, the selection of (actors within) the stakeholder groups of CIs and the municipality is further explained, for whom a description is also provided.

### **FPCs: FC MRA and Voedsel Verbindt**

At the moment, Amsterdam is home to two FPCs: Food Council Metropoolregio Amsterdam (FC MRA) and stichting Voedsel Verbindt<sup>2</sup> (henceforth referred to as Voedsel Verbindt).

FC MRA was established in 2017 with the aim of involving as many actor groups within society in its envisioned food system change as possible, although the focus lies on establishing collaborations with CIs (Food Council MRA, 2020; Van der Valk, 2019). The council's core team consists of researchers, CI representatives, and individuals originating from the private sector (Food Council MRA, 2020). Furthermore, FC MRA employs a 'collaborative leadership' approach: the council aims to bring together people and resources, in order to achieve collective goals (Van der Valk et al., 2018). More specifically, FC MRA strives for a sustainable, healthy, transparent, and fair food system in the metropolitan region of Amsterdam (MRA)<sup>3</sup>. FC MRA currently endorses UA projects, supports an initiative to restructure Amsterdam's street markets, and advocates for the creation of a workspace for knowledge sharing, co-creation, and collaboration between food organizations in Amsterdam (Food Council MRA, 2020). FC MRA is an initiative (rather than a legal entity such as a foundation, cooperation or association) and does not receive regular funding.

Voedsel Verbindt was launched in 2017 as an "*activating platform that provides an overview of relevant Agri & Food initiatives, developments, projects and associations in the region*" (Interviewee C - FPC researcher, personal communication, November 2022; Voedsel Verbindt, 2020). Voedsel Verbindt wants to share knowledge among stakeholders, and effectuate collaborations to achieve food system change where possible. One of these stakeholders is in fact FC MRA. Although Voedsel Verbindt does not explicitly refer to itself as an FPC on its website, the aims of the foundation are corresponding to those of an FPC. Also, in the article of Van der Valk (2019), Voedsel Verbindt is referred to as a food council.

The initiative-takers for the establishment of Voedsel Verbindt were a mixed group consisting of public sector-, private sector- and civil society organizations, such as Zaanstad municipality, Rabobank, and the Slow Food Youth Network (SFYN)<sup>4</sup> (Voedsel Verbindt, 2020). Voedsel Verbindt runs on funding from the Economic Platform MRA<sup>5</sup>, the provinces of Noord-Holland and Flevoland, Rabobank Amsterdam, LTO Noord<sup>6</sup>, and several municipalities within the MRA (Voedsel Verbindt,

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<sup>2</sup> *Food Connects foundation*

<sup>3</sup> The metropolitan region of Amsterdam (MRA) is a partnership of the provinces of Noord-Holland and Flevoland, thirty municipalities within that region, and the 'Vervoerregio Amsterdam', which is a partnership of fourteen municipalities regarding transport and public transport (Metropoolregio Amsterdam, 2023a; Vervoerregio Amsterdam, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> The youth branch of Slow Food Amsterdam, which will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

<sup>5</sup> The metropolitan region of Amsterdam has an economic platform that serves as a medium for regional governments to collaborate on joint projects and coordinate policies. Additionally, the platform serves as a means to pool financial resources to support initiatives more efficiently. One of the supported initiatives is Voedsel Verbindt (Metropoolregio Amsterdam, 2023b).

<sup>6</sup> LTO Noord is an organization that represents the interests of farmers and growers. The group works to assist farmers and growers with their business ventures, innovation, and sustainability through targeted projects and policy advocacy (LTO Noord, 2023).

2021). In 2019, Voedsel Verbindt became a foundation (*stichting*) and thus a legal entity (Van der Valk, 2019). Voedsel Verbindt currently has one full-time office employee. The board of the foundation does not receive remunerations for its work; its members fulfill their function part-time (Voedsel Verbindt, 2020).

For the selection of actors within the FPC subgroup, quota sampling was complemented with purposive sampling. This is the selection of participants based on the researchers' judgment (Dudovskiy, 2022; Fossey et al., 2002; Zerbian & de Luis Romero, 2021). Namely, selected actors were the individuals who were most influential within the FPCs, based on their position within the organization as listed on the website. Although this sampling method is prone to researcher bias and can thus reduce the validity and reliability of the study (Sharma, 2017), it was deemed the best way to select FPC participants that possessed the most valuable information. All in all, four FPC-related actors were included in the study.

### **Municipality of Amsterdam**

To start identifying the municipal officers that would be most relevant for the present research, a LinkedIn search was done. The judgment of relevance was firstly based on whether individuals were working on the topic of food at the time of the publishing of the 2014 and 2019 food policies. More specifically, the program managers for these food policies were sought out. Neither of these latter actors is working on the topic of food policy within the municipality anymore. Nevertheless, they were reached out to. Yet, they did not respond to invitation emails.

Continuing the search for municipal officers to interview, the theses of Allan (2019), Kappelhof (2022), Sauer (2022), and Van Bossum (2017) were consulted. The aforementioned students conducted their research on the topic of food policies and/or food initiatives in Amsterdam, for which they all interviewed municipal officers. From the individuals listed in the theses, a list of potential interviewees was compiled.

Also, a second LinkedIn search was conducted to identify the municipal officers that are currently working on food policy development.

Ultimately, Frank Bakkum, who works for the municipality as food policy and UA advisor, agreed to an interview. He furthermore provided the contact information of Judith Lips, who was subsequently contacted and interviewed. Judith Lips is part of the program team Social Basis as Stedelijk Projectleider Informele Voedselinitiatieven (*Municipal Project Leader Informal Food Initiatives*).

### **CIIs**

To identify the relevant food-related CIIs (and actors within them) for the present study, it was initially attempted to follow the following inclusion criteria: relevant actors were to be CI actors that were *knowledgeable* of the food policy developments in Amsterdam since 2013 (when the network meeting took place) and/or had *participated* in the policy development during this period. For the CIIs, a straightforward benchmark for participation in policy development was the CIIs' presence during the network meeting of 2013. However, many of the initiatives that were present back then had ceased to exist. Regardless, their former representatives were contacted. Only one of the (former) representatives responded.

The sole responder was Slow Food Amsterdam (SFA). Slow Food Amsterdam is an organization that wants to be a platform for working on a healthy, accessible, transparent, and fair food system. It aims to achieve these goals by raising awareness (Slow Food, 2022). After reaching out to SFA through its general email address, the contact information of Mieke Snoek was acquired. Mieke Snoek had not been present at the network meeting herself. However, she had been board member of SFA at the

time. The relevance of interviewing SFA for the present study was furthermore underlined by the fact that the initiative and its youth branch SFYN were mentioned by multiple other interviewees as having been or being a stakeholder in food policy development in Amsterdam.

Since contacting initiatives based on their presence during the network meeting otherwise remained fruitless, the criteria for the selection of CIs (and representatives of these CIs) were adapted. The first step in selecting CIs was now based on an initiative’s appearance on the website of Van Amsterdamse Bodem (VAB). VAB is a platform that aims to connect city entrepreneurs and initiatives with consumers to effectuate more healthy, sustainable, and local diets among Amsterdam’s inhabitants (Marit Beelaerts – VAB, personal communication, 1 December 2022). Using VAB’s list was decided upon because the list is quite exhaustive and contains many different types of entrepreneurs and initiatives all over the city. Because VAB was thus perceived by the researcher to have a considerable amount of knowledge of food-related initiatives and potentially also of food policy development in Amsterdam, the platform itself was contacted for an interview as well. In the end, Marit Beelaerts, who works for VAB as an intern, agreed to do an interview.

Next, the entrepreneurs and initiatives listed on VAB’s website were sorted according to profit-orientation: only non-profit initiatives were contacted (e.g. restaurant owners were not invited for an interview). Finally, this resulted in an interview with Elise Struyck, who is a representative of Guerilla Kitchen, an initiative that wants to reduce food waste. Furthermore, UA project NoordOogst was contacted. Via email, Ron van Echteld agreed to do an interview. As it turned out, Ron van Echteld was also a representative of Stadslandbouw Amsterdam (SLA), an organization that represents (the needs and interests of) UA projects in Amsterdam (Ron van Echteld – SLA, personal communication, 19 December 2022). Because Ron Van Echteld’s endeavors for SLA were discussed far more prominently during the interview than his endeavors for NoordOogst, only SLA is included as a CI in the present study. During the interview, Annet van Hoorn, who is also involved with SLA, joined as well.

For an overview of the interviewees, see **table 3**.

*Table 3: overview of the interviewees included in the present study<sup>7</sup>*

Interviewee	Role	Interview date
A	FPC actor	1 December 2022
B	FPC actor	15 December 2022
C	FPC researcher	23 November 2022
D	FPC researcher	7 December 2022
Frank Bakkum	Municipal officer, working as food policy and UA advisor	25 November 2022
Judith Lips	Municipal officer, working as municipal project leader food initiatives	13 January 2023
Mieke Snoek	Former board member of SFA	30 November 2022
Marit Beelaerts	Intern at VAB	1 December 2022
Elise Struyck	Representative of Guerilla Kitchen	13 December 2022
Ron van Echteld	Representative of SLA and	19 December 2022

<sup>7</sup> Several of the four individuals that were interviewed because of their relation to the FPC’s wanted to remain anonymous. This anonymity could only be guaranteed by anonymizing all FPC-related actors. Thus, FPC-related actors will be referred to as interviewee A – D.

	NoordOogst	
Annet van Hoorn	Representative of SLA	19 December 2022

### Reaching out to the potential interviewees

To invite the interviewees to participate in the present study, an invitation email was sent, asking stakeholders to participate in a sixty-minute face-to-face interview (see **Appendix 5**). Actors were invited to participate in a face-to-face interview (as opposed to an online interview), as this allows for a more natural interaction between the researcher and the interviewee. This furthermore complements the employment of SSIs, as this method allows for reciprocity and dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee (Kallio et al., 2016).

Attached to the invitation email was a consent form that informed potential interviewees of the purpose of the study as well as the data management plan. Potential study participants were fully informed of the aim of the present study, as it was believed that this would not influence the outcomes. The informed consent form and data management plan can be found in **Appendix 3** and **4**, respectively.

When the potential interviewees had not responded after a week, they were emailed again. The re-invitation email can be found in **Appendix 6**. One of the interviewees was contacted directly via telephone.

All in all, ten SSIs (with eleven people) were conducted between November 2022 and January 2023 and lasted between forty and a hundred minutes. The interviews took place face-to-face at the interviewees' offices, the public library, or a coffee shop. They were recorded using an iPhone. Concerning the number of interviews, the quota set at the beginning of the stakeholder selection procedure (two individuals per stakeholder group) was exceeded because additional stakeholders were mentioned as being important by the first interviewees. Also, it was believed that a slightly larger number of interviewees would yield more complete data.

With the finally acquired number of interviewees, the present study exceeded similar studies of a qualitative nature, such as those of Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021) and Zerbian & de Luis Romero (2021). In these studies, there were five interviewees per case and seven in total, respectively. Furthermore, eleven interviewees was believed to be a sufficient number because similar themes began re-emerging towards the end of the field work period, signaling saturation (Fossey et al., 2002).

### Conducting the interviews

Before starting the interview, both the researcher and the interviewee signed the informed consent form (see **Appendix 4**). By signing the form, participants agreed to let the researcher record the interview. Also, the interviewees were asked whether they would like to remain anonymous in the final report. Two of the interviewees did indeed wish to remain anonymous.

One of the interviews was conducted in English and the rest was conducted in Dutch, following the language preference of the interviewees. In both of these two languages, as well as across stakeholder groups, similar wording was used to enlarge reliability.

A researcher stance was adopted wherein an effort was made to make the interviewee feel comfortable enough to share his or her experiences, while at the same time, ensuring a professional relationship between the interviewee and the researcher. Thus, the researcher sought to be both encouraging and unbiased, which was thought to prevent interviewees from giving socially desirable answers as much as possible. Furthermore, the employment of an interview guide lowered the risk of asking leading questions (as compared to unstructured interviews), hence reducing the risk of research bias.



Even though the interviews were recorded, notes were also taken during the interview, especially pertaining to other relevant organizations and stakeholders, and to facilitate the asking of relevant follow-up questions during the interview.

During data analysis, the researcher sent follow-up emails with additional questions to several interviewees. Questions were sent to Frank Bakkum, Interviewee C, and Marit Beelaerts to elaborate on concepts related to the development of the 2019 food policy and the municipal FPC. A follow-up email was also sent to Judith Lips to clarify her role within the municipality.

### 5.3 Data analysis

Directly following the data collection period, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded using Atlas.ti. To start the process of coding, a deductive approach was taken, wherein codes were created contingent to the three dimensions of the conceptual framework (roles, willingness, and ability). This was complemented with an inductive approach, wherein codes were assigned to non-predefined themes that emerged from the data repeatedly, following the researcher's intuition (Fossey et al., 2002; Zerbian & de Luis Romero, 2021). Also, inductive coding was employed for coding the *types* of roles, as the research of Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021) was the only study that listed roles of actors during co-creative food policy development (see also the explanation in **chapter 3**). Since there was only one researcher for the present study, the coding was not checked by other researchers. Thus, this study did not employ a pre-emptive validation strategy.

In a second and third round of coding, codes were revisited and, if necessary, merged or added. Then, the resultant codes were double-checked for accuracy. This resulted in 21 codes with accompanying subcodes. It was furthermore checked whether certain codes appeared together often.

Finally, the codes and co-occurrences between them were assessed to gauge how stakeholders perceive co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam. The results of this assessment are delineated in the next chapter.

## 6. Results

The analysis of stakeholders' perception of co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam can be commenced with the following quote:

*"You are talking about co-creation, but there is none. [...]. It's all top-down. That's what the vibe is like here. It's for good reason that Amsterdam used to be called Moscow at the Amstel for a long time." (Interviewee C – FPC researcher, personal communication, 23 November 2022).*

Upon being asked what causes this absence of co-creation, this interviewees' answer is two-fold:

*"If you don't bring along money, you have no say. [...] Co-creation will only come into existence if there is municipal backing for it."*

In stark contrast to this stakeholders' perception of co-creation in Amsterdam is the following sentiment of Frank Bakkum, who works for the municipality:

*"[food policy development in Amsterdam] is very much about collaborating with other parties. Very much indeed. [...] It's very explicitly about collaborating because no one can do this alone." (personal communication, 25 November 2022).*

As can be gathered from the above, stakeholder perception of co-creation differs. On the one hand, there is the perception that the municipality is willing to co-create and has an open attitude toward this. On the other hand, there is the perception that non-governmental stakeholders do not play a role in food policy development because they have no financial resources and because the municipality is unwilling to co-create.

In the present chapter, these differences in perception are further unpacked by firstly focusing on stakeholders' roles during co-creative food policy development. Thereafter, the factors that determine stakeholders' ability to co-create are delineated. Lastly, the findings pertaining the factors that determine stakeholders' willingness to co-creatively develop food policy are laid out before the reader.

### 6.1 Role

To remind the reader, in this study, 'role' refers to the function that a stakeholder has during co-creative food policy development. As has been discussed in **chapter 3**, these roles can include managing and initiating the co-creation process, providing feedback, or connecting food-related stakeholders (Eckerd & Heidelberg, 2020; Puerari et al., 2018; Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021). The following section describes the roles that FPCs, the municipality, and CIs (have) fulfill(ed) during co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam. It was found that there are four different actors that want to play a connective role (FC MRA, Voedsel Verbindt, the municipality, and SLA). The section below also informs the reader of the ways in which the respective stakeholders play their role (i.e. by attending meetings) and how this contributes to co-creative food policy development throughout the stages of the policy process.

#### 6.1.1 FPCs

In accordance with its name, **Voedsel Verbindt** aims to be a connector. Voedsel Verbindt understands this role as being a 'linker' between food system stakeholders that want to work on similar themes. According to Voedsel Verbindt, the stakeholders that are currently in its network can

be divided into five groups: the private sector, knowledge institutes, academia, NGOs, and governments. The municipality of Amsterdam only recently joined the network of Voedsel Verbindt, after repeated lobbying of Voedsel Verbindt.

By linking stakeholders, Voedsel Verbindt aims to create a more concerted effort toward alleviating food system issues. In the perception of Voedsel Verbindt, these links increase the effectiveness of food system actors' efforts. In other words: Voedsel Verbindt believes that there is strength in numbers. As Interviewee B explains, Voedsel Verbindt mainly plays a linking role during the agenda-setting stage of the policy process:

*“These parties [the municipality of Amsterdam, the province of Noord-Holland, and the municipality of Almere] don't know that they are all working on formulating new food policies [at the same time]. So we bring them together and we ensure that at least, the policy-makers keep the same starting points in mind. And in this way, you get more uniform policies in the region [the MRA], which contributes to realizing our objectives.”* (FPC actor, personal communication, 15 December 2022).

The objectives that interviewee B talks about are the six themes that Voedsel Verbindt works on to reach its main goal of establishing a robust, regional food system. These themes are 'circular food economy', 'healthy eating is healthy living', 'smarter food streams', 'cleaner transport', 'foodscapes: food from the MRA', 'capturing and retaining talent for the food economy', and 'learning from our own data' (Voedsel Verbindt, 2021). That is to say, Voedsel Verbindt has a clear motivation for its linking role, namely establishing a robust, regional food system through six themes.

Regarding the ways in which Voedsel Verbindt performs its linking role, the following was found. Because Voedsel Verbindt was instigated in 2017, it did not attend the network meeting in 2013. Currently, the council is involved in food policy development by arranging one-on-one and group meetings. Carlo Verhart, the office worker of Voedsel Verbindt, attends and organizes about thirty meetings per week. Furthermore, Voedsel Verbindt recently hosted a networking dinner for supermarket chief executive officers (CEOs) *“to see if they could make more room on their shelves for locally produced foods”* (Interviewee B – FPC actor, personal communication, 15 December 2022). Voedsel Verbindt hosted this dinner because it wanted to ascertain whether supermarket chains perceive a local food system as a topic meriting attention, effecting commitment to working on this topic in the (near) future. Thus, this dinner served an agenda-setting purpose.

Similar to Voedsel Verbindt, **FC MRA** wants to be a connecting factor for actors in the MRA. However, the actors in its network are slightly different, as FC MRA is more strongly involved with CIs in Amsterdam than Voedsel Verbindt. In fact, FC MRA seeks to represent the interests and interests of the CIs during food policy development. Also, it wants to show the private and public sectors that all three of these actor groups potentially have valuable perspectives and knowledge to consider. However, this dual role of being a voice for the CIs while also aiming to be a connector has proven to be controversial, with Interviewee C stating:

*“But that is a source of tension between FC MRA and the municipality, as FC MRA is very committed to preserving the last agricultural area of Amsterdam, the Lutkemeerpolder, which the municipality is not very enthusiastic about.”* (FPC researcher, personal communication, 23 November 2022).

FC MRA and the municipality still interact (see below), but for this topic “*FC MRA and the municipality are not yet on speaking terms*” (Interviewee C, personal communication, 2022). Also, FC MRA sees co-creation as a goal in itself. Namely, upon being asked whether the goal of FC MRA at the time of its establishment was to develop food policy, interviewee C answers:

*“Certainly, yes, it was happening in the background, but by that time, there were already numerous policies in place. The aim was to steer the existing policies towards a direction that would foster what you refer to refer to as co-creation.”* (personal communication, November 2022).

Regarding the ways in which FC MRA is realizing its goal of playing a role in food policy development, FC MRA attends the meetings of the Netwerkraad (see below) and Voedsel Verbindt and meets with the municipality one-on-one to discuss food-related issues. FC MRA has insufficient financial resources to organize large-scale meetings of its own. The activities of FC MRA mainly have an influence during the agenda-setting stage of food policy development. Namely, FC MRA provides other stakeholders with knowledge (originating from the CIs) to frame certain issues as topics deserving attention. However, FC MRA has not been very successful in this because the council has limited financial resources (as will be addressed in **section 6.2**) (Interviewee C, personal communication, 2022). Furthermore, one of the actors involved in FC MRA was present during the 2013 network meeting. Several of the suggestions for the five topics for the network meeting in general were integrated into the 2014 food policy. Thus, the efforts of the FC MRA actor were meaningful during agenda-setting and policy formulation. However, this policy was not implemented.

In addition to FC MRA and Voedsel Verbindt, it was found that there are two more FPCs present in Amsterdam: VAB has a Netwerkraad (*Network council*), and the municipality has also set up an FPC of its own. These two organizations, in combination with FC MRA and Voedsel Verbindt, were referred to by the interviewees as ‘the four FPCs’. Below, the roles of the Netwerkraad and the municipal FPC are delineated, as well as the ways in which these roles contribute to co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam.

At the time of its establishment in 2017, the **Netwerkraad** was called the Redactieraad (*drafting council*) and was a collaboration of the municipality of Amsterdam, De Gezonde Stad<sup>8</sup>, Pakhuis de Zwijger, Eetbaar Amsterdam<sup>9</sup>, the AMS Institute<sup>10</sup>, Hogeschool van Amsterdam, Anmec<sup>11</sup> and the founders of VAB. In 2020, the Redactieraad became the Netwerkraad VAB, which has since that year seen an expansion of its network. In addition to the original collaborators, it now includes Voedsel Verbindt, FC MRA, researchers, entrepreneurs, a representative of Rabobank, UA actors, and

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<sup>8</sup> A foundation dedicated to promoting sustainability and health in Amsterdam. It is working towards creating a greener, food-rich and circular city. It accomplishes this by initiating projects and events in partnership with citizens as well as supporting initiatives that align with its sustainability goals (De Gezonde Stad, 2023).

<sup>9</sup> A platform that unites UA initiatives in Amsterdam and the surrounding area (Eetbaar Amsterdam, 2023).

<sup>10</sup> The Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions is a research institute with the goal of transforming cities through addressing urban challenges in energy, circularity, digitization, climate resilience, mobility, and food. (AMS Institute, 2023).

<sup>11</sup> An organization with the ambition to promote awareness among Amsterdam's youth and young adults about the importance of a rich, green, and inspiring environment by means of education materials. The organization emphasizes the interdependence of animals, plants, and people in creating a sustainable ecosystem (ANMEC, 2023).

organizations like Impact Hub<sup>12</sup> and Food Hub<sup>13</sup>. In the future, the Netwerkraad would like to expand even more to achieve a more diverse representation of the stakeholders of Amsterdam's food system. The Netwerkraad aims to congregate twice a year.

The Netwerkraad wants to be a space where actors can network and spruce about food-related issues. The Netwerkraad serves as an agenda-setting platform for streamlining which food-related topics the actors in its network work on. Policies are not drafted during its meetings. Additionally, the Netwerkraad serves as a medium for the further development of VAB itself. Since the Netwerkraad did not yet exist in 2013, it did not play a role during co-creation back then. Thus, the current main avenue through which the Netwerkraad is involved in co-creation is through its own twice-yearly meetings.

The **municipal FPC** was established one year ago. However, its development has since been at a standstill due to a shortage of budget. Therefore, Frank Bakkum refers to this FPC as "*lying dormant*" (personal communication, 25 November 2022). According to Annet van Hoorn, the municipality established this FPC because FPCs are 'trendy' (personal communication, 19 December 2022). Currently, the municipality is still debating how to shape this FPC and who to gather around this figurative and literal table to achieve an accurate representation of all relevant food system stakeholders. The municipality is also unsure which roles the future members of the municipal FPC should play within the council and what the role of the council itself should be. All in all, the existence of the municipal FPC is surrounded by uncertainties and unknowns.

Although the municipal FPC is lying dormant, several of the interviewees are already questioning its usefulness. Namely, they are unsure whether an FPC is something that can be established by the municipality, or should rather be a bit less liaised with the municipality. In the interviewees' opinion, it is quite difficult for a municipal FPC to achieve an accurate stakeholder representation because political factors might play a role in member selection (Interviewee C – FPC researcher, personal communication, November 2022; Ron van Echteld & Annet van Hoorn, personal communication, December 2022). Since the municipal FPC lies dormant, it currently does not contribute to food policy co-creation.

Summarizing the above, there are four FPCs present in Amsterdam, of which three are actually active. Voedsel Verbindt and FC MRA seek to be a connective entity. Voedsel Verbindt perceives this as being a 'linking' entity to streamline what issues the members of its network work on. FC MRA views the connective function as 'framing' or 'representing' to push CI issues onto the policy agenda. The Netwerkraad wants to be a 'networking space' wherein actors are encouraged to streamline which food-related issues they work on. The efforts of Voedsel Verbindt, FC MRA, and the Netwerkraad currently contribute to co-creative food policy development by agenda-setting.

### 6.1.2 Municipality

The main role of the municipality is to develop food policies and decide upon the employment of co-creation within this. Furthermore, the municipality provides funding to SLA and VAB. Also, the

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<sup>12</sup> An organization dedicated to assisting companies in becoming more sustainable and making a greater impact (Impact Hub, 2023).

<sup>13</sup> An organization committed to improving the food system through its Food Hub Academy training programs, transition projects for companies, communication materials, and events (Food Hub, 2023).

municipality wants to play a connecting role during co-creative food policy development. However, the municipality is still determining how to fill in the details of playing this role:

*“[food policy development] is a difficult subject and so is the search for which role we, as a municipality, can play in the collaboration with the very many parties that are busying themselves with it.”* (Frank Bakkum - municipality, personal communication, 25 November 2022).

One large task for the municipality in its role as connector is to connect the large businesses and enterprises (such as supermarkets) with the network consisting of food initiatives and entrepreneurs that want to effectuate food system change. In Frank Bakkum's perception, the municipality has been trying for the past eight years to set up this connection through brokering and has not yet succeeded.

Furthermore, the municipality is taking steps to build connections within its own organization by establishing a ‘core team food’. This team consists of municipal officers of a multitude of municipal departments that dedicate part of their working hours to updating the 2019 food policy together. The departments included in the core team are the department of Planning and Sustainability, the Public Health Service of Amsterdam (also called GGD Amsterdam), the department of Economic Affairs, the department of Work, Participation and Income, and the program team Social Basis (Frank Bakkum – municipality, personal communication, 25 November 2022; Judith Lips – municipality, personal communication, 13 January 2023; 8 February 2023). The core team congregates at least once a month (Judith Lips, personal communication, 8 February 2023). The core team currently contributes to food policy development through agenda-setting and policy formulation. Namely, it is determining whether the six action lines that are in the 2019 food policy are still valid, whether extra ones should be added, and whether they are still worded in the right way (Frank Bakkum, personal communication, 2022).

An additional role of the municipality is lobbying toward the national government. The municipality believes this to be necessary because some measures to alleviate food system issues cannot be taken at the local level. For instance, pushing supermarkets to take sustainability measures is perceived as necessary, yet extremely difficult. Therefore, this is something the national government should take the lead in (Frank Bakkum; Interviewee A; Interviewee B, personal communication, 2022). Thus, the municipality is contributing to the agenda-setting stage of the policy process at the national level.

Furthermore, the municipality is also the one that determines whether other actors can play a role in food policy development. For example, the municipality is the one that determines which parties to include in the municipal FPC. Regarding the determination of the roles of the four FPCs during food policy development, the municipality believes they all should have one, but does not have a clear view of how to organize this (yet):

*“All four of these FPCs have their own role, their own contribution and value, but how do they relate to each other and how can we ensure that they all work together and empower each other? I don’t have a fitting answer to that question at the moment.”* (Frank Bakkum – municipality, personal communication, 25 November 2022).

Frank Bakkum also highlights that the role that an FPC can play during food policy development is influenced by its formalization, which is a topic that will be discussed in **chapter 6.2**.

The municipality's motivation for co-creation is that it realizes that for food system changes, you need a multitude of different actors to become involved, as achieving change alone is impossible (see also the quote at the beginning of this chapter) (Frank Bakkum, personal communication, November 2022). Resultingly, it is planning on organizing a new network meeting in spring 2023 after the core team has finished updating the 2019 food policy. The goal of this meeting is to ask the attendees whether they can recognize themselves in the proposed action lines and will be able to work with these, rather than draw up a new food policy or new action lines together (Frank Bakkum, personal communication, November 2022). Thus, the municipality wants to 'verify' (the wording of) the updated food policy. Resultingly, attendees can contribute to policy formulation to some extent, but not to agenda-setting. This differs from the set-up of the 2013 network meeting in the sense that back then, five themes were defined, but the action lines were not yet. Also, the five themes recurred in the 2014 food policy, but were not the exact same as the action lines in that policy. After the upcoming network meeting, the municipality will potentially also contribute to food policy development by adopting the policy.

About the attendants of the upcoming network meeting, Frank Bakkum says those will include:

*"The parties that you just come across, the Netwerkraad VAB, the network of Voedsel Verbindt, those are the networks that we will be using and the parties that are already at the discussion table within these networks. Maybe we will discuss some themes or subjects specifically, and then you see that they are in fact separate networks. But these are the known parties that you run into when you are working on the food policy."* (personal communication, 25 November 2022).

One of the ways in which the municipality is involved in co-creation is the Academische Werkplaats Voedsel (*Academic Workplace Food*). This is a collaboration of the municipality and researchers and project managers of five different institutes: the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions (AMS Institute), Hogeschool van Amsterdam (HvA), Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA), Vrije Universiteit (VU), Wageningen University and Research (WUR) and the municipality (Frank Bakkum – municipality, personal communication, 25 November 2022; Openresearch Amsterdam, 2023). During the meetings of the Academische Werkplaats, attendants with a research-, policy-, education- or more practical background work together on findings solutions to food system challenges (Openresearch Amsterdam, 2023b). In addition to this Werkplaats Voedsel, the municipality participates in meetings with Voedsel Verbindt and FC MRA. Also, Zita Pels brings work visits to the CIs as a data collection activity during agenda-setting or policy formulation. Furthermore, the municipal officers that are part of the core team communicate frequently with their respective networks. These networks include citizens, initiatives and businesses.

In summary, the municipality plays a connecting role between the private and more alternative sector, is lobbying towards the national government for food policy-related issues, and determines whether other actors can play a role during food policy development. Furthermore, it has set up a core team food to update the 2019 food policy. The municipality plays a role during agenda-setting, policy formulation, and implementation.

### 6.1.3 CIs

From the interviews, it was gathered that **VAB** is still determining what role to play exactly during food policy development. This is because it is not the sole purpose of VAB to influence food policy

development; VAB also takes on other projects. For example, VAB is developing a route through Amsterdam from food outlet to food outlet under the theme of the protein transition. People can download this route via the website of VAB and discover shops that serve meat-free meals. VAB is still determining what its main focus point(s) should be between its different activities (Marit Beelaerts – VAB, personal communication, 1 December 2022). VAB’s goal for co-creative food policy development is that it wants to see which of the action lines of the food policy could be fitting for their program and would facilitate the development of VAB itself. As such, VAB itself does not (yet) contribute to co-creative food policy development.

**SFA** does not structurally play a role during food policy development in Amsterdam. Rather, individuals within SFA that are interested in food policy development get involved on their own accord. For instance, two individuals attended the 2013 network meeting, during which they thus contributed to co-creative food policy development by agenda-setting and policy formulation. The youth movement of SFA, the Slow Food Youth Network (**SFYN**), aims to structurally play a role in food policy development in Amsterdam. It aims to do so via attending the meetings of Voedsel Verbindt, with its goals being to represent the needs and interests of young adults and to provide other stakeholders with knowledge originating from that group. Thus, the activities of SFYN contribute to co-creative food policy development in an agenda-setting manner.

Next, **SLA** has a clear desire to play a role in Amsterdam’s food policy development. SLA aims to be an intermediary between UA initiatives and the municipality, answer UA-related policy questions and provide knowledge to the municipality. Furthermore, the initiative seeks to help the municipality find policy solutions to UA-problems, such as expiring land-lease contracts. SLA’s motivation for participating in food policy development is to incorporate the needs and interests of the UA projects it represents into the food policy. For instance, it wants the municipality to create a norm for a certain amount of square meters of UA land per inhabitant of Amsterdam. The main avenue through which SLA currently plays a role in food policy development is by attending food-related events and by having a say at the beginning of council meetings. Also, Zita Pels will bring a working visit to SLA somewhere in the near future, during which SLA hopes to influence agenda-setting and policy formulation. All in all, SLA’s activities contribute to co-creative food policy development by means of agenda-setting (providing knowledge) and policy formulation (installing a square meter norm).

Contrasting with this is the standpoint of **Guerilla Kitchen**, which does not wish to play a role in food policy development at all and is rarely ever in contact with the municipality. Elise Struyck of Guerilla Kitchen furthermore believes that the municipality is too bureaucratic and that she “*knows how things can go*” (personal communication, 13 December 2022). In her opinion, taking things up with the municipality always takes a lot of time and effort which often does not weigh up to the potential results (i.e. subsidies).

The roles of the municipality, FPCs, and CIs described in the present chapter are summarized in **table 4**, as well as the ways in which the efforts of the three stakeholder groups have contributed to food policy development. It has been shown that most of the actors that do play a role in co-creative food policy development do so during the agenda-setting stage. Yet, the municipality sees the upcoming network meeting as a policy formulation activity (‘verifying’ the food policy). This demonstrates that there is a disparity in the goals that actors have for co-creative food policy development.



Table 4: overview of the roles that the interviewed stakeholders play and how their activities contribute to co-creative food policy development

Actor	Role	Contribution to co-creative food policy development
Voedsel Verbindt	Connector ('linker') to streamline policies	Agenda-setting
FC MRA	Connector Representing the CIs	Agenda-setting, policy formulation
Netwerkraad VAB	Being a networking space to streamline working topics	Agenda-setting
Municipal FPC	?	-
Municipality	Developing food policy Connector Lobbyist Determining whether other actors can play a role	Agenda-setting, policy formulation, policy adoption
VAB	Unsure yet (how to combine playing a role during food policy development with other activities?)	-
SFA SFYN	- Representing young adults Providing knowledge	- Agenda-setting
SLA	Intermediary Knowledge provision Solution provision	Agenda-setting, policy formulation
Guerilla Kitchen	-	-

## 6.2 Ability

According to the conceptual framework, non-governmental actors' ability to participate in co-creation is determined by the required (financial) resources and skills, and perceived ability. For governmental actors, the ability to co-create is determined by the required resource contributions, organizational structures and procedures, and communication infrastructure. The organizational structures and procedures include the hierarchy of positions, the roles and responsibilities of each position, and the policies and procedures that guide policy-making. In this section, the findings regarding the factors that determine the ability of (non-)governmental actors to co-creatively develop food policy in Amsterdam are presented. For the non-governmental actors, three general factors that determine their ability to co-create are laid out first. Subsequently, actor-specific factors are delineated. In **section 6.2.2**, the ability of the municipality to co-create is discussed.

### 6.2.1 Non-governmental actors

In Amsterdam, the ability of non-governmental actors to co-create is firstly determined by their legal status and relatedly, their availability of financial resources. Non-formalized (non-legal) entities can apply for stable funding less easily than legal entities, which leaves non-legal entities dependent on project-specific subsidies. Without stable funding, building a network takes more time and money, as organizing meetings and events can be costly (i.e. hiring a meeting space, providing food and drinks, or hiring a paid speaker). Hiring an office worker to facilitate network building is also difficult without stable funding. Yet, having a network is of utmost importance, since *"80% of [communicating with other parties for food policy development] comes down to networking"* (Interviewee A - FPC actor,

personal communication, 1 December 2022). When the network of a stakeholder becomes substantial enough, it becomes impossible for the municipality to ignore the stakeholders' impact. Resultingly, the stakeholder is included in food policy development. Thus, the legal status of an organization influences the amount of financial resources it has, which influences the size of its network (and the speed with which it can build this network), which determines its ability to co-create.

Secondly, the ability of non-governmental actors to co-create is determined by whether the organization represents a niche (for instance, being the only non-governmental actor that works on UA-related issues, food waste-related issues, or health-related issues). Interviewees noted that the municipality has limited time to talk to all food-related stakeholders, and as a result, tends to select one actor per issue. Consequently, being the only actor working on an issue increases the likelihood of being a regular discussion partner for the municipality (Ron van Echteld & Annet van Hoorn – SLA, personal communication, 19 December 2022). In the conceptual framework, the necessity of representing a niche to participate in co-creation can be put under 'perceived ability'. Thirdly, the ability of all non-governmental actors to co-create is determined by the willingness of the municipality to co-create, which is also actors' perceived ability.

Below, several actor-specific factors that determine the ability to co-create are addressed. Also, it will be explained which non-governmental actors fall within which category of formalization (legal or non-legal).

**FC MRA** is a non-formalized organization that mainly runs on the non-renumerated efforts of two individuals. At the time of its establishment, FC MRA received funding from Rabobank and the provinces of Noord-Holland and Flevoland, but this funding has since ceased. Although this has meant that the council has been unable to run any big projects recently, it has decided to stay an initiative (rather than becoming for instance a foundation), because that means that it can express its views more freely (for instance about the Lutkemeerpolder) (Interviewee C – FPC researcher, personal communication, 23 November 2022). Furthermore, several of the actors that are involved in FC MRA are also in the network of Voedsel Verbindt and try to make their voice heard through that organization (which has stable funding, as will be discussed in **section 6.2.4**). Thus, for FC MRA, its non-formalization is the main factor determining its ability to co-create.

Just like FC MRA, **SLA** is a non-legal entity. However, it receives sufficient funding from the municipality to hire two office workers. Together with the efforts of non-renumerated board members, the office workers are building a network that consists of a large number of UA initiatives. In the opinion of Ron van Echteld, this also means that:

*“in some situations, you have to talk to already existing platform initiatives and say ‘you’d better join us, we already have a platform and otherwise the municipality will... you’d better let your efforts flow through us’. And it’s not about who is the largest or the best or I don’t know what, but it’s more about ‘who does what’ and if the municipality accepts SLA as a platform that they really want to do business with at some point in time, that’d be nice, we really want that as well. But in that case, it would be better for some smaller initiatives to join us.”* (personal communication, 19 December 2022).

This ties in with the previously mentioned importance of representing a niche; SLA is trying to be the sole organization that represents UA needs and interests, which will make the probability of becoming a discussion partner of the municipality larger.

In the absence of a large amount of financial resources, Ron van Echteld highlights some other mechanisms through which the chance of an actor to be included in food policy development can be enlarged. This includes having set up a successful project in the past, as this will augment the status that an organization has. This project thus serves as a resource. Secondly, non-formalized actors can frame certain topics (which the organization has specialized knowledge on) as meriting attention. This knowledge thus serves as a resource that influences the ability to co-create. Lastly, non-formalized actors can write manifests about specific issues (preferably together in collaboration with other actors) (personal communication, 19 December 2022). An example of the latter mechanism is that during the development of the 2019 food policy, SLA wrote a manifest together with thirty food-related actors, such as representatives of Voedsel Anders<sup>14</sup>, FC MRA, and Food Cabinet<sup>15</sup>. This manifest was sent to the municipality to show what the involved actors thought would be important to include in the food policy (thus, an agenda-setting activity). However, this attempt did not bear fruit, as the actors did not get a response to it (Annet van Hoorn, personal communication, 2022; Interviewee C, personal communication, 2022). Since the manifest did not yield a response, it cannot be considered a factor that determines the ability of SLA to co-create. In summary, the factors that determine the ability of SLA to co-create are its (financial) resources and perceived ability.

The ability of **VAB** to participate in food policy development mainly depends on the amount of time it has to do so in-between its other activities (or which activities it prioritizes). In principle, VAB (which is a legal entity) has enough financial resources. It is currently funded by De Gezonde Stad, which is in turn funded by all sorts of organizations, including the municipality. Although this means that VAB can hire office workers (of which it has four) and work on network expansion, it is aiming to become fully independent of this funding. This is because governmental funding (whether from the local, regional, or national government) is influenced by electoral cycles. Thus, for VAB, the ability to co-create is determined by its resources.

**Voedsel Verbindt** is a legal entity running on funding from several different private and public entities (see also **chapter 5**). By means of the funding, Voedsel Verbindt has recently been able to appoint a paid office worker and has subsequently expanded its network from five to 35 partners. Thus, formalization and relatedly, financial resources determine the ability of Voedsel Verbindt to co-create. The aforementioned can be summarized with the following statement of Interviewee C: *“[Voedsel Verbindt] has more power [than FC MRA] because they have money”* (personal communication, November 2022). However, just like for VAB, a cautionary note to the above is the potential instability of the governmental funding Voedsel Verbindt receives. About this, Interviewee B says: *“Voedsel Verbindt strives for [funding until] 2030 but there will be [provincial council] elections [in 2023 and 2027] so you always have to deal with that.”* (FPC actor, personal communication, 15 December 2022). In short, the financial resources of Voedsel Verbindt determine its ability to co-create.

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<sup>14</sup> Voedsel Anders is a network of citizens in the Netherlands and Flanders (Belgium) that aims to advance the movement towards a food (production) system that is based on values such as fair prices for farmers, healthy and high-quality food, nature-inclusive farming and short food chains (Voedsel Anders, 2023).

<sup>15</sup> Food Cabinet is a creative agency that designs campaigns, communication materials and public relations (PR) strategies to create awareness about and changes in behavior to make healthy, sustainable and fair food the norm (Food Cabinet, 2023).

The ability of **SFA** (which is a non-legal entity that furthermore does not receive any stable funding) to participate in co-creation depends on the willingness of individuals to put time and effort into this. Therefore, the ability of SFA is not discussed in the present section, but in **section 6.3.2**.

The non-legal entity **Guerilla Kitchen** does not play a role in food policy development. Hence, its ability to co-create is not discussed in the present section.

### 6.2.2 Municipality

The ability of municipal officers to work on (collaborative) food policy development depends on whether the topic is included in the coalition agreement. Thus, the municipality's organizational structure determines its ability to co-create. The higher positions (the coalition or the municipal board in its totality) determine what the lower positions (the municipal officers) will be working on. This is illustrated by Interviewee C, who, upon being asked whether political context matters for food policy development, says: *"Of course, that determines everything here in Amsterdam. Which parties constitute the [municipal] board. That's a mine field."* (FPC researcher, personal communication, 23 November 2022).

Summarizing **sections 6.2.1** and **6.2.2**, non-governmental actors' ability to co-create is determined by their formalization and relatedly, their financial resources. Also, non-governmental actors' perceived ability determines their ability to co-create, in the format of the willingness of the municipality and the extent to which non-governmental actors represent a niche. The ability of the municipality to co-create is determined by its organizational structure: if the coalition does not perceive food policy development as a priority, municipal officers are unable to work on the topic.

## 6.3 Willingness

According to the conceptual framework, for governmental actors, the willingness to co-create is determined by the required (financial) resources, attitudes, and incentives for co-creation. Examples of incentives are better-quality policies as a result of co-creation, the potential financial benefits, and the potential to increase citizens' commitment to alleviating food system issues. For non-governmental actors, the willingness to participate in co-creation is determined by the required (financial) resources, and non-governmental actors' characteristics and feelings of responsibility. Examples of characteristics are intrinsic values, beliefs, interests, education level, income, and age. In the section below, the factors that determine the willingness of (non-)governmental actors to co-creatively develop food policy in Amsterdam are presented.

### 6.3.1 Municipality

The willingness of the municipality to develop food policy (whether co-creatively or not) is firstly determined by the attitude of the coalition regarding the topic. The coalition's attitude determines whether 'food' is included in the coalition agreement, which in turn determines the ability of municipal officers to work on food policy development. In March 2022, a coalition was elected that overall has a positive attitude to 'food', a statement that can be supported by several examples. Firstly, the 2019 food policy is being updated. For this, a new program manager has been hired (Frank Bakkum, personal communication, 25 November 2022). Secondly, Frank Bakkum (who has been working on food-related issues for the municipality since 2002 among other tasks) is now able to work on food-related issues fulltime. Thirdly, the municipality has established a core team food.

In addition to attitudes, incentive also determines the willingness of the municipality, both to develop food policy *and* co-create. Namely, the municipality realizes that

*“there are a lot of different stakeholders in the network, a lot of parties that want change, but no one can do [this food transition] alone. It’s very much a subject that deserves attention from the municipality.”* (Frank Bakkum, personal communication, November 2022).

As ‘food’ is a subject that gets an increasing amount of attention in both the political and societal spheres, there is a growing incentive for the municipality to develop food policy. This attention to ‘food’ in societal spheres was exemplified by the fact that all of the interviewees mentioned that there are a lot of developments in the food domain. The municipality also has an incentive to co-create because it cannot achieve a food transition alone.

### 6.3.2 Non-governmental actors

For **FC MRA** and **SLA**, the effects of the most recent attempt at co-creation, the 2013 network meeting influences the willingness to co-create. Although neither of these two organizations existed at the time of the network meeting, they are composed of individuals that were present during the network meeting. Because the valuable time and efforts of the attendants of the meeting did not lead to any policy implementation, *“several [attendants of the network meeting] got so frustrated that they left the ‘food world’ completely. They decided that from then on, food was a taboo for them.”* (Interviewee C – FPC researcher, personal communication, 23 November 2022). Thus, the required resource contributions determine the willingness of FC MRA and SLA to co-create. Although the sentiment of disappointment about the wasted effort was widely shared among the attendees of the network meeting, it was difficult for them to take this up with the municipality. This was because many of the attendees had a relationship of dependency with the municipality (for instance regarding funding for the initiative they represented). The stakes were too high to break this relationship (Interviewee C – FPC researcher, personal communication, 2 February 2023). To prevent reinvoking these feelings of disappointment in future co-creation attempts, Interviewee C suggests the following solution:

*“That’s evident, the municipality should at some point provide resources.”*

Researcher: *“So money and administrative capacity?”*

*“Yes, if you develop a food policy then you should also allocate budget to it, otherwise you shouldn’t develop a food policy. That will only lead to feelings of frustration.”* (personal communication, 23 November 2022)

This statement adequately describes the previously mentioned relationship between the attitude of the coalition, the contents of the coalition agreement, and the non-allocation of budget to food policy development that precluded the implementation of the 2014 food policy.

The willingness of **VAB** to co-create is determined by the degree to which it prioritizes this co-creation above its other activities (see also **chapter 6.1.3**). This prioritization reflects the degree to which VAB feels responsible for participating in developing food policy versus other activities. This also relates to the resource contributions that VAB is willing to make; if it prioritizes other activities, it will dedicate less time to food policy development.

The willingness of **Voedsel Verbindt** to co-create is dictated by the main goal of the organization (which is to effectuate a robust, regional food system) and how it wishes to achieve this goal (by ‘linking’). As such, the determining factors for Voedsel Verbindt’s willingness are its characteristics (the values and beliefs of the organization) and feelings of responsibility.

Regarding the willingness of **SFA** to co-create, it was found that there is no collective willingness to co-create within the organization. Instead, certain individuals who happen to be members of SFA are interested in participating in food policy development. This was for instance the case during the 2013 network meeting, where several of such individuals attended the meeting on their own accord. As Mieke Snoek explains, if someone is interested in food policy development and has the necessary expertise, SFA will participate in food policy development and otherwise, it will not (personal communication, 30 November 2022). Thus, the characteristics of individuals determine SFA's willingness to co-create. Furthermore, the necessary resource contributions also play a role in the willingness of SFA-liased individuals to co-create. Namely, SFA does not remunerate the efforts of its board members. Therefore, SFA-liased individuals do not always have the time to participate in food policy development (Mieke Snoek, personal communication, 2022).

As mentioned in **chapter 6.1.3, Guerilla Kitchen** does not want to play an active role in food policy development. This unwillingness is due to the required resource contributions: communicating with the municipality takes a lot of time and potentially reaps limited results. However, Elise Struyck does say that she would potentially attend a network meeting in the future, signaling a certain degree of willingness to co-create (personal communication, 13 December 2022).

In summary, it was found that in Amsterdam, the willingness of the municipality is determined by the attitude of the coalition and the incentives for co-creation (in this case, the political and societal pressure and the realization that food system change cannot be achieved by one sole actor). The willingness of non-governmental actors is influenced by the required resource contributions, feelings of responsibility, and stakeholders' characteristics.

## 7. Discussion

To begin to fill the research gap on co-creation in the food policy domain, this thesis assessed stakeholders' perception of co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam, including their roles, willingness, and abilities during this process. Firstly in this chapter, four main findings are discussed (**section 7.1**). Thereafter, the suitability of the conceptual framework is examined (**section 7.2**), followed by a discussion of the methodological limitations of the present study (**section 7.3**). Next, several recommendations for the municipality of Amsterdam are proposed (**section 7.4**). In **section 7.5**, an avenue for future research on co-creation in the food policy domain is suggested.

### 7.1 Main findings

#### 7.1.1 Roles

From this study's findings, three discussion points regarding the roles that actors play during co-creative food policy development were identified. Firstly, it was observed that Voedsel Verbindt, FC MRA, the municipality, and SLA all aspire to play a connective role. This contrasts with the findings of Sillak et al. (2021), who suggest that different actor groups take on different roles. However, in this study, both governmental and non-governmental actors play a similar role of connecting. Nevertheless, the ways in which the different actors give substance to this connective role vary. The municipality seeks to be a connector within its own organization and between supermarket chains and more 'alternative' food actors. Voedsel Verbindt aims to be a 'linker', SLA seeks to act as an 'intermediary' and FC MRA views connecting more in relation to its role as representative of CIs.

For the **municipality**, the focus on connecting the supermarket chains and alternative food system actors appears to be based on letting them influence each other (resulting in food system change), rather than the municipality serving as an active intermediary. This facilitating connection-role has previously been reported by Kuhlmann (2017). She contends that the municipality facilitates the set-up of platforms or networks, but leaves the funding and goal- and content-determination up to other involved parties. This is because the municipality is highly motivated by economic concerns and does not want to continually provide funding to food initiatives. However, during the 2013 network meeting, this approach resulted in confusion for the attendees: they were unsure what was expected from them during co-creation, as well as what it would result in (Kuhlmann, 2017). A decade later, the municipality is still defining its facilitator role. This is disadvantageous since it has been reported that a collaborative process will be less successful in the absence of a clear division and definition of roles (Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021; Zerbian & de Luis Romero, 2021).

**SLA** takes on the role of 'intermediary' due to its goal of representing the needs and interests of UA projects and incorporating them into Amsterdam's food policy. As previously noted by Sillak et al. (2021), actors intentionally take on roles during co-creation to achieve goals. SLA must be in contact with UA projects to understand their goals and interests, as well as with the municipality to inform it of these needs and interests. Additionally, SLA needs to ensure that it is the sole actor performing this function (representing a niche).

For **FC MRA** and **Voedsel Verbindt**, the connecting role is in line with the findings of Burgan & Winne (2012), Scherb et al. (2012), and Zerbian & de Luis Romero (2021). These authors emphasize the necessity of performing a connective function, saying that the success of an FPC is determined by the breadth of its stakeholder base. This not only provides the FPC with a broad base of knowledge that can be used for policy-making or education purposes, but also ensures that a larger segment of the food community has a vested interest in the achievement of the FPC's goals (Burgan & Winne, 2012).

Thus, the motivation for taking on a connective role is similar to the goal-role relationship described for SLA.

Even though 'connecting' does not mean the same thing to the municipality, FC MRA, Voedsel Verbindt, and SLA, the presence of multiple connecting entities raises the question of whether there is a saturation point for connection and whether this point has not been reached already. At the connection-saturation point, more connecting entities will not lead to a more connected food policy field, nor more effective or efficient food policies. Rather, there are no niches available anymore for actors to work on, and organizations will start to compete for funding as well as actors they can add to their network, reducing their ability to co-create. Already, actors are active in multiple organizations at once. The further development of the Netwerkraad and the municipal FPC will probably accelerate the move toward a connection-saturation point. Therefore, the currently existing organizations should engage in dialogues to avoid this and potentially merge. For instance, since FC MRA, SLA, and Voedsel Verbindt have overlapping actors and are all non-governmental organizations, the three could become one.

Secondly, it was found that SFA and Guerilla Kitchen do not wish to play a role during food policy development in Amsterdam. This can be explained by the goals of the organizations, which determine the roles they play, as reported by Sillak et al. (2021).

**Guerilla Kitchen** is a grassroots organization at heart; it operates outside of the conventional capitalist system, aiming to distribute the food 'waste' it gets from large-scale food retailers to the citizens of Amsterdam for free. Furthermore, it is not profit-oriented and does not want to concern itself with judiciary issues. Thus, its goals do not necessitate playing a role in food policy development. **SFA's** goal is to raise awareness about food system issues, which is a goal one can pursue without engaging in food policy development. Resultingly, it does not play a role in food policy development.

Thirdly, this study found that non-governmental actors tend to play a more significant role during the agenda-setting stage of food policy development (if co-creation is even present, see the beginning of **chapter 6**). Yet, Hu (2015) and Sillak et al. (2021) contend that non-governmental actors can also play a role during the policy formulation stage. Additionally, the working definition for co-creation used in this thesis, "the multi-stakeholder collaboration to create strategies, agendas and actions to reach policy aims", encompasses more of the policy process than solely agenda-setting. Taking stock of the aforementioned, the perception of the presence or absence of co-creation fits with the finding that actors primarily play a role during agenda-setting. Namely, outside advocacy to influence agenda-setting is always possible, regardless of co-creation. Whether the municipality will incorporate the proposed agenda points into the policy is another question.

### *7.1.2 The ability of non-governmental actors to co-create*

In Amsterdam, the ability of non-governmental actors to participate in food policy development is determined by their formalization (being a legal entity or not) and relatedly, access to financial resources and their perceived ability to participate (which is determined by the willingness of the municipality to co-create and the degree to which the non-governmental actors represent a niche). Although the influence of formalization and access to financial resources on ability emerged strongly from the interviews, this has not been addressed in the available literature. Burgan & Winne (2012) note that the ability of FPCs to co-create depends on the councils' ties to the public sector. With stronger ties to the public sector, the council has more access to government staff and greater public accountability and legitimacy. Thus, Burgan & Winne do not touch upon the influence of



formalization and finances on ability. While Scherb et al. (2012) report upon the adverse effect of insufficient funding on FPCs' ability to participate in food policy development, they do not relate this insufficiency to the formalization of the FPC, but to the time that unpaid members of FPCs can dedicate to food policy development. For future studies on co-creation in the food policy domain, the present researcher thus recommends taking into account the impact of formalization on the ability to co-create.

### *7.1.3 The willingness of the municipality to co-create*

The willingness of the municipality of Amsterdam to collaboratively develop food policy is firstly determined by the attitude of the coalition. If the coalition perceives food as an issue meriting attention, it will be included in the coalition agreement. Secondly, the incentives for food policy development determine the willingness of the municipality to co-creatively develop food policy. These incentives are political or societal pressure and the realization that achieving food system change alone is impossible.

The adverse effect of a coalition's negative attitude pertaining 'food' on food policy development in Amsterdam has previously been highlighted by Allan (2019), Kuhlmann (2017), and Sauer (2022). While Halliday (2019) states that the presence of an FPC is a mechanism to 'push' the government to remain committed to food policy development between election cycles, this has not been the case with the FPCs in Amsterdam thus far. This can be attributed to the fact that FC MRA has insufficient funding to 'push' the municipality, Voedsel Verbindt was only formalized in and received more funding since 2019 (which is after the 2018 municipal elections) and the municipal FPC currently lies dormant. Furthermore, the latter FPCs' liaison with the municipality raises questions about whether it would be independent enough to perform a 'pushing' function. The ability of the Netwerkraad to push the municipality is also limited, considering that it mainly wants to be a 'networking space' for streamlining the topics that food-related actors work on.

Another mechanism to influence the willingness of the municipality is societal pressure. In 2011, societal pressure led to the development of the 2014 food policy (together with political pressure) (Kuhlmann, 2017). Yet, between 2014 and 2022, there was insufficient societal pressure for sustained political commitment to food policy development. As can be deduced from Interviewee C's quote in **section 6.3.2**, societal pressure might have been insufficient between 2014 and 2022 because the CI actors were wary of pushing the municipality, as they did not want to break their dependency relationship with the municipality. Only after the 2022 elections was 'food' regarded as an issue meriting attention again.

What can potentially change the trend of waxing and waning municipal dedication to food policy development is the existence of the core team food. The combined efforts of a multitude of municipal departments can lead to an integrated food policy. As mentioned in the IPES-Food report (2017) and by Cohen & Ilieva (2021), Mansfield & Mendes (2013), and Minotti et al. (2022), integrated food policies have a higher probability of achieving food system change. This is because there is a larger within-municipality actor-base that has a stake in the food policy achieving its goals, which can lead to the institutionalization of the food policy. This means that the principles of the food policy become embedded in the beliefs, rules, and norms of the municipality (Sibbing & Candel, 2021). As the aforementioned authors argue, "*institutionalization is a crucial step for bringing a food strategy beyond paper realities, as it entails the creation of an infrastructure and the conditions to address food issues in the long term*" (p.2).

#### 7.1.4 *The willingness of the non-governmental actors to co-create*

The willingness of non-governmental actors to co-create is determined by their feelings of responsibility and characteristics. Also, non-governmental actors' willingness to co-create is determined by the resource contributions that they have to make, as well as by the resource contributions that the municipality makes. When the municipality does not allocate budget to the implementation of the food policy, non-governmental actors are less willing to co-create, out of fear of their efforts being wasted. This is in line with the findings of Puerari et al. (2019), who state that *"Participants' motivation to engage relates to their goals, resources, and expectations of the value of the outcomes"* (p. 5-6). The effect of prior collaboration attempts on future ones has previously been described in the context of between-city collaborations by Sibbing et al. (2021) and in the context of the city of Amsterdam itself by Kuhlmann (2017).

#### 7.2 Suitability of the conceptual framework

To study co-creation in the food policy domain in Amsterdam, a conceptual framework was constructed based on co-creation contributions and other collaboration approaches. This framework consisted of the dimensions roles, willingness and ability. As highlighted by Puerari et al. (2018) and Voorberg et al. (2015), dimensions in co-creation frameworks are often interrelated. This was also the case in the present study. The willingness of the municipality to co-create is determined by the attitude of the coalition, which affects the ability of non-governmental actors to co-create. The ability of non-governmental actors is also influenced by their perceived ability: representing a niche to be the sole seeker of the attention of the municipality, since the municipality cannot make the required resource contributions to talk to actors that represent the same things. The available resources are determined by the attitude of the coalition. Thus, the dimensions that influence co-creation bounce back and forth between the willingness and ability of non-governmental and governmental actors; the two are interrelated. Moreover, one could argue that they are 'two sides of the same coin' (Voorberg et al., 2015), with the municipality deciding which side lands up.

Since it is the municipality that decides which side lands up, there are currently no reciprocal relationships between the subdimensions. That is to say, the willingness of the municipality only determines the ability of non-governmental actors, and not the other way around. A potential explanation for this is the limitation of this study's scope to food policy development as opposed to the whole policy process described by Knill & Tosun (2020). It could be that reciprocal relationships arise during policy implementation. A partial clue for this is based on the paper of Moragues-Faus (2020), who found that CIs think that the government heavily relies on their (non-remunerated) efforts for policy implementation. Also, Frank Bakkum stated that no one can instigate food system change alone, pointing to the possible emergence of more reciprocal relationships during later stages of the (co-creative) policy process.

The results of this study furthermore did not show an influence of communication infrastructure on the ability of governmental actors to co-create. This can be attributed to our highly modernized society in which co-creation formats can be set up over Zoom, Microsoft Teams or another interactive platform, if necessary or desired.

#### 7.3 Methodological limitations

Pertaining the methods employed in the present research, several limitations have been identified. These include sampling limitations, researcher bias, the validity of the interview guide and the (un-)included stakeholders. These limitations are discussed below.

A first sampling limitation was that several individuals belonged to more than one stakeholder group (i.e. were active in CIs and FPCs). However, according to Sharma (2017), individuals can only belong to one subgroup during quota sampling. Since this was not applicable to the present case, this study's external validity is reduced. The validity of the current research is furthermore reduced since the views of an individual are now ascribed to one stakeholder group, while they could also be ascribed to (any of) the other stakeholder group(s) they are involved in. Secondly, visibility may have led to selection bias. This is especially the case for the CIs, as CIs that are not on the VAB website were automatically excluded from the present research.

To conduct a qualitative study that aims to assess perceptions, extensive engagement with participants and the research context is necessary (Fossey et al., 2002). This is especially true for a case study, since it entails the collection of context-specific data. However, the familiarization of the researcher with the context leads to the formation of preconceptions. These preconceptions can furthermore be generated during face-to-face interviews. This was sought to minimize by establishing a professional relationship between the researcher and the participants. Nevertheless, it cannot be guaranteed that researcher bias was not present. This may have had an influence on the interpretation of the generated data (Fossey et al., 2002; Sacred Heart University, 2006). Future research could employ data triangulation to reduce this influence.

Bias can furthermore have been generated due to the position of the researcher: an outsider to the highly politicized field of food policy development (Berger, 2015; Fossey et al., 2002). This outsider position may have generated incomplete results, since several of the interviewees highlighted that they had to be a bit careful with their answers or choice of words. This indicates that the researcher entered a delicate field. Due to this delicacy, some of the original questions in the interview guide were phrased too directly. Therefore, the researcher had to rephrase them ad-hoc to fit the situation. However, this rephrasing may have reduced the reliability of the research (not all of the participants were asked the exact same questions), as well as the validity of the research (some of the rephrased questions led to answers that were a little beside the point). In future research, an effort should be made to phrase the interview questions even more neutrally.

A next methodological limitation is the limited number of stakeholder groups included in the present research. While there are many more stakeholders of a food policy, such as supermarket chains, farmers, and academic institutes, they were not included in this study. Excluding the aforementioned stakeholder groups may have reduced the representativeness and generalizability of the present study because of a less holistic view on the co-creation of food policy in Amsterdam. Yet, these stakeholder groups were excluded from this study for the following reasons.

Firstly, supermarket chains are extremely hard to reach out to. The position of the researcher (being a non-graduated student) is not facilitative in this. Following the criteria for including the other stakeholder groups (the reported increased inclusion of FPCs and CIs in food policy-making) would furthermore not have led to the inclusion of supermarket chains.

The exclusion of farmers from the present research was also based on a rationale of inaccessibility, as farmers often have limited time for interviews.

Academia was not included in the present research because of their perceived less apparent role in food policy development. However, this perception was incorrect, considering the existence of the *Academische Werkplaats Voedsel*. Therefore, in future food policy co-creation research in Amsterdam, the inclusion of academia is recommended. While one can argue that the world of academics has to some extent been included in the present research in the form of the FPC

researchers, a recommendation for future research is to include researchers from an institute such as the AMS Institute, HvA, UvA or VU.

#### 7.4 Recommendations for the municipality

Since it is the role of the municipality to initiate co-creation, both according to theory (see for instance Puerari et al. (2018) and Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021)) and in the current case, several recommendations for the municipality have been drafted. These serve to improve both the process, as well as the outcomes of future co-creation efforts. Underpinning all of these recommendations is the advice to reiterate co-creation. The reasoning for this is provided by Skelcher & Torfing (2010), who contend that *“Participation must be reiterated over time and supported by institutional rules, norms, and procedures in order to have a positive effect on the participants. [...] Only institutional forms of participation with a certain extension in time and space can do the trick.”* (p. 79).

A first recommendation for the municipality is to start the upcoming network meeting with the attendees (including the municipality) stating which goals they seek to achieve with co-creation. These goals are currently quite dispersed. For instance, SLA wants to incorporate the needs and interests of UA projects into the food policy (agenda-setting), whereas the municipality sees the upcoming network meeting as a means of ‘verifying’ the updated food policy (policy-formulation). This municipal goal for collaboration has previously been described by Eckerd & Heidelberg (2020). The necessity of streamlining goals becomes apparent from the findings of Moragues-Faus (2020), Sibbing et al. (2021) and Webb et al. (1998), who state that co-creation processes are more successful when actors have similar goals or successfully reach consensus on a common goal as well as how to achieve this goal, especially if the co-creation involves a wide variety of stakeholders. Since co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam will ideally involve a wide variety of stakeholders, the imperative for the alignment of goals is clear.

Yet, during the reaching of consensus, the municipality should be cautious of exerting too much pressure. Indeed, within the context of interactive governance arenas such as FPCs and co-creation processes, Moragues-Faus (2020) warns against consensual modes of decision-making *“led by dominant political or economic interests”* (p.76). Therefore, a second recommendation for the municipality is to prevent consensual decision-making, which can be done in three ways. Firstly, the municipality should ensure that co-creative food policy development happens in a ‘safe enough space’. In such a space, actors trust each other, are willing to view problems and solutions in a different light, exhibit mutual recognition, understand each other’s needs and capacities and feel ‘safe enough’ to express opposing opinions (Sibbing et al., 2022; Vara-Sánchez et al., 2021). Thirdly, an impartial and neutral ‘co-creation coach’ could be appointed to guide the co-creation process (including the evaluation moments). This coach could be a food policy researcher that is not affiliated with any CI or FPC to avoid any potential conflicts of interest, and who furthermore has in-depth knowledge of food policy co-creation theory and best practices. He or she can ensure that there is a wide variety of stakeholders included in the co-creation process that has equal opportunities to participate and express their views. Related to the appointing of a co-creation coach is to incorporate evaluation moments into the co-creation process, which can be guided by the coach (Zerbian & de Luis Romero, 2021).

A third recommendation for the municipality is to determine whether the outcomes of the upcoming network meeting will be binding. If the outcomes are not binding, attendees should be informed of this to prevent disappointments and the loss of trust.

A last recommendation for the municipality is to ensure sustained commitment to food policy development. This can be done by further institutionalizing the core team food, implementing the new food policy before the 2026 elections, and giving longer-term contracts to the municipal officers working on the topic of food. Additionally, the municipality could give FC MRA and/or Voedsel Verbindt (depending on whether they merge or not, see above) a larger role in food policy development, as it has been shown that FPCs can push local governments to remain committed to the issue (Halliday, 2019). While there might be political and professional reluctance to this, adopting this suggestion could position Amsterdam as a leading example for other European cities, enhancing its reputation as an influential city.

### 7.5 Future research

To further advance research on co-creation in the food policy domain, the emergence of reciprocal relationships between the sub-dimensions of the conceptual framework in later stages of the policy process (such as implementation and evaluation) could be studied. As described by Nabatchi et al. (2017) and Sillak et al. (2021), co-creation can indeed be employed (and thus studied) during the implementation and evaluation phase of the policy process. A longitudinal study could be set up to assess co-creation in these two last stages or throughout the entire policy process. However, given the six-month time frame of a master thesis, an ex-post study might be more feasible. In that case, it can only be conducted in a few years' time, as otherwise, the implementation and evaluation stage will not have taken place yet. A further complication is a potential switch in political context after the 2026 elections. In case the budget for food policy development is cut and policy development halted, the study cannot be conducted.

However, conducting co-creation research in the food policy domain in Amsterdam in the next few years might not be feasible. Collaborative food policy development is still in its early stages in cities, and Amsterdam is no exception. The municipality still initiates and manages the co-creation process and power relations have not yet been reconstructed to enable other actors to initiate co-creation. This is also noted by Interviewee C, who says:

*"I think your research is still a bit too early. If you look back in ten years, you might find some traces of co-creation. But for the municipal food policy, I don't see anything of that at all. The only attempt we had there was in 2013."* (FPC researcher, personal communication, 23 November 2022)

Thus, co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam might be too premature to study in the upcoming years.

## 8. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to assess how stakeholders perceive co-creative food policy development in Amsterdam. It was found that stakeholders perceive this co-creation differently. Whereas in the opinion of the municipality, food policy development in Amsterdam is very much about collaborating, other actors do not have a similarly optimistic perception of this. The data showed that non-governmental actors' ability to co-create is determined by the formalization or their organization and relatedly, access to financial resources. Furthermore, non-governmental actors' ability to co-create is determined by their perceived ability to do so (the governmental willingness and the extent to which non-governmental actors represent a niche).

Non-governmental actors' willingness is determined by the required resource contributions, feelings of responsibility, and characteristics.

Furthermore, this study revealed that FC MRA, Voedsel Verbindt, the municipality, and SLA all aim to play a connective role during food policy development. However, the perceptions of what this role of 'connecting' means, differ. Connecting can allude to 'linking' (Voedsel Verbindt), 'mediating' (SLA), 'representing' (Voedsel Verbindt), or connecting the private and more alternative sector. The presence of four connecting entities raises the question of the existence of a 'connection-saturation point' wherein there are no niches to work on anymore and connecting entities start to compete for funding as well as actors to add to their network.

The municipal elections are the primary factor determining the employment of co-creation for food policy development in Amsterdam. The attitude of the coalition towards food as being an issue meriting attention determines the willingness of the municipality to (co-creatively) develop food policy. Due to the organizational structure of the municipality, this attitude of the coalition determines whether municipal officers are able to work on food policy development. Further determinants of the willingness of the municipality to co-create are political and societal pressure and the necessity of collaboration for effective food system challenge alleviation. The coalition's attitude towards food policy explains why food policy development has waxed and waned in Amsterdam between 2010 and 2023. The aforementioned also shows that the dimensions of co-creation as shown in the conceptual framework are interrelated. The existence of two FPCs has not been able to combat this waxing and waning. However, the newly established core team food could potentially promote sustained commitment to co-creative food policy development.

Since the municipality is the one to initiate co-creation, four suggestions for the municipality are proposed. Firstly, the municipality should start the upcoming network meeting with the attendees (including the municipality) stating which goals they wish to achieve with co-creation. This allows for easier alignment of both goals and values, increasing the potential for co-creation to generate beneficial outcomes. Secondly, the municipality should avoid consensual modes of decision-making by establishing a 'safe enough space', appointing a co-creation coach, and incorporating evaluation moments into the co-creation process. Thirdly, the municipality should determine whether the outcomes of co-creation will be binding, and communicate the decision to the co-creation participants. Lastly, the municipality should ensure continued political commitment to food policy development.

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## Appendix 1: Interview Guides English

### Introduction

Thank you for letting me interview you! If you wish to stop or not answer a question, you can do so at any time. Can you sign the informed consent form?

For this research, I am focusing on the contribution of co-creation to food policy development in Amsterdam. Co-creation is a process whereby stakeholders collaborate to create policy agendas, documents and to reach policy aims. Policy development, in my research, is a stage in the making of a policy where it is being decided what the aims of the policy are, what is going to be included in it and what is not.

### Food policy council actors

You are being interviewed because of your affiliation with the Food Council MRA / stichting Voedsel Verbindt.

### Roles

- Can you explain something about the FPC in general?
- What is your position within the FPC?
- How does (has) the FPC participate(d) in food policy development in Amsterdam?
- What is the council's motivation for participation?
- What is the *role* of the FPC in food policy development in Amsterdam?
- Has this role changed over time?

### (Roles of) other actors

- What other actors are important to include in food policy development in general? Why?
  - o Marginalized groups
  - o Creative solutions
  - o Multiple sectors
- Which other actors are participating in the development of food policy in Amsterdam?
  - o Municipality
  - o Civil society organizations
- What roles do these actors play in food policy development?
- Have these roles changed over time?
- Would you want to see those roles change?
- What are the benefits of the fact that these other actors participate in food policy development? / What do these other actors bring to the table during food policy development? / what is the unique added value of involving these other actors?

### Inclusive participation

- In your opinion, do these aforementioned other actors include all of the actors that *should* be involved in food policy development? Why (not)? And which ones are missing?
  - o Marginalized groups
- Are these uninvolved actors making an effort to participate in food policy development? Why (not)?
- How could the municipality ensure that these actors participate in food policy development in the future? Do you believe it to be the task of the municipality to ensure that these actors participate in the future?

### Communication + collaboration

- How does the FPC communicate with the municipality (for food policy development)?
- How does the FPC cooperate/collaborate/communicate with other actors that (do not) participate in food policy development in Amsterdam?

### Opportunities

- In your opinion, what is the added value of the participation of the FPC specifically in food policy development in Amsterdam?
  - o What were specific issues/perspectives that you brought to the table that no one else did?
- What have been the outcomes of the participatory food policy development in Amsterdam thus far?
  - o Engagement
  - o Empowerment
  - o Legitimacy
- What could be possible additional outcomes in the future?
  - o What is needed to reach these?

### Challenges

- What challenges has the FPC experienced during participation in the food policy development process?
  - o Conflicting opinions
  - o Funding
  - o Time
  - o Skills
- (LR): What role does Amsterdam's political context play in the development of food policy?
  - o Does it also play a role in to what extent participation in food policy development is allowed?
- (LR) In your opinion, do certain actors have more influence in the process of developing Amsterdam's food policy? Which ones? Why? What kind of 'extra power' do they have?

Thank you for letting me interview you! Do you know any other relevant participants in the development of Amsterdam's food policy I could interview?

### Municipal officer

You are being interviewed because of your connection to the municipality of Amsterdam, for whom you are [function].

### Roles

- Am I right about your function? Could you elaborate on this?
- Can you explain something about the past and current viewpoint/stance of the municipality of Amsterdam regarding food policy development?
  - o Participatory process
- What is the role of the municipality in food policy development in Amsterdam? Has this role changed over time?
- Is the municipality currently developing a food policy?
  - o If yes, are participatory processes employed?
  - o If yes, what are its innovative aspects?
- According to you, what is the difference between the food vision and the food strategy?

### **(Roles of) other actors**

- What other actors are important to include in food policy development in general? Why?
  - o Marginalized groups
  - o Creative solutions
  - o Multiple sectors
- Which other actors are participating in the development of food policy in Amsterdam?
  - o Food policy councils
  - o Civil society organizations
- What roles do these actors play in food policy development?
- Have these roles changed over time?
- Would the municipality want to see these roles change (even more)?
- What is the motivation (objective) for initiating participatory food policy development?
- What are the benefits of the fact that these other actors participate in food policy development? / What do these other actors bring to the table during food policy development? / what is the unique added value of involving these other actors?

### **Inclusive participation**

- In your opinion, do these aforementioned other actors include all of the actors that *should* be involved in food policy development? Why (not)? And which ones are missing?
  - o Marginalized groups
- Are these unincluded actors making an effort to participate in food policy development? Why (not)?

### **Communication + collaboration**

- How does the municipality communicate with other actors regarding food policy development?
- How is the municipality stimulating the participation of other actors in food policy development?
  - o Financial stimulation
  - o Reaching out to them via ...
- How does the municipality cooperate/collaborate with other actors that (do not) participate in food policy development in Amsterdam?
- In what way does the FPC influence food policy development in Amsterdam?

### **Opportunities**

- (LR) In your opinion, what opportunities are generated by the fact that the municipality has developed food policies?
- What are the opportunities generated by participatory food policy development in Amsterdam in general?
- What are the opportunities generated by the fact that the municipality itself participates in the participatory processes/meetings?
- What have been the outcomes of the participatory food policy development in Amsterdam thus far?
  - o Engagement
  - o Empowerment
  - o Legitimacy
- What could be possible additional outcomes in the future?

- What is needed to reach these?

### Challenges

- What challenges has the municipality experienced regarding food policy development in general?
  - Budget
  - Administrative boundaries
  - Time
  - Technical boundaries
  - Insufficient skills or willingness/dedication of municipal officers
  - Internal constraints
  - Institutional arrangements
- What challenges has the municipality experienced regarding the initiation of a participatory policy development process?
  - Other parties are not enthusiastic or stop cooperating
  - Conflicting opinions
- (LR): What role does Amsterdam's political context play in the development of food policy?
  - Does it also play a role in to what extent participation in food policy development is allowed?
- In your opinion, do certain actors have more influence in the process of developing Amsterdam's food policy? Which ones? Why? What kind of 'extra power' do they have?

Thank you for letting me interview you! Do you know any other relevant participants in the development of Amsterdam's food policy I could interview?

Do you know if there are any internships available within the municipality?

### Civil society actor

You are being interviewed because you/your initiative is involved in food policy development in Amsterdam.

### Roles

- Can you explain something about the civil society initiative you represent? What is its goal?
- What is your position within the initiative?
- How does (has) the initiative participate(d) in food policy development in Amsterdam?
- What is/was the motivation for participation?
- (LR) How did your initiative get involved in food policy development in Amsterdam?
  - Invited by the municipality
- What was your experience/conception of the initiative's participation in food policy development in Amsterdam?
  - Satisfied?
- What is the *role* of the initiative in food policy development in Amsterdam?
- Has this role changed over time?

### (Roles of) other actors

- What other actors are important to include in food policy development in general? Why?
  - Marginalized groups
  - Creative solutions
  - Multiple sectors

- Which other actors are participating in the development of food policy in Amsterdam?
  - o Municipality
  - o FPC
- What roles do these actors play in food policy development? Have these roles changed over time?
- Have these roles changed over time?
- Would you want to see those roles change?
- What are the benefits of the fact that these other actors participate in food policy development? / What do these other actors bring to the table during food policy development? / what is the unique added value of involving these other actors?

### **Inclusive participation**

- In your opinion, do these aforementioned other actors include all of the actors that *should* be involved in food policy development? Why (not)? And which ones are missing?
  - o Marginalized groups
- Are these uninvolved actors making an effort to participate in food policy development? Why (not)?
- How could the municipality ensure that these actors participate in food policy development in the future? Do you believe it to be the task of the municipality to ensure that these actors participate in the future?

### **Communication + collaboration**

- How does your initiative communicate with the municipality (for food policy development)?
- How does your initiative cooperate/collaborate with other actors that (do not) participate in food policy development in Amsterdam?

### **Opportunities**

- In your opinion, what is the added value of the participation of the FPC specifically in food policy development in Amsterdam?
  - o What were specific issues/perspectives that you brought to the table that no one else did?
- What have been the outcomes of the participatory food policy development in Amsterdam thus far?
  - o Engagement
  - o Empowerment
  - o Legitimacy
- Have there been outcomes specifically for your initiative?
- What could be possible additional outcomes in the future?
  - o What is needed to reach these?

### **Challenges**

- What challenges has your initiative experienced regarding its participation in food policy development in Amsterdam?
  - o Funding
  - o Time
  - o Skills
  - o Rigid boundaries (no creativity allowed)
  - o Competition with other initiatives (for funding/attention from the municipality)

- Conflicting opinions
- (LR): What role does Amsterdam's political context play in the development of food policy?
  - Does it also play a role in to what extent participation in food policy development is allowed?
- (LR) In your opinion, do certain actors have more influence in the process of developing Amsterdam's food policy? Which ones? Why? What kind of 'extra power' do they have?

Thank you for letting me interview you! Do you know any other relevant participants in the development of Amsterdam's food policy I could interview?

## Appendix 2: Interview Guides Dutch

### Introductie

Allereerst heel erg bedankt dat u dit interview wilt geven. Indien u bepaalde vragen niet wilt beantwoorden, kunt u dit altijd aangeven. Hetzelfde geldt voor als u wilt stoppen met het interview. Heeft u de bereidverklaring gelezen en ondertekend?

Zoals u heeft kunnen lezen in de verklaring, gaat dit onderzoek over de bijdrage van co-creatie aan de ontwikkeling van het Amsterdamse voedselbeleid tussen 2013 en 2022.

Ik zal even twee termen uitleggen.

Co-creatie is een proces waarbij verschillende stakeholders samenwerken om beleidsagenda's en documenten op te stellen, om zo beleidsdoelstellingen te behalen.

Beleidsontwikkeling is het proces waarbij besloten wordt wat de beleidsdoelen zijn, wat er in het beleid gezegd gaat worden, en wat er niet in het beleid zal komen.

### Voedselraadmedewerker

Ik heb u benaderd voor een interview vanuit uw positie binnen de Food Council MRA / stichting Voedsel Verbindt. Laten we beginnen.

### Rollen

- Zou u wat kunnen vertellen over de Food Council MRA/ stichting Voedsel Verbindt in het algemeen?
  - o Ontstaan
  - o Betrokken actoren
- En wat is uw functie daarbinnen?
- Op welke manieren heeft de Food Council MRA/ stichting Voedsel Verbindt meegedaan aan het ontwikkelen van het voedselbeleid in Amsterdam?
  - o Op welke manieren doet de Food Council MRA/ stichting Voedsel Verbindt momenteel mee?
- Wat was/is de motivatie voor het meedoen aan het ontwikkelen van het voedselbeleid?
- Wat zou u zeggen dat de rol van de Food Council MRA/ stichting Voedsel Verbindt was tijdens de beleidsontwikkeling?
  - o Kennisdeler
  - o Verbinder van partijen
  - o Adviesgever
- Is deze rol veranderd gedurende de jaren dat de Food Council MRA/ stichting Voedsel Verbindt actief is/bestaat?

### (Rollen van) andere actoren

- Wie zou u zeggen dat andere belangrijke actoren zijn om te betrekken bij het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid in het algemeen? Waarom deze specifieke actoren?
  - o Gemarginaliseerde groepen
  - o Creatieve oplossingen
  - o Meerdere sectoren
- Welke actoren zijn er daadwerkelijk betrokken (geweest) bij het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid? (Waarom zijn ze niet meer betrokken?)
  - o Gemeente
  - o Burgerinitiatieven
- Welke rol spelen deze actoren in de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid?
- Zijn deze rollen in de loop der jaren veranderd?



- Zou u deze rollen verder zien willen veranderen?
- (LR) Wat was volgens u de waarde van de deelname van deze andere actoren? Wat hadden deze actoren te bieden tijdens het co-creatieproces?

### **Inclusieve participatie**

- De actoren die u net genoemd heeft hebben dus meegedaan aan de ontwikkeling van het voedselbeleid. Zijn er nog meer actoren waarvan u het wél belangrijk vindt dat ze mee zouden doen, maar die dat momenteel nog niet doen? Welke zijn dit?
  - o Gemarginaliseerde groepen
- Wat zorgt er volgens u voor dat ze momenteel nog niet mee doen in de ontwikkeling van het voedselbeleid?
  - o Taalbarrière
  - o Gemeente beschouwt ze niet als legitiem/belangrijk
  - o Tijd/geld
- Hoe zou de gemeente er voor kunnen zorgen dat deze actoren wél mee gaan/kunnen doen aan de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid? ((LR) Vindt u het de taak van de gemeente om ze erbij te betrekken of moeten ze dit zelf doen?)

### **Communicatie en samenwerking**

- Via welke kanalen/ op welke manieren communiceert de Food Council MRA/ stichting Voedsel Verbindt met de gemeente (voor het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid)?
- Via welke kanalen/ op welke manieren communiceert de Food Council MRA/ stichting Voedsel Verbindt met andere actoren die (nog niet) meedoen aan de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid?
- (LR) Hoe werkt de Food Council MRA/ stichting Voedsel Verbindt samen met deze partijen?

### **Mogelijkheden/kansen/waardecreeatie**

- Wat zijn naar uw idee de mogelijkheden/waarde die de Food Council MRA/ stichting Voedsel Verbindt creëert met de deelname aan beleidsontwikkeling in Amsterdam / Wat waren bijvoorbeeld perspectieven waar de Food Council MRA/ stichting Voedsel Verbindt op wees die anderen nog niet benoemd hadden?
  - o Kennis
  - o Verbinding met andere stakeholders
  - o Politieke inzet
- (LR) Wat zijn tot nu toe de resultaten van de co-creatie van voedselbeleid in Amsterdam?
  - o Empowerment
  - o Legitimiteit van andere partijen
  - o Meer maatschappij-brede inzet voor voedselgerelateerde problemen en oplossingen
- (LR) Welke resultaten van co-creatie zou u in de toekomst graag willen zien?
  - o Wat is er voor nodig om dit te realiseren?

### **Uitdagingen/obstakels/moeilijkheden**

- Welke obstakels heeft de Food Council MRA/ stichting Voedsel Verbindt ervaren tijdens de deelname aan het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid?
  - o Tegenstrijdige meningen
  - o Financiën
  - o Tijd
  - o Skills

- (LR): Welke rol speelt Amsterdam's politieke context in de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid?
  - o Speelt de politieke context ook een rol in de mate waarin participatie aan de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid wordt bemoedigd?
- (LR): Zijn er naar uw idee partijen die meer invloed hebben tijdens participatieve beleidsontwikkelingsprocessen? Welke partijen zijn dit? Waarom hebben zij meer invloed?

Bedankt dat ik u mocht interviewen! Weet u nog andere personen die mogelijk relevant zouden zijn voor mijn onderzoek?

### Gemeentemedewerker

Ik heb u benaderd voor een interview vanuit uw positie binnen de gemeente als [functie]. Laten we beginnen.

#### Rollen

- Heb ik uw functie juist omschreven? Zo nee, zou u kunnen uitleggen wat uw functie inhoudt?
- Zou u wat kunnen vertellen over de houding van de gemeente wat betreft de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid
  - o Participatie van burgers
- Wat is de rol van de gemeente in voedselbeleidsontwikkeling?
- Is deze rol gedurende de jaren veranderd?
- Is de gemeente momenteel bezig met het ontwikkelen van een nieuw voedselbeleid?
  - o Zo ja, spelen participatieve processen een rol?
  - o Zo ja, wat is er 'nieuw' in dit nieuwe beleid?
- Wat is naar uw mening het verschil tussen een/de voedselvisie en een/de voedselstrategie?
- 

#### (Rollen van) andere actoren

- Wie zou u zeggen dat andere belangrijke actoren zijn om te betrekken bij het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid in het algemeen? Waarom deze specifieke actoren?
  - o Gemarginaliseerde groepen
  - o Creatieve oplossingen
  - o Meerdere sectoren
- Welke actoren zijn er daadwerkelijk betrokken (geweest) bij het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid? (Waarom zijn ze niet meer betrokken?)
  - o Gemeente
  - o Burgerinitiatieven
- Welke rol spelen deze actoren in de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid?
- Zijn deze rollen in de loop der jaren veranderd?
- Zou de gemeente deze rollen verder zien willen veranderen?
- Wat was volgens u de waarde van de deelname van deze andere actoren? Wat hadden deze actoren te bieden tijdens het co-creatieproces?
- Wat was de motivatie van de gemeente voor het organiseren van participatieve processen voor het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid?

#### Inclusieve participatie

- De actoren die u net genoemd heeft hebben dus meegedaan aan de ontwikkeling van het voedselbeleid. Zijn er nog meer actoren waarvan u het wél belangrijk vindt dat ze mee zouden doen, maar die dat momenteel nog niet doen? Welke zijn dit?
  - o Gemarginaliseerde groepen

- Wat zorgt er volgens u voor dat ze momenteel nog niet mee doen in de ontwikkeling van het voedselbeleid?
  - o Taalbarrière
  - o Tijd/geld

### **Communicatie en samenwerking**

- Via welke kanalen/ op welke manieren communiceert de gemeente met andere partijen voor het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid?
- Op welke manieren stimuleert de gemeente de participatie van actoren aan de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid?
  - o Financiële stimuli
  - o Ze contacteren via ...
- Op welke manier beïnvloedt de FPC de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid in Amsterdam?

### **Mogelijkheden/kansen/waardecreeatie**

- (LR) Wat is naar uw mening de toegevoegde waarde van het feit dat de gemeente voedselbeleid heeft ontwikkeld?
- Wat zijn tot nu toe de kansen die er ontstaan zijn doordat er participatieve processen zijn rondom voedselbeleidsontwikkeling?
- Wat zijn naar uw idee de mogelijkheden/waarde die de gemeente creëert met de deelname aan beleidsontwikkeling in Amsterdam / Wat waren bijvoorbeeld perspectieven waar de gemeente op wees die anderen nog niet benoemd hadden?
  - o Verminderen van politieke weerstand
  - o Enthousiasmeren
  - o Samenwerkingen met andere overheidsniveaus opzetten
- Wat zijn tot nu toe de resultaten van de co-creatie van voedselbeleid in Amsterdam?
  - o Empowerment
  - o Legitimiteit van andere partijen
  - o Meer maatschappij-brede inzet voor voedselgerelateerde problemen en oplossingen
- Welke resultaten van co-creatie zou u in de toekomst graag willen zien?
  - o Wat is er voor nodig om dit te realiseren?

### **Uitdagingen/obstakels/moeilijkheden**

- Welke obstakels heeft de gemeente zelf ervaren tijdens de deelname aan/het opzetten van participatieve processen rondom het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid?
  - o Financiën
  - o Administratieve moeilijkheden
  - o Tijd
  - o Technische moeilijkheden
  - o Skills / onwelwillendheid vanuit de medewerkers
  - o Institutionele moeilijkheden
- Welke obstakels heeft de gemeente ervaren met betrekking tot het opzetten van een participatief proces
  - o Andere partijen zijn niet enthousiast of stoppen met meedoen
  - o Tegenstrijdige meningen
- (LR): Welke rol speelt Amsterdams politieke context in de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid?
  - o Speelt de politieke context ook een rol in de mate waarin participatie aan de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid wordt bemoedigd?

- (LR): Zijn er naar uw idee partijen die meer invloed hebben tijdens participatieve beleidsontwikkelingsprocessen? Welke partijen zijn dit? Waarom hebben zij meer invloed?

Bedankt dat ik u mocht interviewen! Weet u nog andere personen die mogelijk relevant zouden zijn voor mijn onderzoek? Heeft u een stageplek?

### Burgerinitiatief

Ik heb u benaderd voor een interview vanwege uw verbondenheid met [initiatief X] en de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid in Amsterdam. Laten we beginnen.

#### Rollen

- Zou u wat kunnen vertellen over het initiatief in het algemeen? Wat is het doel van het initiatief?
- En wat is uw positie binnen het initiatief?
- Op welke manieren heeft het initiatief meegedaan aan het ontwikkelen van het voedselbeleid in Amsterdam?
- Wat was de motivatie voor het meedoen aan het ontwikkelen van het voedselbeleid?
- (LR) Hoe is het initiatief betrokken geraakt bij het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid in Amsterdam?
  - o Uitgenodigd door de gemeente
- Wat is uw algemene ervaring van het meedoen aan het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid?
  - o Tevreden?
- Wat zou u zeggen dat de rol van het initiatief was tijdens de beleidsontwikkeling?
  - o Innovatieve oplossingen
  - o Kennisdeler
  - o Verbinder van partijen
  - o Awareness creëren
- Is deze rol veranderd gedurende de jaren dat het initiatief actief is/bestaat?

#### (Rollen van) andere actoren

- Wie zou u zeggen dat andere belangrijke actoren zijn om te betrekken bij het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid in het algemeen? Waarom deze specifieke actoren?
  - o Gemarginaliseerde groepen
  - o Creatieve oplossingen
  - o Meerdere sectoren
- Welke actoren zijn er daadwerkelijk betrokken (geweest) bij het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid? (Waarom zijn ze niet meer betrokken?)
  - o Gemeente
  - o FPC
- Welke rol spelen deze actoren in de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid?
- Zijn deze rollen in de loop der jaren veranderd?
- Zou u deze rollen verder zien willen veranderen?
- Wat was volgens u de waarde van de deelname van deze andere actoren? Wat hadden deze actoren te bieden tijdens het co-creatieproces?

#### Inclusieve participatie

- De actoren die u net genoemd heeft hebben dus meegedaan aan de ontwikkeling van het voedselbeleid. Zijn er nog meer actoren waarvan u het wél belangrijk vindt dat ze mee zouden doen, maar die dat momenteel nog niet doen? Welke zijn dit?
  - o Gemarginaliseerde groepen
- Wat zorgt er volgens u voor dat ze momenteel nog niet mee doen in de ontwikkeling van het voedselbeleid?
  - o Taalbarrière
  - o Gemeente beschouwt ze niet als legitiem/belangrijk
  - o Tijd/geld
- Hoe zou de gemeente er voor kunnen zorgen dat deze actoren wél mee gaan/kunnen doen aan de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid? ((LR) Vindt u het de taak van de gemeente om ze erbij te betrekken of moeten ze dit zelf doen?)

### **Communicatie en samenwerking**

- Via welke kanalen/ op welke manieren communiceert het initiatief met de gemeente (voor het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid)?
- Via welke kanalen/ op welke manieren communiceert het initiatief met andere actoren die (nog niet) meedoen aan de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid?

### **Mogelijkheden/kansen/waardecreeatie**

- Wat zijn naar uw idee de mogelijkheden/waarde die het initiatief creëert met de deelname aan beleidsontwikkeling in Amsterdam / Wat waren bijvoorbeeld perspectieven waar het initiatief op wees die anderen nog niet benoemd hadden?
  - o Mogelijkheden die specifieke individuen boden
  - o Innovatieve oplossingen
  - o Maatschappij-brede realisatie van het belang van voedselbeleid
- Wat zijn tot nu toe de resultaten van de co-creatie van voedselbeleid in Amsterdam?
  - o Empowerment
  - o Legitimiteit van andere partijen
  - o Meer maatschappij-brede inzet voor voedselgerelateerde problemen en oplossingen
- Zijn er specifieke mogelijkheden ontstaan voor uw initiatief na deelname van voedselbeleidsontwikkeling?
- Welke resultaten van co-creatie zou u in de toekomst graag willen zien?
  - o Wat is er voor nodig om dit te realiseren?

### **Uitdagingen/obstakels/moeilijkheden**

- Welke obstakels heeft het initiatief ervaren tijdens de deelname aan het ontwikkelen van voedselbeleid?
  - o Financiën
  - o Tijd
  - o Skills
  - o Geen ruimte voor creativiteit
  - o Competitie met andere initiatieven (voor geld/aandacht)
  - o Tegenstrijdige meningen
- (LR): Welke rol speelt Amsterdam's politieke context in de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid?
  - o Speelt de politieke context ook een rol in de mate waarin participatie aan de ontwikkeling van voedselbeleid wordt bemoedigd?

- (LR): Zijn er naar uw idee partijen die meer invloed hebben tijdens participatieve beleidsontwikkelingsprocessen? Welke partijen zijn dit? Waarom hebben zij meer invloed?

Bedankt dat ik u mocht interviewen! Weet u nog andere personen die mogelijk relevant zouden zijn voor mijn onderzoek?

## Appendix 3: Data Management Plan (DMP)

### 1. Organizational context

<b>Name researcher</b>	Noortje Schalker
<b>Name supervisor(s)</b>	Lucie Sovová
<b>Chair Group</b>	RSO
<b>Start date of project</b>	1-9-2022
<b>(Expected) end date of project</b>	1-3-2023

### 2. Research project

<b>Title</b>	Stakeholder perception of the co-creation of Amsterdam's food policy between 2013 and 2022.
<b>Project summary</b>	<p>The purpose of this study is to assess the contribution of co-creation to food policy development in Amsterdam between 2013 and 2022. Co-creation is a process during which stakeholders from multiple sectors (i.e. the public sector, private sector, or civil society) are participating to develop and experiment with policies. Co-creation can also be used to create strategies, agendas, and actions to reach policy aims.</p> <p>To arrive at this study's aim, the roles that participants of the co-creation process played during said process are assessed. Furthermore, the opportunities that were generated by their participation are studied, as well as the challenges that were associated with their participation. Data will be collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with stakeholders that have been involved in policy creation between 2013-2022.</p> <p>The findings of the present study can be employed to further the understanding of co-creation in policy-making in general. Additionally, the findings can serve to improve the future policy co-creation processes in Amsterdam.</p>

### 3. Define data management roles

<b>Roles</b>	
Who is <b>collecting</b> the data?	Noortje Schalker

Who is analyzing the data?	Noortje Schalker
<b>Other</b> (Do you make use translators or others who help you with collecting and/or analyzing data)	No
<b>Partner organization</b>	None

**4. Data storage while doing your research (after your research, you submit your data for protected storage by the university)**

Data stage	Specification of type of research data	Storage location during research	Back-up location
Raw data	<p>Interview recordings, interview transcripts, potentially Teams-meeting recordings if interviewees want to meet online.</p> <p>The data will be collected by me via semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, preferably offline or otherwise online.</p> <p>Data will be analyzed using Atlas.ti. The Atlas-folder will be protected with a password.</p> <p>Potentially, some secondary data (council committee documents or annual reports) will be collected and analyzed using Zotero or Atlas.ti.</p> <p><i>Context: who, what, why, where and how will the data be collected and analyzed?</i></p>	Phone, laptop, Atlas.ti, Zotero	E-mail
Processed data	<p>The processed data consists of coded interviews in Atlas.ti and potentially analyzed secondary data in Atlas.ti or Zotero.</p> <p><i>Content: what does your processed dataset contain? For example, data processed in quantitative (like SPSS) or qualitative programs (like Atlas-ti)</i></p>	Atlas.ti, Zotero	E-mail
File structure	<p>Give your folder the following name "Data_[last name]_[thesis]_[year]". Giving your data files in this folder a descriptive name (such as "interviews",</p>	Laptop (Atlas.ti/Zotero)	E-mail



	“observations”, “pictures” etc.)		
Protection	How do you protect your data while in the field? (password-protected, encryption, other)	My laptop and phone have a password, and so does the Atlas.ti file	E-mail

## Appendix 4: Informed Consent Form

### **Title of study**

Stakeholder perception of the contribution of co-creation to the development of Amsterdam's food policy between 2013 and 2022.

### **Researcher information**

Noortje Schalker

For the chair group Rural Sociology of Wageningen University and Research

Rozengracht 237-2, 1016SX Amsterdam

[Noortje.schalker@wur.nl](mailto:Noortje.schalker@wur.nl)

06 - 37279290

### **Purpose of the study**

You are invited to take part in a thesis research. Before you decide that you are willing to participate in this study, it is important that you understand the purpose of this research and what your participation will involve. Please read the following information carefully. You can always ask the researcher for clarifications.

The purpose of this study is to assess the contribution of co-creation to food policy development in Amsterdam between 2013 and 2022. Co-creation is a process during which stakeholders from multiple sectors (i.e. the public sector, private sector, or civil society) collaborate to develop and experiment with policies. Co-creation can also be used to create strategies, agendas, and actions to reach policy aims.

To arrive at this study's aim, the roles that participants of the collaborative process played during said process are assessed. Furthermore, the opportunities that were generated by their participation are studied, as well as the challenges that were associated with their participation.

The findings of the present study can be employed to further the understanding of co-creation for policy-making in general. Additionally, the findings can serve to inform future policy co-creation processes in Amsterdam or other (Dutch) cities.

### **Study procedures**

The participant is invited to participate in a face-to-face interview, lasting approximately one hour. The interview will be audio-taped. The recorded audio will be transcribed verbatim directly after the interview.

The interviews will take place in November and December 2022.

### **Participation**

You may decline to answer any or all questions. Also, you may terminate your involvement at any time if you wish to do so.

### **Benefits**

The participant may obtain new insights into their own roles during co-creation, which he/she can use during future collaborative processes. Furthermore, the participant can get a better overview of other players in the development of food policy in Amsterdam, serving as the base for establishing connections between them.

**Confidentiality**

You are given the option to remain anonymous in the final report. If you wish to remain anonymous, only your respective stakeholder group will be referred to (for instance ‘municipal actor x’). However, it cannot be guaranteed that anonymizing interviewees’ names will indeed prevent third parties from figuring out who the interviewees are, since only a few actors per stakeholder group (the most relevant ones) will be interviewed.

**Data management**

While the research is ongoing, only the researcher, the researcher’s supervisor, and the chairholder of the Rural Sociology group have access to the interview recordings and transcripts. After completion of the study, the report will be made public and accessible via <https://library.wur.nl/WebQuery/theses>.

**Contact information**

If you have questions about this study or feel uncomfortable about your participation, you can contact the researcher using the information on the previous page. If problems arise that you do not want to discuss with the researcher, please contact the chair group Rural Sociology at [office.rso@wur.nl](mailto:office.rso@wur.nl) or +31(0)317-482088.

**Voluntary participation**

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to decide whether or not you wish to participate in the study. If you decide to participate, you are asked to sign this consent form. If after signing this consent form, you wish to withdraw from the study, you are free to do so at any time. If you wish, the interview recordings can be sent to you after your withdrawal. After this, they will be deleted from the researcher’s possession.

**Consent**

I have read and understand the information provided in this consent form, and have had the chance to ask questions to the researcher about the implications of my participation in this study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to be a participant in this research.

Date:

Signature of the participant

-----

Signature of the researcher

-----

## Appendix 5: Invitation email

Subject: Uitnodiging interview masterscriptie 'voedselbeleid in Amsterdam'

Geachte mevrouw/meneer X,

Mijn naam is Noortje Schalker en momenteel ben ik mijn masterscriptie aan het schrijven aan de Wageningen Universiteit. Zowel academisch als daarbuiten is voedsel mijn passie (en ben ik recent verhuisd naar Amsterdam); vandaar dat ik heb besloten onderzoek te doen naar de ontwikkeling van het Amsterdamse voedselbeleid tussen 2013 en 2022.

Vanwege uw betrokkenheid bij [het ontwikkelen van het Amsterdamse voedselbeleid], zou ik u willen vragen of u bereid bent een interview te geven over dit onderwerp in november of december. Het gaat om een interview van ongeveer zestig minuten, wat bij voorkeur face-to-face plaatsvindt. Qua locatie ben ik flexibel, we zouden het interview bijvoorbeeld bij u op kantoor, in een koffietentje of op de universiteit kunnen doen. De inzichten van mijn onderzoek zal ik na afloop met u delen.

Graag hoor ik van u of u ervoor open zou staan geïnterviewd te worden. Bijgevoegd bij deze e-mail vindt u een bereidheidsformulier met informatie over de studie en uw eventuele deelname. Voor meer informatie kunt u ook mij altijd mailen of bellen.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Noortje Schalker

MSc student *Urban Environmental Management en Organic Agriculture*

06-37279290

## Appendix 6: Re-invitation email

Geachte mevrouw/meneer X,

Graag zou ik u hierbij nogmaals willen uitnodigen om deel te nemen aan mijn scriptieonderzoek over de ontwikkeling van het Amsterdamse voedselbeleid (ik heb mijn originele mail hieronder nog een keer toegevoegd). Naar mijn mening zouden uw inzichten erg waardevol zijn voor mijn studie. Dit vanwege [uw ervaring met het opzetten van burgerinitiatieven en samenwerkingen met/tussen ambtenaren, ondernemers en bewoners], waardoor u een unieke kijk heeft op de ontwikkeling van het Amsterdamse voedselbeleid die ik graag zou willen documenteren. Ik hoor graag van u of u door mij geïnterviewd zou willen worden in december.

Met vriendelijke groet,  
Noortje Schalker