Agricultural Utopias: Transformations through Visions of Change in the Alternative Food Movement

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Executive Summary

The current food system is increasingly revealing its detrimental to people and the planet and thrives on an economic system that exacerbates these grievances. In the face of this, alternatives are arising in the hopes of showcasing what a better food system may look like—the Alternative Food Movement (AFM). This speculative nature of the AFM is one rife with visions of a better future, and efforts at enacting them. This thesis looked to answer the following research question: *How do the visions of the Alternative Food Movement (aim to) contribute to transformative change in the food system?* The answer to this question was built on an exploration of the AFM in Utrecht as a niche, followed by the description and evaluation of the visions that different Alternative Food Initiatives (AFIs) voiced. This evaluation consisted in approached the visions as social innovations and subsequently establish the transformative intent underlying them and their prefiguration.

Building on existent literature on the AFM, the research contextualised it within that of Social Movements, Social Innovation, and Transformative Change. Exploring the transformative intent of the visions of the AFIs was grounded on an adaptation of the Transformative Social Innovation (TSI) framework. This framework takes on a relational approach to transformative change, looking at the relations along four dimensions: (i) within initiatives, (ii) between different initiatives, (iii) between initiatives and the institutional context, and (iv) between initiatives and the sociomaterial context they are embedded in. TSI is typically used to assess the transformative potential of social innovation in the existing context. Since visions, however, aim at describing an alternative status-quo, the TSI could be used to evaluate how these visions relate to the different dimensions of transformative change that the TSI observes.

This research centred on the AFM in Utrecht for the breadth of initiatives active in the city, and the municipal interest in bringing about change in the food system. This is shown in its 'Food Agenda' and its participation in the FAO's City Region Food System pilot that aims at concentrating regional food production for internal consumption over export. Data for this thesis was gathered through interviews as a primary source, which was subsequently supplemented with document analysis and participant observation. The data was then thematically analysed to understand what the main grounds for the visions in the AFIs are, what actors are seen as crucial for its realisations, and

what pathways they indicate for the actualisation of these visions. Moreover, the visions were analysed to explore in what ways they contained socially innovative components.

The AFM in Utrecht is rife with a plurality of visions indicative of an ongoing search to find the right solutions to the failings of the incumbent food system with distinct formative intent. Some of the main ways they see this change occurring are through (i) the shortening of supply chains and creating more transparency within the food system, (ii) embracing more local production, (iii) adopting more environmentally and seasonally appropriate production, (iv) creating structures of co-ownership between producers and consumers, (v) opening themselves up to the intersection of other sectors such as that of arts in the advocacy for an alternative food system, (vi) establishing hubs for knowledge and mutual support, and (vii) obtaining policy support for all preceding points. This last point is of special importance as the AFIs see institutional actors such as national and regional governments and municipalities as important actors in achieving this transformation. These visions harbour distinct transformative intentions, and are often built on practices they are presently engaged in advocating for or enacting, thus prefiguring the visions they profess.

Yet, the analysis also showcased a movement characterised by its individual parts rather than a cohesive whole, something that reveals itself as a dampener in this transformative intent. The lack of a cohesive vision underlying the AFM presents itself as a hurdle for institutional uptake of these very visions and stands in the way of the realisation of this part of the vision pathways where they wish to see support from institutional actors. Though the movement shows intent for networking and forming coalitions, these are not always structurally realised and show a movement that is still in relative infancy with regard to its presentation as a cohesive whole. The AFIs should, therefore, seek to deepen this collaboration and attempt to align their visions to overcome the great diversity therein and thereby better voice their demands of institutional intervention.

As this research sought to take on a broad approach to analysing the visions in the AFM, it would be important for future research to triangulate these findings with a narrower case study that delves more deeply into the visions underlying AFIs. This could serve to understand how different types of initiatives may be differently transformative.

Acknowledgements

I want to begin by thanking all three of my supervisors, for their invaluable guidance in all stages of the thesis research design and the subsequent hurdles encountered. I am incredibly thankful for their support and accommodation of my initially ambitious timelines, and their flexibility when these targets couldn't quite be met. This gave me the space to realise a project I found pride in accomplishing. The thesis writing process was one that turned out to be quite demanding and required me to push my academic skills and knowledge to areas that I wasn't initially very familiar with, and Flor, Jaco, and Udo challenged me at every turn to embrace these learnings.

I am also thankful for all the participants in the interviews, and the people I have met during my participant observation. They have granted me precious time during the summer period, and I feel blessed to have had such interesting conversations with them. Though this thesis may at some points shed critical light on the alternative food movement, the interactions I have had have also filled me with hope as to the future of the movement and their intentions to bring about a better future (both with regards to food and outside) carry with them strong anticipation of fulfilment.

I also wish to thank my family, friends, and partner, whose moral support, and at times invaluable help, have helped me push through the toughest periods of the thesis research process.

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Abbreviation

AFM – Alternative Food Movement
AFN – Alternative Food Network
AFI – Alternative Food Initiative
CRFS – City Region Food System
CSA – Community-Supported Agriculture
LSA – Local Sustainability Initiative
MLP – Multi-Level Perspective
NoC – Narratives of Change
NSMs – New Social Movements
SFSC – Short Food Supply Chains
TSI – Transformative Social Innovation
UFP – Urban Food Practices

Chapter 1 | Introducing the Context

1.1. The State of the Food System

The place of food is coming under increasing scrutiny within the current sustainability paradigm. More and more, the social, environmental, and economic impacts of the current food system are being questioned for the place they have within a world suffering another multitude of crises. The severity of these challenges is all the more prevalent when looking at the scale of the presence of the global agricultural food system on the planet, occupying about half of the ice-free surface on Earth and being responsible for 70% of all fresh-water use (Zurek et al., 2021). The global agricultural food system is one of the largest contributors to the emissions of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs), totalling at about 30% (Crippa et al., 2021; Zurek et al., 2022). The food system's contribution to climate change factors is, simultaneously, creating an increasingly precarious context for its own ability to keep functioning by disrupting arable climate zones (Zurek et al., 2022). This incumbent food system is characterised by energy-intensive, mono-cultural food production processes and an increasingly globalised food market. The environmental challenges caused and faced by the modern food system are, however, not the only problems it faces. Globally, access to safe and nutritious food remains a severe problem in many regions of the world, leading to hunger and malnourishment in areas in all regions (Zurek et al., 2021). Moreover, the food that *is* produced and consumed is not always the right one—that is to say, the healthiest or most nutritious—and is contributing to an increasing diet-based health crisis (Zurek et al., 2021). The current industrial mode of agricultural food production is simultaneously caused by—and responsible for—an increasing alienation of people from their food sources. The alienation and unsustainability of the agricultural sector bring into question its validity in its current state. Nevertheless, people need to see their access to food preserved and often-times expanded too, with particular attention to the environmental and social sustainability aspects thereof. Our deep entrenchment within an exploitative industrial food system, however, renders the exploration of alternatives difficult. Some stakeholders and bottom-up initiatives, however, have begun envisioning and enacting such an alternative through a reinvigoration of the aptly named Alternative Food Movement (AFM). The AFM has sprung up in response to these challenges and aims at overcoming them. It is constructed out of agro-agricultural initiatives such as organic farming or permaculture, urban (allotment gardening)

farms, agroforestry, vertical farms, community-supported agriculture (CSA), farmers' markets, and any other alternative to the current ways of sourcing food. It pertains to offering a way to reimagine this incumbent agricultural food system, overcome its environmental shortcomings, and reconnect people to nature via their relationship with food.

To understand the potential for the AFM to transform the agricultural system, it is important to look at those places its practices might be most impactful; it is important to understand how places where agriculture is most distant and where concentrations of people are highest may be rife grounds for the practices of the AFM; it is important to look at cities.

Global populations are increasingly settling in cities, with expectations that close to 70% of the global population will live in urban areas by 2050 (Knusden et al., 2020). This, along with the concentration of economic activities and cities' challenges with sustainability questions—GHG emissions, urban regeneration, and questions of social justice and equality—make them key players in sustainability transitions (Frantzeskaki et al., 2018). These areas are surrounded by rural areas to varying degrees of immediacy, and these rural areas are, to some extent, used for agricultural production. Nevertheless, much of this peri-urban rural agricultural output fails to find its way to the cities in proximity (Haenen et al., 2018; Olsson et al., 2016). Moreover, cities are inherently reliant on an inflow of food produce that comes from all over the world (Morgan, 2009), contributing to the emissions problem of the current food system. Indeed, the transportation of food produce can range from a few percentage points to more than half of produce's GHG emissions (Striebig et al., 2019; Wakeland et al., 2012). It is, therefore, important to tackle cities' access to local sustainable food produce.

When looking at the modern historical occurrence and presence of urban alternatives to the intensive industrial agricultural food system, one of the most prevalent examples is that of the Victory Gardens. These represented a top-down encouragement in the United States to set up food-producing gardens in people's homes to foster food resilience during the Second World War (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Horst et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2011). They set precedence for small-scale, sometimes urban, agricultural initiatives—and the potential for self-sustenance that emerged in the process. They showed that in times of great need, it was possible to radically change the existent food system, on the production side as much as the consumption side. It presented a

new mode of community organisation in which food played a central role. Times of crisis realign priorities, often stripping daily life of superfluous needs in favour of the essentials—food, family, leisure, and fun. With the continued encroachment of the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation seen in recent droughts, water shortages, and extreme weather events, the need for such radical interventions in the food system is coming to light again. These messages and the grievances caused by the incumbent food system find a resurgence in the AFM. It echoes the values advocated for by La Vía Campesina—one of the largest international networks advocating for change in the food system; There is a need for the re-valorisation of small-scale, local, sustainable, and culturally relevant food sourcing. This is understood as food sovereignty (Borras Jr, 2008; Desmarais, 2012; Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2010). Much like the Victory Gardens, la Via Campesina is a present-day precedent for efforts to seek to revalorise and reintroduce small-scale farming within local food systems.

Important changes are necessary, and there is increasing acknowledgement of this need, but right now there is an extremely rich plurality and diversity of approaches that can make it hard to figure out what solutions work and which ones don't, which ones are applicable where, and this leads to the proliferation of visions about the future that can be quite clashing.

1.2. Food in the city

The importance of locality is finding resonance at various policy levels, and urban areas are no exception thereto. Cities and the wider regions they are embedded in are beginning to explore the potential of their organisation as City Region Food Systems (CRFS). This is an effort to reconnect urban areas with their surrounding rural and peri-urban areas and focusing their food production to meet the demands of the cities rather than that of the international markets (Blake, 2021; Delaney et al., 2018; Dubbeling et al., 2017; FAO, n.d.; Luis Vicente-Vicente et al., 2021; Vaarst et al., 2018). At the core of the CRFS project is building regional and local food resilience in the sense of finding a certain degree of autonomy in a city and its encompassing region's food autonomy. This resilience has the potential to encompass a wide breadth of socioeconomic and environmental questions into it; the regional focus could serve to empower local communities via food sovereignty though the focus still heavily lies on notions of food security (Vaarst et al., 2018). Food security focuses on access to food from

a nutritional understanding (Maxwell, 1996), while food sovereignty advocates for agency in the production and cultural determination of food (Clendenning et al., 2016). The focus on food security, however, often fails to find intersection with food sustainability (El Bilali et al., 2019), which creates tension within the CRFS program. This is more prevalent in the food sovereignty movement (Patel, 2009). Though there is an increasingly loud call for food sovereignty throughout the world, this is not yet reflected in the strategies of the CRFS. The CRFS, however, serves to paint a good baseline of a region's food system. It is, therefore, interesting to use CRFSs as case studies for their intention to give food a more prominent place in the city.

To achieve the incorporation of food more prominently in the city, it is necessary to look at how stakeholders organise themselves to participate in—and improve—urban food systems to ensure that the project finds perpetuation and that resilience for some does not go at the expense of others. This organisation can be approached from a social movements and transition theory perspective to explore its transformative potential. As these social movements are also practical, enacting the change they wish to see in the agricultural system, the AFM can be seen as "prefigurative" (Monticelli, 2018, p. 509), i.e. prototyping and enacting—at a small scale—the change they wish to see take shape on a broader scale. Moreover, the human component of the AFM does not just demand a structural reorganisation of the food system in terms of agricultural modes of production employed and disentangling the food system from its capitalist dynamics; it also demands a social reorganisation where communities self-organise for their food provision, or where producer-consumer relations are altered and rendered more direct. This entails an implicit socially innovative element to it that is often seen in social movements (Frantzeskaki et al., 2016; Gregg et al., 2020; Millward & Takhar, 2019; Seyfang & Haxeltine, 2012; Wolfram, 2018). Hence, the AFM lends itself to be understood through the Transformative Social Innovation (TSI) framework (Pel et al., 2020). This comes from the TSI's focus on understanding the countervailing intent of the social innovation (SI) proposed by social movements like the AFM. It is this intent—a prefigurative intent—and the visions of alternatives it produces, that are interesting to explore.

Given the importance of imagining alternatives to the incumbent food system, and the prominent role the AFM has assigned itself in this task, it is important to understand how these visions in themselves may contribute to transformative change, and how they claim to intend to do so. This will foster a better understanding of the context within which urban just and sustainable food transitions take place and of the

challenges thereupon imposed by it. My research will, therefore, address the following question:

How do the visions of the Alternative Food Movement (aim to) contribute to transformative change in the food system?

This research question is subsequently divided into three sub-research questions that are drawn from an overview of the existent relevant literature:

R.Q.1. How is the AFM constituted?
R.Q.2. What are the visions in the AFM?
R.Q.3. To what extent do the AFM's visions contribute to transformative change?

To answer these questions, chapter two will begin by laying out said overview of the existent literature pertaining to the AFM, visions, transformative change, and transformative social innovations. Chapter three will lay out the research design aimed at overcoming the research gaps identified in chapter two. For this, I will begin by laying out a case-study approach built on the use of semi-structured interviews with practitioners in the AFM, document analyses that serve as portrayals of the initiatives in the AFM and reflections of their visions, and participant observation to see these visions enacted. This case-study approach is centred on the AFM in Utrecht, one of the cities having taken part in the FAO's CRFS pilot project. Chapter four will present the results and the analysis of the data gathered, showing a plurality and rich diversity of visions throughout the initiatives in the AFM that showcase intent for transformative change and enacting it to a certain degree while struggling with extending this impact in the context of its institutional embeddedment and its relation to the prominent institutional actors in it. Lastly, chapter five will provide a discussion and conclusion to the research showcasing the AFM in Utrecht as being constituted by a plurality of initiatives whose biggest hurdle in the enactment of their desired change is their organisation as a comprehensive movement that has the potential to bring about significant change at the institutional level, to percolate into wider systemic change.

Chapter 2 | Theoretical Framework

To answer the ways the AFM can contribute to just sustainability transitions in the incumbent food system, it is important to first highlight the current state of the literature on sustainability transitions, and the turn towards just sustainability transitions. Second, the various ways the AFM is already asserting its transformative intent need to be conceptualised. For this, I realised a literature review looking at (just) sustainability transitions, and the intersection of the AFM literature with that of (just) sustainability transitions. The literature, moreover, reveals a strong prevalence of visions and utopian conceptualisations of alternative food systems, but these visions themselves are often not granted much attention. This literature review will, thus, also explore the nature of visions as socially innovative and transformative. Moreover, as the literature on the AFM reveals that much of its transformative potential and intent is actualised by way of social innovation, I have also delved into the literature elucidating the intersecting nature of social movements, social innovation, and sustainability transitions.

2.1. Methods of the literature research

In order to understand the current state of the literature, learn from it, and identify its current shortcomings, this thesis bases itself on an initial literature review. The literature review was carried out through keyword searches on SCOPUS, Google Scholar, and specific searches in the *Agriculture and Human Values* journal. The first two are employed for their wide breadth of literature and journal coverage, while the third was chosen for the source's focus on the human and socio-relational approaches to conceptualising food systems. Since the literature showed that the AFM and its AFNs have a strong socially innovative component at their core, it was also important to carry out literature research aimed at elucidating the intersection of social movement, social innovation, and sustainability transitions. These searches were also carried out as specific searches in the *Sociology* journal for its wide breadth of research on questions of societal impacts and transformations. The literature body from these searches was supplemented by snowballing from the relevant sources, along with the use of grey literature, organisational reports and specific literature from the SIRIUS project for its research in "Sustainable, Innovative, Resilient, and Interconnected Urban food Systems" (*SIRIUS*, n.d.).

The keywords and combinations used in all searches were as follows:

- Alternative Food Movement, Alternative Food Networks, or Alternative Food Initiatives

The AFM, its initiatives, and the Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) that arise with the initiatives ascribed to it are both seen in the literature and can be seen to allude to the same drive for the transition to an alternative food system. They are two sides of the same coin, albeit the first stands for the movement's ideology and the latter can be understood as its more practical implementation. These terms serve as the basis for the exploration of the state of the AFM broadly speaking. Some notable works in this area are (Allen et al., 2003; DuPuis & Goodman, 2005; Hinrichs, 2003; Lever & Sonnino, 2022; Renting et al., 2003; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006; Tregear, 2011; Watts et al., 2005).

- The AFM and its derivatives and Sustainability Transitions.

The intersection of the AFM and sustainability transitions sheds light on the role the AFM has to play within the issues of social, environmental, and economic degradation under the strains of the current industrial agricultural model and other paradigmatic influences. It reveals the AFM as a niche innovation with transformative potential (Bui et al., 2016; El Bilali et al., 2019; Svenfelt et al., 2011). At the same time, some authors see that the AFM does sometimes struggle with the engagement of all three pillars of sustainability to meaningful degrees (Forssell & Lankoski, 2015; Michel-Villarreal et al., 2019; Tregear, 2011)

- Social Movements, Grassroots Movements; Social Innovation, Grassroots Innovation; and Sustainability Transitions or Sustainability Transitions.

The literature at the intersection of social movements, social innovation, and sustainability transitions reveals social movements as playing an important role in the definition of solutions pertaining to sustainability questions. Social movements are understood as being inherently innovative, which equips them with transformative potential (Frantzeskaki et al., 2016; Gregg et al., 2020; Hess, 2018; Seyfang & Haxeltine, 2012; Späth & Rohracher, 2012; Wolfram, 2018).

- Transformative Change and Sustainability

The literature on transformative change showcases a need to undergo significant societal changes in the context of sustainability transitions, aided by impactful transformations that directly strive to change, alter, or replace existing practices and institutions. (Avelino, 2017; Grin et al., 2010; Pel et al., 2020; Schot & Steinmueller, 2018; Weber & Rohracher, 2012).

- (Transformative) Visions

Visions present themselves as important tools in the devising of better futures and provide clear and necessary goals with tentative pathways towards their actualisation (Berkhout, 2006; Millward & Takhar, 2019; Rotmans et al., 2001; van der Helm, 2009; Wright, 2010).

2.2. The Alternative Food Movement

Before delving into previous accounts and understandings of the AFM, it is important to acknowledge one of the main problems encountered in these discussions, namely nomenclature. Tregear (2011) highlights the fact that research into the alternative movement, the subsidiary networks that make it up, and the various individual initiatives forming these networks have a tendency to be blurred into the same term, namely Alternative Food Networks (AFNs). For the purpose of this research, I wish to distinguish between the broader social movement that is the Alternative Food Movement (AFM) as the sum of all networks and initiatives profiling under its mantle, the individual Alternative Food Initiatives (AFIs) that commit to exploring innovative ways of facilitating the realisation of food systems falling outside of the incumbent industrial food system, and the Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) that represent the collaborative efforts of different AFIs through formalised or informal arrangements or networks of solidarity. I do, herein, acknowledge that there is a degree of ambiguity in distinguishing AFIs from AFNs, as the former is often also constructed of networks of different actors—consumers, producers, retailers, or other roles—hence the term AFN refers to collaborative efforts of distinct initiatives portraying themselves as such.

2.2.1. Conceptualising the Alternative Food Movement.

The AFM and its networks of initiatives—AFNs—have been conceptualised in the literature with a strong focus on the rural context, where AFNs are viewed as a new

breath in the rural development endeavour (Renting et al., 2003; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006; Watts et al., 2005). They are seen as becoming an increasingly prevalent force in the makeup of the food system in the world's largest (industrial) agricultural economies. There, they increasingly lend their weight to the transformation of (rural) agricultural systems, and food systems as a whole. One of the more prevalent expressions of the instauration of AFIs—regardless of the shape they take—is the move toward Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) (Renting et al., 2003). SFSCs are no radically innovative initiative in terms of novelty; they are, instead, a call-back to historical market organisations surrounding food production (Dubois, 2019). They are, nevertheless, innovative with respect to the current system the practice is now embedded in. SFSCs are an effort that often stands in direct and wilful opposition to the globalised nature of the existent industrial food system, the associated perceptions of unsustainability underlying it, and the loss of value for farmers and consumers along the various stages of the supply chains (Dubois, 2019; Renting et al., 2003).

The AFM is a movement wherein plurality and diversity are inherent. It is comprised of a variety of projects and initiatives, that tend to link up to one another to form networks—the AFNs—wherein this diversity is also often reflected. Some of the prevailing narratives underlying the AFM are localism, resilience, food health and quality, transparency, and sustainability, to name but a few (Goodman, 2004; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006; Tregear, 2011). All the while, the literature shows that attention to the visions underlying the AFM often revolves around localism primarily with an expectation for the other concerns to trickle down from a more localised food system (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005; Hinrichs, 2003; Tregear, 2011). This localism, however, is not clearly defined; the boundaries thereof are often left vague and ambiguous.

Nevertheless, Renting et al. (2003) highlight the importance of embracing the heterogeneity of AFNs and the AFM; it is in the exploration of said heterogeneity that insights can be gained as to the movement's transformative contributions. In producing a typology for the extension of the reach of SFSCs in AFNs, Renting et al. (2003) provide an overview of AFN types, categorised by the proximity they create in the consumer-producer networks they produce. This is rendered in Figure 2.1.

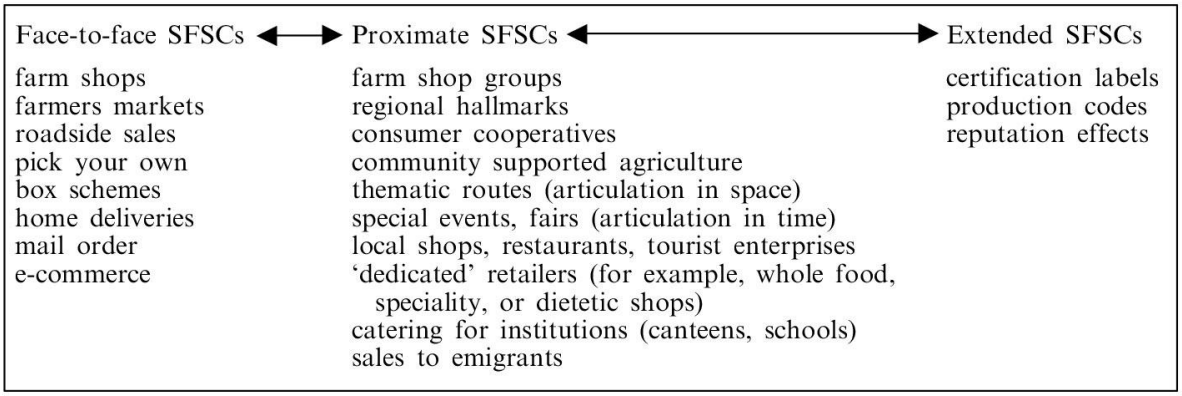


Figure 2.1. Different mechanisms for extending short food supply chains (SFSCs) in time and space (Renting et al., 2003).

The scale and proximity of the SFSCs in the AFM is, however, not the only approach that can be envisaged. Sharp et al. (2015) propose a typology of AFIs that is based on the approaches to practice, centred around (i) the facilitation of access, (ii) production, and (iii) procurement. This is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

AFIs centred around the *facilitation of access* are seen as the more transformational ones through their focus on learning as part of the engagement with the AFM, with the process of knowledge acquisition trumping the actual consumption of the food obtained as part of this learning process. The *production* aspect of AFIs is related to efforts at obtaining self-sufficiency and control over the produce and its quality, with consumption playing a more central role. Yet in this assertion of autonomy through self-sufficiency also lies an active "performance of difference" from the incumbent food regime (Sharp et al., 2015, p. 15). This showcases a contestational penchant in the AFM and an active distancing from the incumbent food system. The last aspect of this typology concerns *procurement*, or the alternative sourcing methodologies of food that do not necessarily entail one's own production thereof. In the examples of dumpster diving or foraging, it highlights the presence of consumable food in places that are not directly linked to direct production for consumption. The procurement approach to AFIs seeks to highlight the presence and relevance of traditional food sourcing and their modern adaptations thereof.

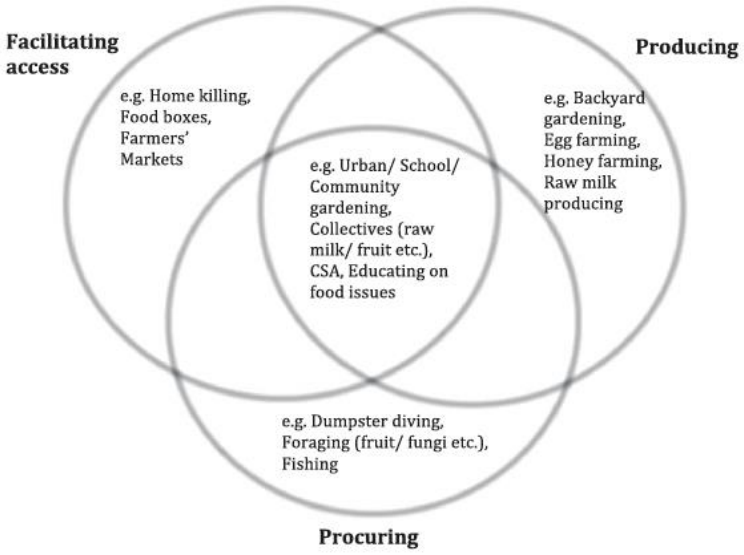


Figure 2.2. Typology of Alternative Food Initiatives (Sharp et al., 2015, p. 14)

The diversity in AFN structures in terms of physical, social, or cultural proximity and the internal market dynamics underlying their functioning demand a similar diversity of social constructions and social innovation to sustain these alternative market relations. Yet, the diversity in the AFM on its own does not warrant radical potential or intent for changing the existing system—each initiative does not present itself as an alternative to the same degree.

Indeed, Watt et al. (2005) demonstrate that there are different degrees of strength to AFIs that are based on the extent to which they serve to question the incumbent food system and the degree to which they embody solutions to their critiques. There is, hence, a difference between 'weaker' and 'stronger' AFIs. Weaker AFIs present themselves more through the offering of better-quality produce or showcasing their locality through certified labels such as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) or Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) while functioning within existing market and food system dynamics. Stronger AFIs could still adhere to some of these values but would incorporate a stronger challenge to the incumbent food system through the provision of different methods of sourcing these products in farmer's markets, for instance, or by way of more participatory initiatives such as community-supported agriculture (CSA). This variety in contestational nature of AFIs is, however, also a testament to the degree of exploration and change existent within the AFM more broadly, and lends some strength to viewing the plurality of initiatives as a strength for the movement.

In the urban context alone, the diversity of Urban Food Practices (UFP) that arise as alternatives to the incumbent regime generate a "patchwork of transformative initiatives" that are instrumental to the realisation of food system transformations (Hebinck, Selomane, et al., 2021, p. 4). This plurality does not only reveal itself in the variety of networks and initiatives visible under its umbrella term; these are, instead, manifestations of the plurality of undercurrent food movements existent within the AFM. The various engagements and understandings of initiatives in the AFM are also richly diverse in their intentions and visions for revising and contesting the incumbent food system. This diversity, in turn, can sometimes breed conflictual visions, having these various undercurrents to the AFM stand at odds with each other (B. J. Smith, 2019). Said diversity mentioned is visible in the various narratives spun by the practitioners and partakers in the food system and its various alternatives, which matter for the pathways of sustainability transitions envisioned by the AFM (Béné et al., 2019; Forssell & Lankoski, 2015; Michel-Villarreal et al., 2019; Zurek et al., 2021).

One of the prevailing narratives present in the AFM is that of social resilience, which finds strong resonance within the concept of food sovereignty (Mares & Peña, 2011; Mert-Cakal & Miele, 2020). This is something that is seen in practically all of the types of initiatives in the AFM, whether they be CSA endeavours (Mert-Cakal & Miele, 2020), (organic) farmer's markets (Beckie et al., 2012; Spiller, 2012), Solidarity Purchasing Groups (SPGs)/teikei (Kondoh, 2015; Miralles et al., 2017), agro-ecological practices (El Bilali et al., 2019), to name a few. The health, safety, and nutrition aspects of food are important motivators for adherence to the AFM, based on the notion that the current agricultural model and its reliance on GMO crops, pesticides, and fossil fuels would have an adverse effect on public health. Tangentially, these same factors influence the notion of environmental/climate resilience based on their (perceived) destructive contribution to soils, ecosystems, and biodiversity. Additionally, the AFM often strives for social resilience—taking the form of social innovation (Alberio & Moralli, 2021; Pellicer-Sifres et al., 2017)—to ensure sovereignty and agency in the access to healthy and environmentally-friendly alternatives, shortening supply chains, and contesting the neoliberalisation and marketisation of interpersonal relationships between stakeholders (Kondoh, 2015; Mert-Cakal & Miele, 2020).

The plurality of AFM interpretations and applications is also the product of national, regional, and local cultural norms and values. In Europe, there is a stark distinction in foundational intent employed by AFNs, with Southern-European countries like

France, Spain, and Italy basing themselves on questions of quality and direct selling while the Northern-European Netherlands, Germany, as well as the UK see environmental sustainability as an important foundation for their initiatives (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006).

2.2.2. Transformative intent in the AFM

There is an inherent transformative intent underlying the AFM that goes beyond the revision of the incumbent food regime. Many of the AFM's initiatives arise in direct response to the failures their stakeholders experience within the incumbent food systems (Kondoh, 2015; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006). They are often contestations of the market dynamics underlying their functioning, exclusionary practices, or unhealthy attributes. The oppositional nature of the AFM is dialectically constructed in reference to the shortcomings of the incumbent food system (Goodman, 2004), and is reflected in the normative forms of contestation that the AFM often employs. This is seen in the contestation narratives surrounding the question of *quality*, and the AFMs definition of the production thereof being socially constructed, formulated in opposition to the incumbent food regime (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006).

This oppositional nature of the AFM is in itself, however, just one facet of the movement's transformative potential. The AFM's 'alternative' aspect is another, one that (Allen et al., 2003) show to be about the socially innovative side of the movement to create new socio-economic and cultural connections to the food system. The mere adoption of alternatives without them lending themselves to some form of contestation is, however, not necessarily transformative and might even lead to the reinforcement of the neoliberal capitalist market logic that much of the AFM is trying to change (Allen et al., 2003).

The movement's socially innovative niche dynamics further highlight this transformative nature (Bui et al., 2016; Pesch et al., 2019). In the urban context alone, UFPs are understood as "pockets for the future with potential for transformation" (Hebinck, Selomane, et al., 2021, p. 6). As such, the question of food is tied to ones relevant to the sectors of health, ecology, society, politics, and the economy, among others (Hebinck, Selomane, et al., 2021; Zurek et al., 2021). Aside from the environmental concerns of intensive industrial agriculture, the current food system can also be seen to be a driving agent of gentrification (Anguelovski, 2015), fuelling a health crisis due to an ever-increasing tendency toward obesity (Harvey et al., 2004; James, 2008), repeated food safety scandals (Harvey et al., 2004; Renting et al., 2003), or

leading to the alienation of people from their food sources through its continued commodification (Korthals, 2019; Mayer & Knox, 2006). As a result, the AFM is often seen to advocate for an overhaul of the entire food system. The sustainability dimension of this transformative intent is, however, not without contention. Though the literature seems to agree on the positive impact that AFIs can have in terms of sustainability, it is not always clear to which degrees this is realised, nor does it encompass all the pillars of sustainability per se (Forssell & Lankoski, 2015; Michel-Villarreal et al., 2019). Moreover, these positive effects are often attributed to the nature of the intervention of the initiative—such as locality or short supply chains—rather than the actual impact of the intervention.

The literature reveals that there are institutional efforts aimed at translating the learnings from the AFM and fostering its growth (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006). These translation efforts, however, often fail to result in concrete action and are not reflected in policies that predominantly still pursue the further liberalisation of the food system favouring large-scale, industrial food producers (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006). The victories of AFIs can then better be understood as occurring despite the governing institutions rather than thanks to them.

2.2.3. The AFM in the urban context

The urban applications of AFIs also shed light on the relationship of food among cities' inhabitants, and the roles cities play in the advocacy for alternative food solutions in relation to the incumbent system. Hebinck et al. (2021) highlight cities' experimental nature for the nurturing of (food) niches, echoing Wolfram's (2018) notion that cities are important loci for the shaping of grassroots social movements and innovations. Doernberg et al. (2022) highlight this further by showing that the implementation of SFSCs in CRFSs tends to show positive improvements in terms of social sustainability, with economic and environmental sustainability impacts being more precarious. Yet the literature on the urban presence of the AFM is lacking, with most of its attention still being directed to rural food systems.

2.2.4. Challenges in the AFM

Bottom-up approaches to revising the food system—ones advocated for by the AFM—do not come without their own challenges. In understanding the AFM, it is first of all

important to take note of the nuances of the oppositional nature observed throughout the movement. The diversity, plurality and heterogeneity of the AFM mean that there are varied relations to the incumbent food regime permeating the AFM—from oppositional to collaborative—with some incumbent actors dabbling in the AFM by only taking on *some* characteristics of the movement (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006); this challenges the typical efforts of the AFM to provide a counterweight to the incumbent system.

The AFM has an important social innovation element inherent to it that often takes the form of advocacy for social cohesion and social resilience through the formation of tightly-knit communities (Mert-Cakal & Miele, 2020). This is seen in the *resocialisation* and *respacialisation* of food under the efforts of the AFM (Lever & Sonnino, 2022; Renting et al., 2003, p. 398); dynamics that influence consumers' choices and behaviours surrounding food sourcing, and consumption, and sometimes an uptake of agency in the production effort. This can lead to the formation of communities of producing consumers—"prosumers" (Kotler, 1986)—that take it upon themselves to rectify the shortcomings of the food system. Yet, despite the experienced importance of the communal aspect to AFIs, CSAs included, this aspect can often be the more challenging characteristic element of the AFM to maintain.

This respacialisation of the food system also brings with it the problem of the AFM's *localisation*. Sonnino and Marsden (2006) highlight the tensions and complexities that occur from a certain vagueness in the conceptualisation of the profusely used localising intent of much of the AFM. They allude to Hinrichs' distinction between "defensive localisation" and "diversity-receptive localisation" (2003, p. 36); the former is exclusionary—often along socio-economic lines—while the latter is recognisant of the dynamic interests at play in any one particular locality. Yet many of the AFM practices fall into the trap of defensive localism and perpetuate systemic injustices in their efforts at overhauling the incumbent food regime.

The food justice undercurrent of the AFM brings many of the social shortcomings to light. The strong, emancipatory, narrative that is implicit in much of the AFM's advocacy has the potential to be reproductive of many of the exclusionary structures of privilege currently experienced in the incumbent industrial food system and even contribute to the neoliberalisation of structures of the AFM (Jhagroe, 2019; B. J. Smith, 2019). The neoliberalisation of the AFM also leads to the reduction of the visi-

bility of its impact on monetary viability rather than encompassing the wider transformative intent that the AFM often proposes. Moreover, the focus on "food localism" (DuPuis et al., 2011, p. 292)—the efforts of AFIs to create highly localised, small-scale, food systems—can perpetuate the exclusionary and marginalising practices already present within certain communities, dividing access to alternative food sourcing along existent racial and socio-economic lines (Mares & Peña, 2011; Mert-Cakal & Miele, 2020). Successful transformative interventions into the food system should, therefore, account for and acknowledge the need to integrate justice into it.

2.2.5. Conclusions on the literature

The literature shows that, although evaluations of the transformative impact of the AFM have been carried out, there is still a lot of work to be done in that regard (Renting et al., 2003; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006). The literature searches at the intersection of the AFM and sustainability transitions yielded only a limited number of sources on the topic. That which does exist in the field points to a lot of gaps in the reasoning of the positive impacts observed (Forssell & Lankoski, 2015; Tregear, 2011). Moreover, the role of visions and imaginaries in the prefigurative processes of the AFM has yet to see much light shed onto it. The research that has been carried out on the AFM's transformative impact has focused on the socio-economic advantages of the adoption of AFNs from a development perspective that emphasises monetary indicators (Goodman, 2004; Renting et al., 2003). The focus on value-added benefits of engaging in AFNs fails to really evaluate the whole breadth of transformative potentials of these initiatives, and implicitly even legitimises the co-optation of AFM values by the incumbent food system's actors (Goodman, 2004). And though the literature acknowledges the social innovation perspective of AFNs, assessment of the transformative impact thereof is still wanting. It is interesting to note that the literature also tends to lack definitions of what locality entails, what the boundaries of *local* food systems entail, and what the benefits of this locality are, as they are often deemed implicit without additional elaboration (Tregear, 2011). Moreover, key authors on the questions about the AFM have focused their attention on the implementation of initiatives in rural contexts but have omitted the exploration of AFM implementations in more urban or peri-urban settings, except for the consumption side of the question (Goodman, 2004; Renting et al., 2003; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006). The work of Hebinck et al. (2021) is beginning to acknowledge UFPs as forces influencing urban food systems, but there is

still space to integrate social movement's roles herein. Lastly, the intersectionality of food shows that AFIs harbour the potential to perpetuate social injustices and marginalise communities most in need of the reformation of the food system. The literature showing efforts at addressing this focuses on the North American region, and is notoriously lacking in Europe. It is, therefore, important to strive to acknowledge the social justice components of the AFM where present.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

2.3.1. Transformative Change

The undergoing of transformative change in societies refers to the enactment of transitions geared toward the development of "new structures and institutions, be it a new legal structure, physical infrastructure, economic paradigm or religious ideology" (Avelino, 2017, p. 5). This non-exhaustive list shows a plurality of approaches through which societies might undergo changes that stem from the challenging, altering, or replacing of the incumbent structures and institutions (Pel et al., 2020). The field of transformative change is intimately tied to that of sustainability transitions and strives to promote and understand the radical changes of (parts of) society towards more sustainable outcomes (Avelino, 2017; Grin et al., 2010; Schot & Steinmueller, 2018). It arose with the rising recognition that social and environmental challenges need to be better reflected in the realm of innovations (Schot & Steinmueller, 2018).

Transformative change detaches itself from the perceived need for constant technological innovation and its profession of the value of economic growth as the main pathways to building sustainable futures and states that this constant drive for innovation is in and of itself not inherently good (Schot & Steinmueller, 2018; Weber & Rohracher, 2012). Indeed, it has contributed to social marginalisation and disempowerment in the transition process and yielded environmentally harmful technologies too, not to mention rebound effects from the use of new sustainable technologies (Schot & Steinmueller, 2018).

Weber and Rohracher (2012) identify four areas of innovation policy failure that transformative change pertains to overcome. These are (i) directionality failure; (ii) demand articulation failure; (iii) policy coordination failure; and (iv) reflexivity failure. *Directionality failure* refers to the lack of incentivisation of innovation that would contribute to the transformative changes needed throughout society. This is done in favour of free-market-like dynamics in the realm of innovation that makes

innovations compete amongst themselves without questioning the goal and intent of the innovations, i.e. without reflecting on the directionality of innovation. The response of the transformative change framework is to formulate guiding visions in order to provide direction to the course of innovation. *Demand articulation failure* in a way further refers to the lack of directionality in the sense that there is a lack of alignment between people's wants and needs that would translate into the consumption or adoption of new innovations, and the innovations that are actually brought out into the world. *Policy coordination failure* sheds light on the lack of coherence along various policy-making levels that would stimulate the fostering and adoption of adequate transformative change. The directionality demands of transformative change—and the visions formulated to provide it—furthermore play out over longer-term trajectories that demand the constant revision and realignment of the pathways undertaken. This means that transformative change ought to address the *reflexivity failures* encountered in traditional innovation pathways.

Transformative change advocates for the revision and, indeed, the transformation of key socio-technical systems such as "energy, mobility, food, water, healthcare, communication, backbone systems of modern societies" (Schot & Steinmueller, 2018, p. 1562), and therefore promotes socio-technical systems change. This embracement of the need for more deeply-rooted systemic change opens the door for the exploration of different pathways of change stressing the relevance of social and behavioural aspects to innovation; it introduces the importance of social innovation in the undergoing sustainability transitions.

2.3.2. Social movements, social innovation, and sustainability transitions

Sustainability transitions necessitate far-reaching, innovative, and radical changes to resonate throughout society. Though these can be in the form of technological niche adoptions, the socio-technical perspective to transitions highlights the need for strong socially innovative changes to take hold and challenge incumbent systems. Social movements—and grassroots movements—are representations of the acknowledgement of this need for societal transformations to occur and serve as a form of contestation for the (sustainable) shortcomings observed in the incumbent regime (Frantzeskaki et al., 2016; Gregg et al., 2020; Hess, 2018; Seyfang & Haxeltine, 2012). They play an important role in ensuring that incumbent actors are held accountable

for their actions and uphold high standards of sustainability in the course of transitions. More importantly, however, social movements often implicitly or explicitly formulate alternatives to the incumbent regime in response to their failures to take note of societal demands, and it is in the enactment of these alternatives that social movements employ various forms of social innovation (Gregg et al., 2020; Seyfang & Haxeltine, 2012; Späth & Rohracher, 2012). Social movements are, therefore, often seen as having an inherent socially innovative component, one with transformative intent (Haxeltine et al., 2017), and which is crucial for the enactment of sustainability transitions.

This socially innovative component of social movements comes from their being understood as tools in the enactment of transformative social change in their own right; they are "social technologies" (Banks, 1972, p. 15), implicitly advocating for change through their very existence (Gregg et al., 2020; Millward & Takhar, 2019). Indeed, their intention to address sustainability questions is often paired with some form of advocacy for social innovation in the form of behaviour change, empowerment, and citizen participation—the latter's focus lying on "legitimacy, consensus, and voice" (Gregg et al., 2020, p. 4). This is particularly true for the New Social Movements (NSMs) which have arisen in response to the increasing wickedness of the problems encountered to tackle broad themes like "peace, the environment or inequalities related to gender, ethnicity or sexuality" (Millward & Takhar, 2019, p. 3). Social movements are thus an innovative tool for tackling complex present-day problems that demand alternative socio-political configurations.

Their innovative characteristics express themselves in the facilitation of the creation of new uses and assemblages of existent technologies—rather than developing new ones—to better suit present-day needs (Wolfram, 2018). Moreover, SI is crucial in the capacity-building of social movements for their ability to contest and enact change, with the prefigurative quality of SI rallying more support than mere awareness-raising (Seyfang & Haxeltine, 2012). Social movements set the stage for the exploration of these new assemblages which also consist of the practising and envisioning of alternative modes of sustainable—often-times communal—living and co-existing (Wolfram, 2018). In this proposal of alternatives, social movements create socially innovative niches that enter into contention with the incumbent regime and interact with other (socio-technical) niches (Haxeltine et al., 2017; Späth & Rohracher, 2012). They are active players in the transition field.

The socially innovative aspects of social movements in the context of NSMs are also a response to the stresses of neoliberalism on the individuals and on the movements they adhere to, which require an innovative response to cope therewith. These stresses are the increasing time constraints experienced by workers within their jobs that hinder unionisation and organisation, and the rising financial insecurity that comes with the prospects of unemployment tied to eroding social security (Edwards, 2008). This is seen in the consequences of the erosion of welfare states and other socio-economic depletions of the spheres of care and personal economic resilience (Frantzeskaki et al., 2016). The transformative socially innovative components of social movements, therefore, arise in response to the stresses imposed by the structures they aim to transform.

It is this socially innovative aspect of social movements that highlights them as important forces in the enactment of regime transitions (Seyfang & Haxeltine, 2012). There is liminality to social movements that allows them to occupy spaces less severely embedded in the incumbent regimes to then explore and develop the social innovations inherent to them.

2.3.3. (Transformative) Visions

The study of the role of visions in the exploration of transformative change finds its roots in emancipatory social sciences (Wright, 2010). It focuses on the identification of the ailments of the current system and formulating main points of critique thereto, to then allow for the exploration of alternatives to this system. Wright (2010) highlights that these alternatives ought to be (i) desirable, (ii) viable, and (iii) achievable. This is understood as meaning that the exploration of an alternative to the incumbent system ought to represent an improvement on the current state in a manner that is self-sustaining and presents pathways for the realisation of this alternative.

Visions constitute conceptualisations about the future that include some prefigurative intent, some degree of actualisation of these imaginaries (Rotmans et al., 2001; van der Helm, 2009). They constitute the frameworks that can direct future-oriented action and serve as tools for reflection on the direction of these actions (Berkhout, 2006; Rotmans et al., 2001; van der Helm, 2009). This comes from the fact that they help shape expectations and direct thoughts towards specific reflexive goals, and help contrast imagined future states from the present (Berkhout, 2006). Visions are often socially constructed and adaptive to the changing circumstances of the systems they are attempting to transform.

Van der Helm (2009) proposes three characteristics making up visions, namely (i) a projection into the future, (ii) an idealised conceptualisation thereof, and (iii) the desire to enact the deliberate change necessary to pursue this vision. This idealistic aspect refers to the conception of better—preferred—futures with respect to the historically and contextually constructed present and can be seen as just one strand in a plurality of pathways and future directions to be undertaken. Visions, therefore, require active agency in their enactment and realisation for this preferred future to manifest itself and take hold rather than an alternative one, while at the same time serving as a method for change.

> *"We could see a vision as the more or less explicit claim or expression of a future that is idealised in order to mobilise present potential to move into the direction of this future" (van der Helm, 2009, p. 100).*

Their role in social movements is further highlighted in the importance of "working utopias" (Crossley, 1999, p. 810)—prefigurative utopias enacting the visions they propose. These working utopias represent radically transformative visions and ideas that are necessary for the resilience and perpetuation of social movements (Millward & Takhar, 2019).

Van der Helm's (2009) three characteristics of visions showcase their role as tools in the enactment of change. He expresses this in his portrayal of visions as agents in both "ideational" and "transformational" change (2009, p. 100). Ideational change consists of the effort to enact change at a very bottom-up personal scale; to change the thoughts and ideas people have so that it translates into changes in the world they are embedded in—their "material reality" (van der Helm, 2009, p. 100). Transformational—transformative—change relates to the notions of transformative change and innovation strongly embedded in the sustainability transitions literature. It refers to those changes aimed at contesting, replacing, or altering incumbent structures and institutions (Pel et al., 2020). Van der Helm (2009) proposes two ways in which visions contribute to transformative change; on the one hand, visions can be proactive in their challenge to a resilient incumbent regime; on the other, they can be employed in response to a context of disruption and instability for the regime. Rather than being mu-

tually exclusive, these two dynamics reflect the Multi-Level Perspective's (MLP) interplay of niche innovation and landscape developments—enacting change at auspicious moments of correspondence.

Van der Helm (2009) notes that it is important to bring to light the contents and intentions of visions for them to enact their transformative and ideational impacts. This is also echoed in the 'Narratives of Change' (NoC) framework proposed by Wittmayer et al. (2019). The NoC approach is relevant to integrate in the exploration of visions of change with respect to the prefigurative performance of these visions; that is to say, the moment visions of change are vocalised in the context of their enactment, they employ narratives that in and of themselves are also important in the exploration of their transformative impact (Wittmayer et al., 2019). The content of these narratives ought to reflect (i) a rationale, a motivation for the change to occur; (ii) actors involved in the enactment of this change—including but not limited to the pro- and opponents of the change; and (iii) a plot, the envisioned pathways to actualising the vision (Wittmayer et al., 2019). In understanding visions of change, it is, thus, important to also pay attention to the content of the narratives related to them.

Visions play an important role in the formation of niches. Smith's (2007) account of socio-technical uptake of niche practices at institutional levels highlights the relevance of futuring herein. This shows itself in the dynamic interplay of institutional embedding with the development of robust niches that are reliant on (i) the "entertaining" of the niche's innovation itself, (ii) the development of "robust, widely shared *expectations about future niche development*", and (iii) "broad networks of actors in support of its socio-technical practice the *future regime it prefigures"* (A. Smith, 2007, pp. 429–430, emphasis added). Visions are thus seen as transformative forces in their own right but are also important elements in niche development. Their role in fostering the translation of niche practices to institutional contexts, therefore, ought to be acknowledged

2.3.4. Transformative Social Innovation

The representation of social movements as social innovation warrants the exploration of the former with the help of the Transformative Social Innovation (TSI) framework. Hence, it can serve as an analytical lens through which to evaluate the transformative potential and intent of the AFM.

The use of the TSI framework is grounded in the notion that it establishes itself as a response to the historical tendency to research social innovation in isolation (Pel et al., 2020). It serves as a lens to take a wider, more systemic, approach to understanding social innovations' role in the context of sustainability transitions by highlighting the relations of various social innovation initiatives between one another and elucidating their interactions with regime actors and institutions. Given that the aim of this thesis consists in the exploration of the visions of the AFM on a more systemic level in the city of Utrecht, the TSI framework will serve as a conceptual framework to make sense and bring to light the transformative potential of the AFM in this context.

The framework explores how social innovation may enact transformative change by way of challenging, altering, or replacing the incumbent systems and institutions (Pel et al., 2020). TSI offers an elaboration, expansion, and challenge to the conceptualisation of the regime as laid out by the MLP (Geels, 2011; Hargreaves et al., 2011; Jørgensen, 2012; A. Smith et al., 2010), and seeks to shed light onto the role of social innovation in the transformation of the incumbent regime.

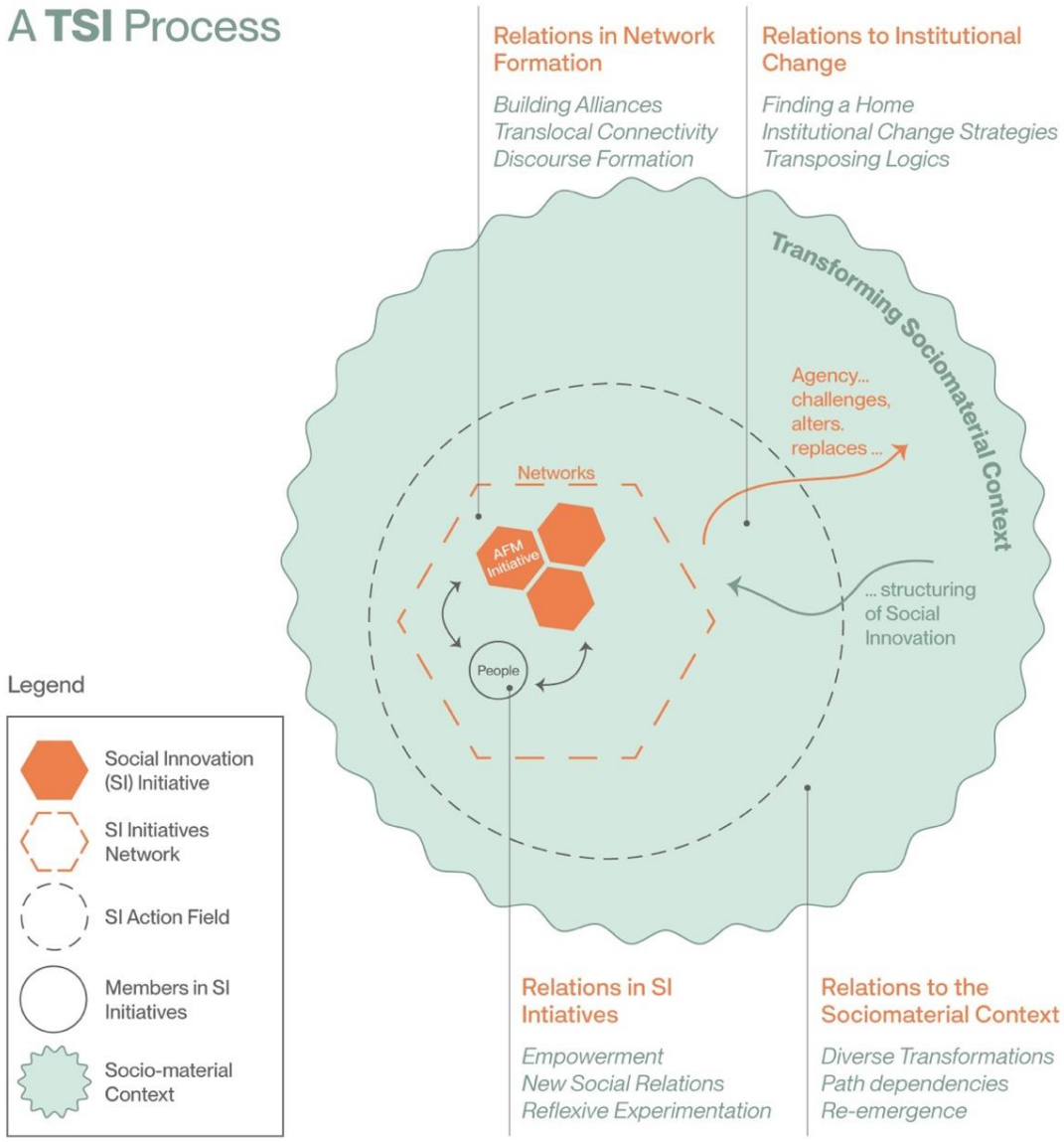
The TSI framework serves as a challenge to the boundaries implicit in the three levels of the MLP and sees social innovations as relationally intersecting much more with these various levels (Pel et al., 2020). The framework, thus, proposes four "dimensions" of socio-material interaction between social innovations and the contexts they are embedded in (Pel et al., 2020, p. 4). These four dimensions of relations of SI to the socio-material context are presented as:

(i) Relations within SI initiatives
(ii) Relations in Network Formation
(iii) Relations to Institutional Change
(iv) Relations to the socio-material context

It begins at a relatively individual level—the people making up the social innovation initiative and the processes coinciding with its inception. It then looks at the interlinkages social innovation initiatives find or create with other initiatives to form networks, which follows with an evaluation of these networks' relation to the institutions they wish to transform, and the strategies employed in its contestation. Lastly, the TSI framework looks at the dialectic embeddedment of the social innovation initiative within the "socio-material context" (Pel et al., 2020, p. 10)—those circumstances

shaping the resources and possibilities of emergence and contestation of the social innovation. These relations are shown in Figure 2.3. below:

Figure 2.3. *A Transformative Social Innovation Process.* Author creation based on Pel et al. (2020)



These dimensions of interaction within the socio-material context help structure our analysis and understanding of the transformative potential of the social innovations observed. Hence, they also structured the interpretation of the transformative intent and potential of the visions of the AFM, and inform analytical questions that helped guide the research. Thus, I will further elaborate on these four levels below.

2.3.5. Dimension of socio-material relations.

The first dimension *(i) relations within SI initiatives* alludes to the interpersonal relations occurring within SI initiatives. Social innovation is human after all, and that warrants looking into how adherent to SI initiatives relate to one another to advocate for the change they wish to see. The interpersonal dimension delves into the ways that organisation into an SI initiative may lead to personal empowerment for the enactment of this change. It is the level at which individuals create meaning and narratives to bolster motivation for societal transformation. Pel et al. (2020)stress that empowerment can be seen as "the process by which people gain the ability to act on goals that matter" (2020, p. 4). This translates into the need to believe that the actions undertaken can, indeed, contribute to change, and allows for the exploration of individuals' transformative potential in an autonomous space shared with people whose ideals, norms, values, and competencies align—at least sufficiently—to foster a sense of (potential) impact (Pel et al., 2020).

This first dimension represents the space where visioning originates and takes place for the exploration of alternatives to the systems the SI initiatives are attempting to transform (Pel et al., 2020). It also represents the space where initial attempts are made at embodying and enacting those visions; it is here that their prefiguration occurs. Through this prefigurative process, the visions developed interpersonally within the SI initiatives already contribute to the realisation of social innovation as participants explore new ways of doing, framing, organising, and knowing, as well as relating to one another (Pel et al., 2020).

The second dimension *(ii) relations in network formation* explores the empowering tendencies that come from SI initiatives' organisation in tangent and solidarity with like-minded initiatives that have similar goals. The TSI's relational approach to transformative change attributes much of the successes of social movements, social innovation, and social entrepreneurship to their interlinkages and network formations with other such initiatives to bolster their platform and voice in their enactment of change (Pel et al., 2020). It alludes to the notion that SI initiatives will struggle to enact real and meaningful change if they do not engage in this in partnership with other actors—whether they be SI initiatives themselves or more local government or civil society organisations active in their action field (Wittmayer et al., 2020). The formation of the networks can help overcome one of the biggest hurdles faced by SI initiatives in their efforts to enact, namely the obtention of resources to sustain their endeavours (Pel et al., 2020).

Pel et al. (2020) also propose translocalism and the formulation and diffusion of narratives throughout society as two important factors bolstering the influence of SI initiatives. Translocal networks are ways to reconcile the broader embeddedment of local struggles with the contextual nature and demands of the challenges SI initiatives pertain to tackling. They, therefore, serve as a tool for empowerment by learning and sharing resources, practices, and ideas with similar initiatives beyond the local setting (Avelino et al., 2020). SI initiatives also contribute and respond to the development of narratives and discourses circulating throughout the socio-material context and this informs the ways in which the various initiatives may relate to one another and find common ground to build these networks.

The third dimension *(iii) relations to institutional change* alludes to the need for institutional literacy among SI initiatives to tackle their transformative ambitions. Institutions are active forces in people's sense-making of the world and in a way provide some cognitive boundaries to thought and action (Pel et al., 2020). They, thus, provide a set of tools for SI initiatives to employ in their contestation of incumbent systems, and simultaneously delimit the realm of action that SI initiatives should concentrate their efforts on; the provision of tools is also constraining and the search for alternatives then becomes a form of contestation of institutional boundaries. Pel et al. (2020) stress that "TSI theory should explain how social innovations adapt their strategies to cope with the constraints of the institutional environment" (2020, p. 5). Yet the contestation of the institutional boundaries runs tangentially to a need to find an "institutional home" (Pel et al., 2020, p. 9) to accommodate for the need for increasing resources with SI initiatives' growth, resources they may no longer be able to glean from their networks.

The need for institutional embeddedment is an effort at reinforcing their position within their action field and overcome the precarity that might arise from their purely contestational position. This comes with challenges in its own right; there is a danger of co-optation by the institutions the SI initiatives are pertaining to transform, much like there may be a need to lose some radicality in their stance to allow for new partnerships to form with institutional actors. The latter dynamic could also lead to the loss of some members of the networks SI initiatives are embedded in.

Lastly, the fourth dimension *(iv) relations to the socio-material context* represents the dialectic nature of SI initiatives and the systems and regimes they are trying to contest.

It closely resembles the dynamics of the *landscape* level present in the MLP; this dimension pertains to explaining the reasons why some SI initiatives prevail—in institutionalising, for instance—while others don't, and attribute it to certain socio-material path dependencies (Pel et al., 2020). These path dependencies are, however, relational too—meaning they are not absolute—and find some social construction outside of the paradigmatic domination of the incumbent socio-material context. It herein also differs from the *landscape* level depicted in the MLP which is seen as more exogenous to the system pertained to be changed perspective (Geels, 2011; Jørgensen, 2012; A. Smith et al., 2010). The dialectic nature of SI and the socio-material context is also seen in the ways in which the latter shapes traditional understandings of what SI ought to look like. The demarcation from these definitions and the plurality of approaches ensuing from the navigation of this boundary reveals TSI to be embedded in "multi-dimensional socio-material societal structures" where individual path dependencies coalesce and intersect (Pel et al., 2020). The socio-material context is, therefore, delimiting the breadth of social innovations existent, yet at the same time fostering a plurality that continuously seeks to expand this breadth to enact transitions.

2.4. Adapted conceptual framework

Using the TSI framework as the basis for the conceptual framework of this thesis results in the adapted framework depicted in Figure 2.4. below. The framework draws on the depiction of SI dynamics in the TSI framework (Pel et al., 2020)—in this case, carried out by AFIs—but includes the interplay of visions in the AFM with their socially innovative component and the actors enacting them. Similarly to the TSI, this analytical framework embeds the AFNs and their visions within a socio-material context and the four dimensions of operation identified in it which here are (i) the relations within AFNs, (ii) their relations in network formation, (iii) their relations to institutional change, and (iv) relations to the social material context they are embedded in.

In the first two dimensions, the relation of people with the visions of the AFNs is seen to be built along the narratives employed in their depiction of the visions of the movement they are embedded in, and these visions consequently influence the actions and ambitions of these stakeholders. Moreover, the visions are seen to be socially innovative in and of themselves, and this social innovation can be seen as the prefigurative expression of the vision. As such, it is important to determine the ways in which the AFIs' visions are socially innovative and explore how the enactment of this social

innovation shapes the visions too. Lastly within this dimension, the practice of SI through the visions can be approached as a form of empowerment for the actors active within the AFNs and a factor in capacity-building for change. This draws on the literature on SI within social movements, where SI is seen as a success factor in engaging stakeholder support and growing a social movement (Seyfang & Haxeltine, 2012).

In the third dimension, the AFIs' practices, and therefore enactments of their visions—their prefiguration—interacts with institutions at the municipal level that can reinforce or contest the visions' transformative intent. It is important to understand how the visions anticipate and accommodate for this, and to grasp the extent to which the visions' prefiguration is already eliciting a reaction from municipal stakeholders. The visions spawn from individual conceptualisations of what the initiatives represent to them personally, while also being the product of the actions of the initiatives themselves and, therefore, the ways they implicitly and explicitly present themselves outwardly. They are socially constructed and dialectically influence the actors and the pathways of action for the AFIs, and this process needs to be accounted for. Additionally, it is important to pay attention to the possible role that visions have in initiatives' network formation for transformative change.

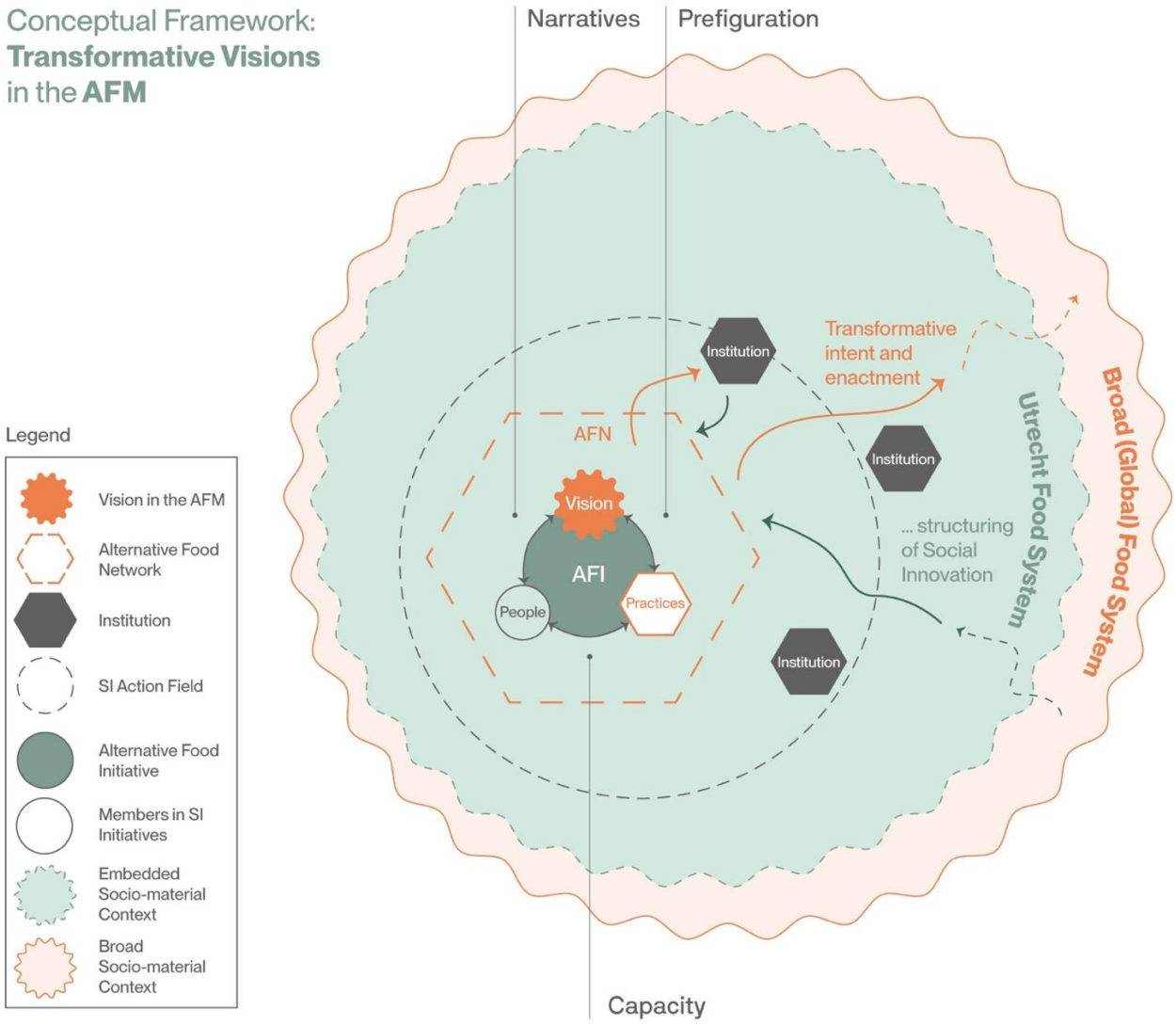


Figure 2.4. Overview of Conceptual Framework. Based on (Pel et al., 2020)

This framework serves to visualise and guide the analysis of the data gathered and illustrates the ways in which visions, SI, and the AFM intersect in the latter's contestation of the incumbent food system and its role in bringing about transformative change. The TSI Framework can be seen as intended to serve to sketch an overview of the existent sociomaterial context, Yet, as visions effectively attempt to depict an alternative sociomaterial context and alternative dynamics undergrounding it, the adapted TSI can be employed to understand how the AFM intends to establish itself as a transformative influence over the incumbent food system. The analytical framework is supported by analytical questions laid out in the section below.

Chapter 3 | Research Design

Much of the power social movements exert in the actualisation of their transformative potential draws on their ability to not only imagine radical and alternative futures, but also their tentative and initial enactment and embodiment thereof. This is what Moticelli calls their "prefigurative" potential (2018, p. 509). This prefiguration thus expresses itself in the conceptualisations of alternative futures and the steps social movement and their adherents take to make it a lived reality in the present already. In order to understand how the visions developed in the local AFNs may contribute to the exertion of transformative change on Utrecht's food system, this research will answer the above-mentioned research question with the following analytical goals:

(i) Mapping the state of the AFM in Utrecht
(ii) Mapping the visions inside the AFIs
(iii) Exploring the relations of the AFIs and their visions to the sociomaterial context

The uncovering of these steps was done with the realisation of semi-structured interviews with experts and stakeholders, document analysis, and participant observation. The different approaches undertaken according to the different steps are laid out in Table 3.1. below:

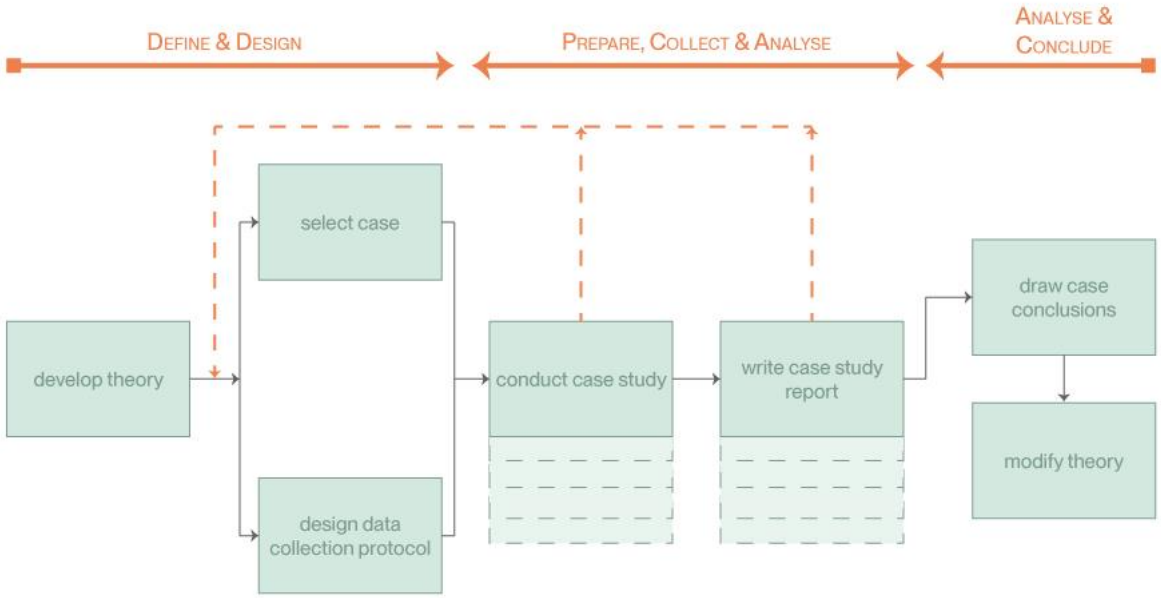
Table 3.1. Overview of the methodologies used through the research.

Step	Methods used	Approach
(i)	Desk Research	-
(ii)	Semi-structured interviews	Participants in AFIs
	Document analysis	*Secondary sources:* organisation websites and other online appearances (e.g. news articles)

	Participant observation	Events held by organisations. Events attended by members of organisations.
(iii)	Semi-structured interviews	Participants in AFIs Municipal stakeholders
	Document analysis	*Secondary sources:* municipal websites, policy briefs, municipal development plans, and online appearances (e.g. news articles).
	Participant observation	Events held by AFI organisations. Events held by the municipality Events attended by members of AFI organisations.

This research took a case-study approach of the city of Utrecht as a single-case embedded case-study for the exploration of the transformative intent of the visions of its AFM for just sustainability transitions. This consisted of three phases inspired by Yin's (2003) proposed design for an embedded, multiple case-study, methodology, illustrated in Figure 3.2. I therein begin with setting a research question and selecting a case, followed by data collection and analysis and ensuing subjection to the analytical framework chosen. Lastly, the case-study was analysed and conclusions as to the transformative intent and visions of the AFM in Utrecht were drawn and discussed.

Figure 3.2. Overview of the research process of an embedded, single-case-study methodology, inspired by Yin (2003, p. 50)



3.1. Case-study Approach

In order to understand how the visions upheld by the AFM in Utrecht can contribute to sustainability transitions in the city's food system, I took a case-study approach of the AFM in Utrecht as a whole. Case studies are a method of inquiry that observe the subjects studied within their own, actual, context (Noor, 2008; Yin, 2003). This research, therefore, took on an embedded single-case case-study approach as a "representative or typical" (Yin, 2003, p. 41) case of the state of the visions of the AFM in its Dutch, European, and urban context. This single case-study is embedded as the research is aiming at understanding the global transformative potential of the aggregated visions in the AFM in Utrecht. Yet, these visions do not arise uniformly within the different initiatives present in the city, and it is therefore important to acknowledge these differences through an embedded case-study rather than delving into the individual visions advocated for by the initiatives themselves (Yin, 2003). This means that I opted for a focus on breadth rather than depth in the selection and sampling of AFIs in Utrecht, translating in the ambition to hold interviews with representative members of 15 different AFIs within the municipality of Utrecht.

This consists of three phases inspired by Yin's (2003) proposed design for an embedded, multiple case-study, methodology, illustrated in Figure 3.2 I therein begin with setting a research question and selecting a case, followed by data collection and analysis and ensuing subjection to the analytical framework chosen. Lastly, the case-

study were analysed and conclusions as to the transformative intent and visions of the AFM in Utrecht were drawn and discussed.

3.2. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis can thus be understood as being the AFM in the city of Utrecht, with embedded units of analysis being AFNs present in the city. Figure 3.3. presents an overview of the unit of analysis as based on the representation of single-case embedded case studies laid out by Yin (2003). The city of Utrecht represents a niche element of the AFM and the various initiatives located in the city, in turn, are niche representations of the AFM in Utrecht. Yin (2003) speaks of four levels of validity that are (i) construct validity, (ii) internal validity, (iii) external validity and (iv) reliability. This research strove to adhere to all four elements:

(i) Construct validity was upheld in using multiple sources of evidence through the exploration of visions in multiple initiatives, while also allowing for key participants to review the research findings. The ethics of the data collection and management were also approved by a data management officer of the TU Delft on the basis of a human research ethics checklist and a data management plan.
(ii) The research strove for internal validity by building the explanations on the basis of the established conceptual, and analytical frameworks and seeking to represent contesting information wherever it presented itself.
(iii) External validity was fostered by situating the findings back into the literature in the discussion section.
(iv) The research sought to uphold reliability by following the case-study protocol determined and showing transparency on the grounds of analysis of the results.

The city of Utrecht boasts a variety of initiatives. These were uncovered via google searches and snowballing from the results. Table 3.4. Gives an overview of the various initiatives found via these searches. Some boundaries were set in the determination of whether an initiative could be qualified as adhering to the AFM; since AFIs typically aim at establishing themselves as alternatives to the incumbent food *system*, and given that the redefinition of producer-consumer relations is an important element in defining the impact of AFNs, this research limited its scope to initiatives in Utrecht that

incorporate some form of production and direct producer-consumer relation in its workings. Hence, initiatives such as restaurants, soup-kitchens, or waste-prevention fall outside of the scope of this research.

The typology of AFIs identified in the conceptual framework does not give indications as to the specific organisation of different forms of initiatives existent within cities. In order to observe the pluralism of the AFM, this research identified three categories of initiatives: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), Direct producer to consumer SFSC initiatives (P2C), and Knowledge translation initiatives in the form of education or advocacy (TRAN). These categories were selected to acknowledge the diversity of initiatives while also being representative of the composition of the AFM in Utrecht. The analytical framework will lay out how the representative cases for these categories are located in the aforementioned typology. For each category, three cases are identified. These are shown in Figure 3.2. The cases are selected based on the initiatives' presence in the AFM in Utrecht, herein choosing more prominent examples, as well as access, based on the researcher's existent network.

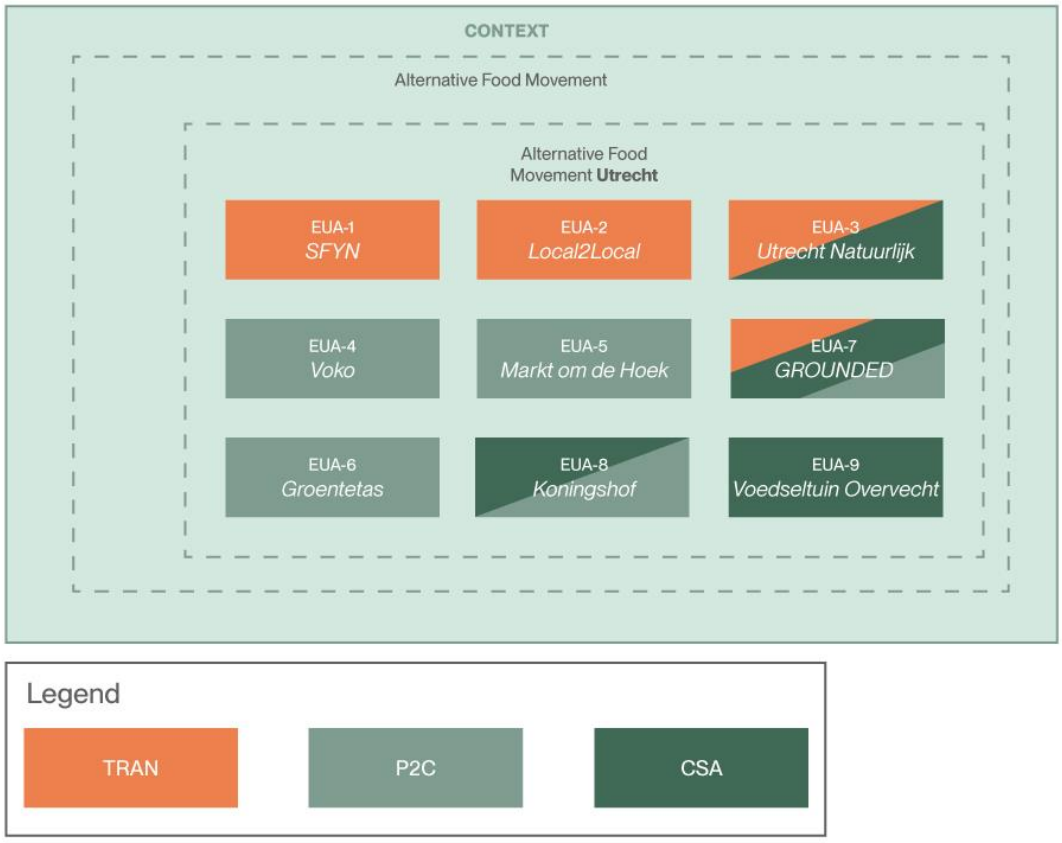


Figure 3.2. Unit of analysis of single-case embedded case-study, inspired by Yin (2003, p. 40)

Table 3.2. Overview of AFIs in Utrecht.

Legend. P2C: Direct Producer to Consumer SFSC initiatives; CSA: Community Supported Agriculture; ALLO: Allotment gardening; PERM: Permaculture; TRAN: Knowledge translation initiatives in the form of education or advocacy; LOC: Food localisation

Name	Type	Short description
Amelishof	P2C, CSA	Community supported farmer's market and food bags
Bikkershof	PERM	Permaculture initiative
Biologisch Verbonden	CSA, P2C	Food bag with sustainable local produce
Bor borren	PERM	Permaculture designer
De GoodFoodClub	TRAN, LOC	Integrating healthy food consumption in the municipality
Edges Permacultuur	PERM	Permaculture in the city
Eetbaar Woonwijk Rijnvlliet	Other	A design plan for a nature inclusive neighbourhood with food at the centre
Foodprint Utrecht	TRAN, LOC	Creating an integrated healthy local food system in the city
Groentetas Utrecht	CSA, P2C	Food bag with sustainable local produce
GROUNDED	CSA, TRAN, P2C	Community and Event initiative centred on the provision of local produce
Koningshof	CSA, ALLO, P2C	Community supported farmer's market and allotment gardening
Local2Local	TRAN	An advocacy network for alternative food practices
Lokaal Voedsel Utrecht	P2C	A network to facilitate the connection between local producers and consumers
Markt om de Hoek	P2C	A yearly market with local products by local people for locals in Utrecht

Milieuwijzer Utrecht	CSA	An overview of community managed and supported green spaces throughout the city.
Moestuin de Haar	CSA	Community supported agriculture on historical land
Moestuin Maarschalkerweerd Utrecht	CSA, REST	CSA, also coupled to a restaurant
Plukdestad	TRAN	Information platform for individual urban food production
SFYN Utrecht: Slow Food youth network	TRAN	Educational knowledge and networking platform for youth
Stadstuin Klopvaart	CSA, PERM	Community supported agriculture with permaculture initiative. Linked to *Utrecht Natuurlijk*.
Tuin Kansrijk	P2C, CSA	Self-harvesting market
Tuinderij Groenesteen	CSA	Attempt at creating a *herenboederij*—community supported agricultural initiative
Tuinderij Volle Grond	P2C	Food bag with sustainable local produce
Utrecht Food Freedom	CSA	Local food production
Utrecht Natuurlijk	CSA, ALLO, TRAN	Network of different (peri-)urban farming and allotment gardening initiatives
Voedseltuin Overvecht	CSA	Community supported agriculture lots
Voko: Voedselcollectief Utrecht	P2C	Food bag with sustainable local produce

The case-study approach is one that often requires a multi-methods approach, if only for the sake of triangulating the findings and providing as complete an overview of the case chosen (Noor, 2008; Yin, 2003). As priorly mentioned, the embedded case-study of the vision of the AFM in Utrecht was, thus, be realised with the aid of interviews—

of experts and practitioners—, document analysis, and participant observation in public information events relevant to the AFNs.

3.3. Semi-structured Interviews

The normative nature of the research pertaining to visions and people's lived experiences and expectations with regards to what a *good* or *ideal* future food system would look like warrants the use of a qualitative research methodology like interviewing. Qu and Dumay (2011) highlight the relevance of the use of the interview methodology in the context of its localist nature which presents the responses as highly embedded in the context the interviewee is sourcing their information and experience from. This is, therefore, especially applicable in the context of research that seeks to illuminate local visions, and in reference to the AFMs' overwhelmingly local turn. The interviews were semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews provide the flexibility of tackling the broad themes and open-endedness that come with visioning efforts while retaining the ability for the researcher to guide the conversation along the lines of interest for the research (Qu & Dumay, 2011). They are, moreover, able to provide insights into underlying interests and motivations of the interviewee, while remaining at a critical distance that avoids leading them to specific answers (Qu & Dumay, 2011). The structured parts of the interviews pertained to guide the conversation to gleaning information on the visions underlying the AFNs, their socially innovative nature, and the ways they give indication about their transformative intent and potential along the four dimensions of the TSI framework. The questions guiding these interviews are presented in Appendix A.

These interviews took between an hour and one and a half hours, were recorded, and subsequently transcribed for coding. The interviews were be anonymised with identifying information of the interlocuter omitted to the greatest ability from the recounting in the results.

The embedded case-study approach aims to explore nine AFIs within the municipality of Utrecht. The research strove to realise between one and three interviews with representative individuals from each case. Table 3.3. gives an overview of the interview participants.

Table 3.3. Overview of Interview participants.

Interviewee	Respondent code
Advisor in Utrecht Natuurlijk	R1
Administrative team member Voko	R2
Board member Markt om de Hoek	R3
Founder Grounded	R4
Founder Grounded	R5
Team member Local2Local	R6
Board member Koningshof	R7
Founder Koningshof	R8
Founder Koningshof	R9
Board Member SFYN	R10
Board member Groentetas	R11
Board member Groentetas	R12
Board member Voedseltuin Overvecht	R13
Advisor *Voedselagenda* (Food Agenda)	R14p*, R14m*

(* to distinguish between personal opinions and ones representative of the municipality)

3.4. Document Analysis

Document analysis is often used as a means to triangulate data (Bowen, 2009). They are especially apt in the context of this research as they help understand how an AFM initiative may portray itself and its visions, as well as the ways these visions are taken up from an outsider's perspective (Wittmayer et al., 2015). It is therefore apt at complementing qualitative research data gathered from other sources such as interviews (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis helped verify and supplement the information gathered during the interviews. The document analysis was realised tangentially to the aforementioned interviews and therefore served to check and validate the acuity of the questions. These documents were comprised of grey literature that could in the first place be found through the browsing of the chosen organisations' public content, obtained via their website. I additionally gathered documents from the municipality of Utrecht about the city's future visions for food systems. This was done through google searches and scouring the municipality's website and database of public policy docu-

ments. These documents were successively coded for the visions they profess and evaluated for their transformative intent. Comparing and contrasting the findings from these two sources would shed light on the internal consistencies of the visions expressed by AFM practitioners. The aim of the document analysis was (i) understanding how the visions are manifested in public communications, (ii) understanding how the visions are publicly broadcast and portrayed, and (iii) exploring how the visions may relate to calls to action and involvement. Table 3.4. provides an overview of the documents analysed. The documents were approached following the checklist below:

- ☐ What do the documents tell us about the activities of the AFI/AFM?
- ☐ What do they tell us about the visions of the AFI/AFM?
    - Is there explicit mention of future projections?
    - Is there mention of how such a future projection is going to be attained through initiatives' actions?
- ☐ What actors do they refer to?
    - How do they relate to specific AFIs?
- ☐ What institutions do they refer to?
    - How do AFIs relate to the institutions mentioned?
- ☐ How do the documents confirm or contest the data collected in the interviews?
- ☐ What do the documents reveal about the uptake of the visions of AFIs by municipal institutions?

Table 3.4. Overview of documents reviewed

Document	Document Code
Voko members meeting presentation	D1
Voko vision document	D2
Voedseltuin Overvecht annual report	D3
Utrecht Natuurlijk annual report	D4
Grounded Festival 'about us'	D5
Markt om de Hoek 'about us'	D6
Food-Print Utrecht municipal debate summary	D7
Food Agenda region Utrecht	D8
'Local Food Utrecht' findings report	D9

The documents displayed validating or complementary information to that voiced in the interviews. The documents and the visions they contained did not contain contradictions with regards to the content of the visions gathered in the interviews

3.5. Participant observation

Participant observation is an ethnographic methodology aimed at gaining a sense and understanding of an environment with limited disruption from the researcher's intervention in that space. It can help uncover actors in the chosen environment's identities, motivations, roles and dynamics within the setting chosen (Wittmayer et al., 2015). Participant observation is pluralistic; the settings can be public or closed meetings, taking part in the daily routine of an organisation or only for specific events; the recurrence of participation is also adaptive, ranging from singular visits to full-time residence. As such the research outputs from the employment of the methodology are also varied—fieldnotes, interviews, and visual material like photographs or films (Wittmayer et al., 2015). The degree of participation within the context of participant observation is also fluid (O'Reilly, 2012). Some participant observation calls upon active intervention in and support of the research community, while other times the researcher's presence in the field can be quite minimal.

In the case of this thesis, participant observation was used at public events held by the AFNs researched and the municipality of Utrecht, as well as other events that adherents of the AFNs attend. Table 3.7. gives an overview of the events attended The identification of these was the result of encounters with AFM actors in the context of the interviews. The participant observation aimed to get a sense of (i) how the visions manifest during the events attended, (ii) understand how the visions are promoted during the events, and (iii) how the events contribute to the enactment of the visions. In order to gain these understandings, the participant observation moments paid attention to the following checklist;

- ☐ Who is the organiser of the event?
- ☐ Where is the event taking place?
- ☐ Who is attending the event?
- ☐ Who is facilitating the event?
- ☐ What is the objective of the event?

- How does the event fulfil that objective?
- What do the participants of the event aim to gain from their attendance?
- What is being discussed at the event? Formally and informally?
- How do the observations confirm or contest the data collected in the interviews?

The observations made were recorded as fieldnotes and vignettes that then served to illustrate the aforementioned objectives of the participant observation. Similarly to the documents analysis, the participant observation events showcased complementary contents to the visions voiced in the interviews and did not showcase contradictions thereto.

Table 3.5. Overview of participant observation events.

Event	Description	Event code
Koningshof Volunteering Day	The volunteering day consisted of an entire day spent on the location of the Koningshof terrain, and included setting up the initiative's market stall, helping harvest vegetables from a production field and a greenhouse, clearing up and weeding those plots, gathering for a communal lunch, and aiding in making infrastructure adjustment and repairs.	P1
Voko information session	A mandatory information evening for all prospective Voko adherents. The information evening delineated the vision underlying the function of Voko, the volunteering structure that lies at its hart, and the relation to local farmers that Voko sources its produce from.	P2
Grounded Festival attendance	A yearly festival that mixes performance art with various workshops, including but not limited to a regenerative agriculture workshop, an alternative post-growth co-operative economy workshop, a sexual liberation discussion, and yoga workshops. The food and beverages sold at the festival were predominantly provisioned from local food producers	P3

3.6. Analytical Framework and Data Analysis

Data Analysis

Seeing an important aspect of the research consists in the identification of the visions underlying the actions of the AFNs in Utrecht, a thematic approach can be taken to the coding process. The thematic approach explores motifs present throughout the interviews (Bryman, 2012), and can thus be used to gain a sense of the general vision underlying the ambitions of the AFM in Utrecht. This entails the use of thematic coding to identify the key themes present throughout the narratives laid out by interviewees, participants in information events, and the documents selected. These codes are drawn from the conceptual framework and highlighted in the analytical framework below. The thematic coding approach is chosen to accommodate the possible variety of visions upheld between the various initiatives.

The coding was realised with the use of NVivo. NVivo facilitates the analysis of qualitative and subjective research data (AlYahmady & Alabri, 2013), and produced a more uniform and standardised overview of the themes observed.

Analytical Framework

In order to assess how the visions in the AFM (aim to) contribute to transformative change in the food system, it is first of all necessary to understand what different types of AFMs operate in the chosen context of the city of Utrecht. Hence, this research worked to identify how its initiatives relate to the typologies seen in section 2.2., to observe the plurality of expressions of the AFM. This is represented in Figure 3.3. below. This entails understanding in what way the initiatives showcase themselves to be established in the interplay of food production, food procurement, or the facilitation of access to practical interaction with the food system.

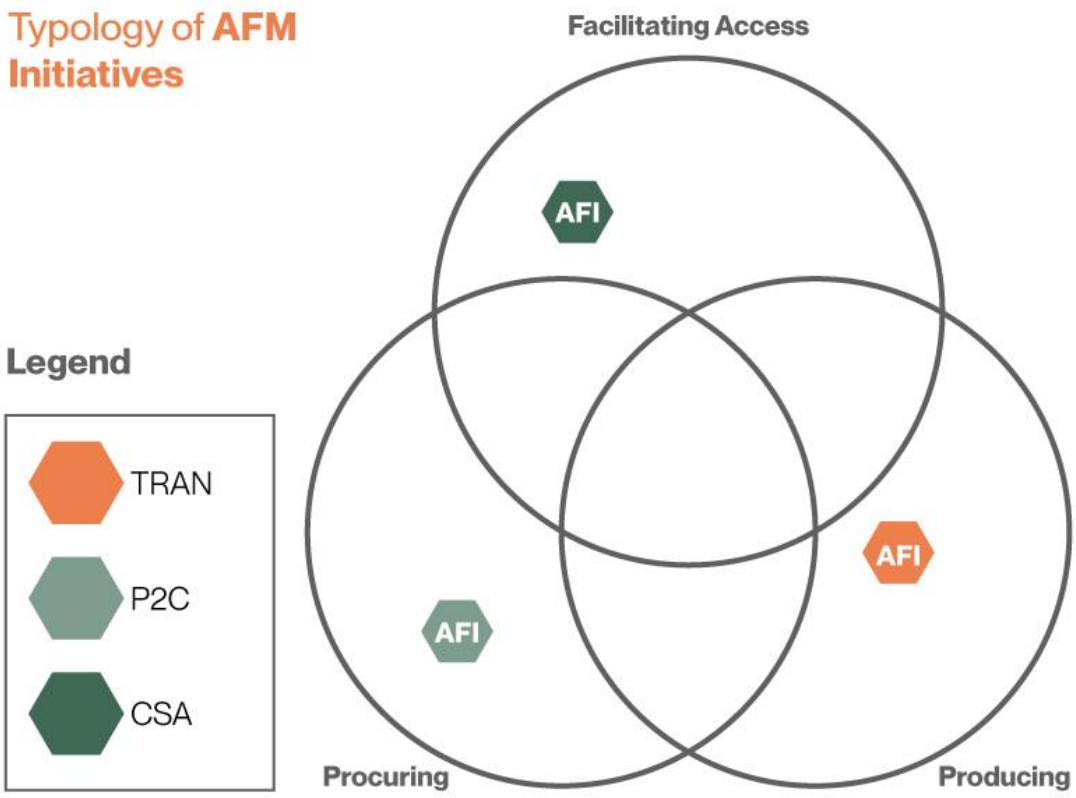


Figure 3.3. Typology of Alternative Food Initiatives (AFIs). Based on Sharp et al. (2015)

Analytical Questions

The questions drawn from the conceptual framework will guide the analysis of the transformative intent of the visions in the AFM in Utrecht. The analytical questions, and the codes they translate to for the data analysis, are summarised in Appendix B.

In understanding how AFIs employ visions to contribute to transformative change, it is, first of all, important to respect and represent the plurality of initiatives present in the city and to, therefore, understand how different types of initiatives may be differently transformative. To answer *R.Q.1.* '*How is the AFM constituted?*', it is important to look into (i) what AFIs are active in the city, (ii) who participates in them (iii) what activities they carry out, and (iv) how they collaborate or form networks.

After gaining a sense of the upmake of the AFM in Utrecht, *R.Q.2. 'What are the visions in the AFM?'* looked into what the different visions are within the individual AFIs to gain a sense of the ways they may relate to each other, and whether the visions aligned along initiative type lines. For this, the research first sought to understand the

content of the visions in the AFM. It did this by exploring what the (i) rationales of the visions are, (ii) who the actors involved in the accomplishment of the visions are, and (iii) what plots are devised to bring about the vision. Establishing that these scenarios constituted vision also required understanding in what ways they (iv) showcased future projections, (v) presented an idealised future, and (vi) proposed ways to enact this future and prefigured it. The research then sought to highlight what the nature of the visions is, namely in what ways it presented intent towards (i) ideational change or (ii) transformational change (van der Helm, 2009), and whether the change envisioned is (iii) pro-active or (iv) responsive. Following this, the research strove to explore the innovative characteristics of the visions by looking into how the visions showcase intent for social change and to what extent they involve new ways of doing, framing, organising, and knowing (Pel et al., 2020).

Finally, assessing *R.Q.3 'To what extent do the AFM's visions contribute to transformative change?'* requires understanding (i) how different visions are differently transformative which (ii) builds on an exploration of how they indicate intent to challenge, alter, or replace the incumbent food system, (iii) how the different AFIs enact their visions, and (iv) how these visions are taken up at institutional levels. This assessment builds on the four dimensions of sociomaterial relations explored in the TSI framework.

Chapter 4 | Results & Analysis

4.1. Case-study Analysis

The city of Utrecht is an interesting case as it has expressed the ambition to work on the question of food justice from a resilience perspective. It is currently working on the "Healthy living for and by all" project, which includes the intentions of greening the cities, fostering a sustainable energy transition, and improving human resilience. Additionally, a food agenda (*Voedselagenda*) has been adopted to find out how to foster a more sustainable and inclusive food system in the city. This demonstrates the city's engagement with transitioning its food systems to a more sustainable and localised one which upholds questions of food, justice, and food justice. Nevertheless, a recent FAO assessment highlights that much work still needs to be done for Utrecht to realise its resilience ambitions (Haenen et al., 2018). Only 5-10% of the city's food is destined for domestic consumption. The biggest food processor in the region is Douwe Egberts, a coffee roastery, and the largest agricultural land use serves livestock farming (Haenen et al., 2018). In this context, however, there are important developments regarding AFIs. Figure 4.1. shows a map representing some of the most important food actors in the city's SFSC, indicating a strong presence and a variety of ties between the different initiatives.

The figure is representative of the AFIs studied, save for *Voedseltuin Overvecht*. Below, I will give a brief description of the various initiatives studied, their activities, and their alignment with regard to Sharp et al.'s (2015) typology of AFIs around food access, production, and procurement

- Koningshof:

The *Koningshof* provides allotment gardens to inhabitants in Utrecht with about 30 gardens. It also has its own food production areas with a production field, a greenhouse, and various fruit-bearing trees. These produce vegetables that are sold at a market they host each Saturday, with their produce and that of some other (organic) local food producers. This food production is sustained by a group of volunteers that helps out on Saturdays as well. There is a low entry threshold for the volunteering, and it also serves an educative purpose (R7-9, P1). People are encouraged to exchange knowledge and practices around sustainable food provisioning, whether it be eating,

growing, or purchasing food. It also offers an event space on the property. The *Koningshof*, herein, mixes the facilitation of *access* to alternative food practices, the *production* of food in an alternative manner, and the *procurement* of alternatively and sustainably grown foods.

- Voedseltuin Overvecht:

Voedseltuin Overvecht has at its disposition three gardens that serve as allotment gardens that are run by volunteers. These volunteers can harvest the vegetables by themselves and are assisted in the cultivation and harvest process by a garden coordinator employed by the organisation. People are encouraged to harvest within the capacity of their consumption, leading to the remaining uncollected harvests being sold at the gate to passers-by. One of the locations is associated with a restaurant—STECK—that sources the food of its menu from the garden, while allowing customers to view where the food is accessed from. These gardens are also often used as examples for like-minded institutions and individuals to set them up in future city and neighbourhood designs. Similarly to *Koningshof*, the *Voedseltuin* facilitates all three pillars of AFI intervention.

- Voko:

Voedselkollektief Utrecht Voko (Food collective Utrecht Voko) is an initiative that allows customers to purchase locally produced foods on a weekly basis. It serves as a platform where local farmers and food producers can offer their produce to for members to do their groceries. The members are all involved to some extent in running the organisation, with an obligatory volunteer shift once a month. These volunteering shifts are organised in teams: the administrative team, the transport team that collects the food produce at the farms, and a promotional team that handles internal and external communication (R2). *Voko* is centred around the *procurement* of food.

- Markt om de Hoek:

Markt om de Hoek (Market around the corner) is a neighbourhood initiative by a neighbourhood in the east of Utrecht located around an abandoned train line that was going to be redeveloped by the city. The citizens of that neighbourhood petitioned the municipality not to use it for high-density residence, instead putting it at the disposition for citizen initiatives. It is a market held once or twice a year, where local food

producers and inhabitants of the neighbourhood are invited to sell products and produce that are locally grown and produced (R3). It is also centred around the *procurement* of food.

- Groentetas:

Groentetas (Vegetable bag) is a student-run initiative similar to *Voko* that offers the chance to purchase local organic food produce weekly. It also centres on the *procurement* of food.

- Utrecht Natuurlijk:

Utrecht Natuurlijk is an initiative that originated with the municipality, but which has since then become an independent organisation. It is a network of various allotment gardening plots and local urban agriculture plots. It also has small cafés spread and market stands throughout the city that offers regional products and locally grown food from the gardens. It is also an educative platform hosting workshops around food production and processing and offers its locations as places for events and collaborative events (R1). It is oriented towards *access, procurement,* and *production*.

- Local2Local:

Local2Local is a platform striving to connect food producers with consumers through blockchain technology. It offers food practitioners a platform to map endless factors and indicators in the supply chain such as food amounts by weight, temperatures stored, soil health and biodiversity, in an attempt at fostering transparency within the food supply chains. The platforms connecting people also allow for direct investment into producers on the basis of trust and experience. *Local2Local* is also a research initiative looking into how best to engage SFSCs and activate young talents to innovate in the food sector. It focused on the *procurement* of food, and access to some extent through its research and educational ambitions.

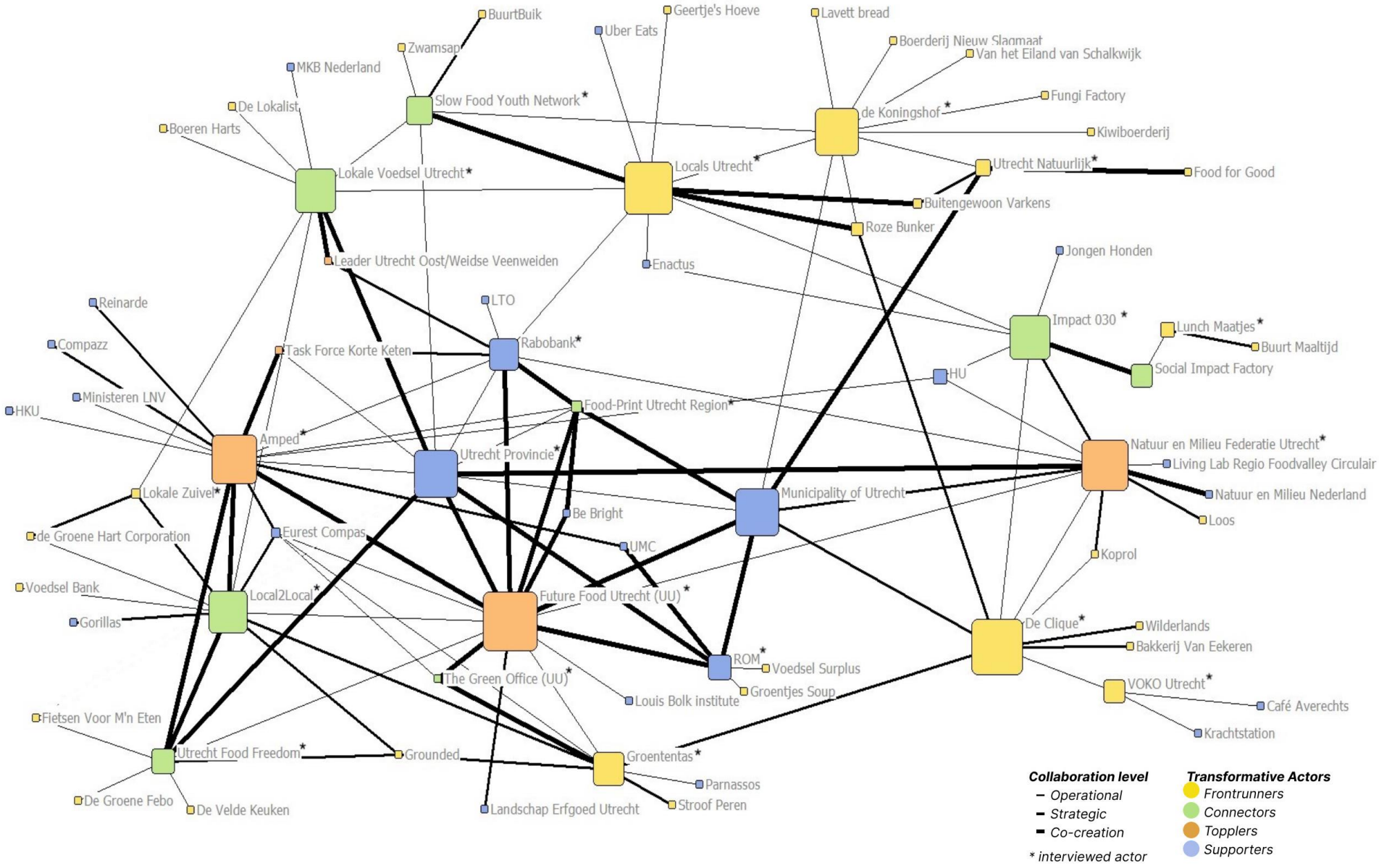


Figure 4.1. Overview of SFSCs in Utrecht as studied by (Jeandrain, 2022)

- GROUNDED:

GROUNDED is an initiative that offers CSA opportunities for volunteers, offers weekly yoga and dinner sessions, and hosts educational events while also having a café. It also organises *GROUNDED Festival*, a festival that sources practically all of the food and drinks on the festival grounds from local producers. They are located, and have stewardship, over one of the many forts that surround the region of Utrecht. In this, *GROUNDED* presents aspects of *access, procurement, and production,* though with the festival being one of the main activities organised, the *production* side plays a somewhat lesser role.

- SFYN:

The *Slow Food Youth Network (SFYN)* is an organisation that aims to inspire and inform young adults about the potential and possibilities within an alternative food system that centres on slowing the market dynamics in the food system. It hosts a variety of ever-changing activities that include the development of a local food market map, raises awareness for sustainable restaurants and like-minded food initiatives, or gives instructional sessions on partaking in an alternative food system through foraging workshops or food processing workshops. In this, it focuses on *access* to the alternative food movement.

Figure 4.2. shows how these initiatives fit within Sharp et al.'s (2015) typology of AFIs. It showcases that the AFIs in Utrecht are often a combination of TRAN, P2C, and CSA endeavours, that also incorporate a variety of dimensions of AFIs. Notable, ones incorporating elements of CSA also tend to be more holistic in the enactment of different dimensions of AFI interventions and P2C-type AFIs focus more strongly on the procurement side. TRAN-type initiatives, on the other hand, appear to be less distinctly defined by the type of activity they propose, and experience more freedom in the adherence to different dimensions of AFIs.

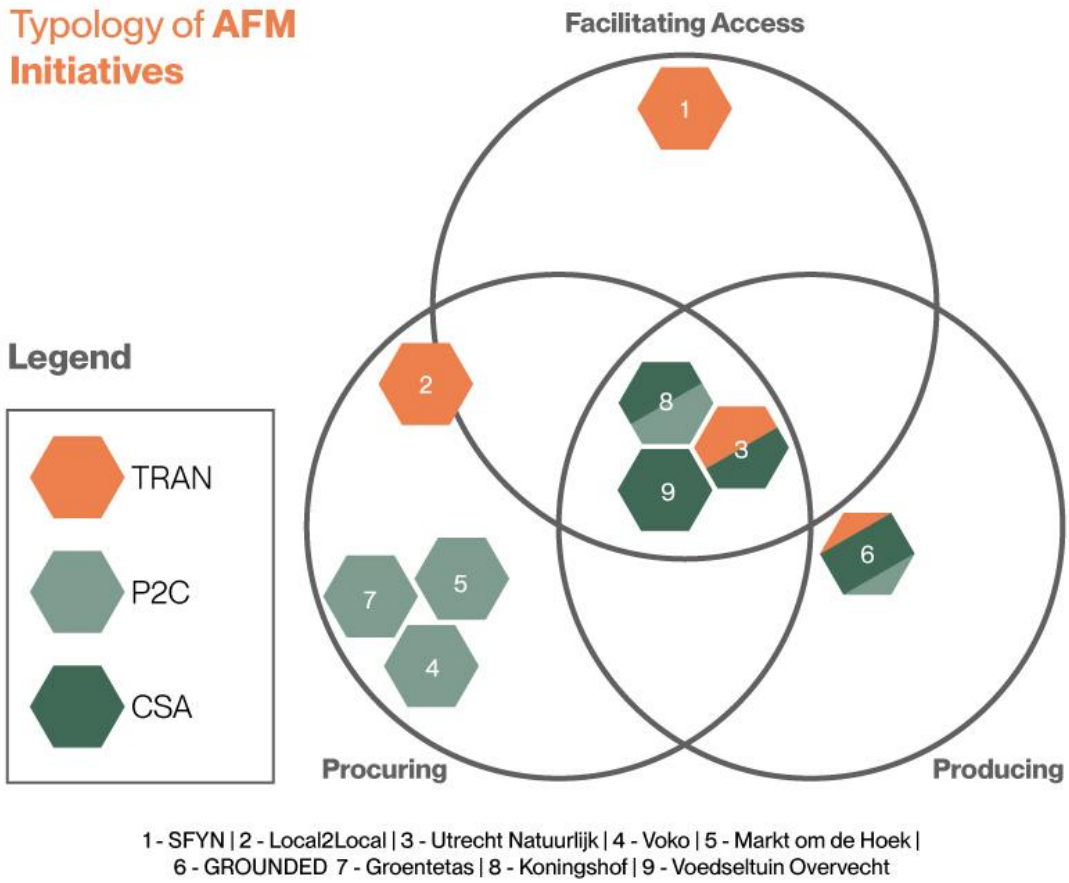


Figure 4.2. Typology of AFIs in the AFM in Utrecht. Based on (Sharp et al., 2015)

4.2. Visions in the initiatives

The AFM in Utrecht is rife with a plurality of visions, as are the visions within each initiative. The AFIs can be seen as receptacles for this plurality of visions at the personal level of representatives and participants. Rather than it being the visions that delineate different types of initiatives, it is their manifestation in the activities the AFIs propose that serve to mark the differences. It is, therefore, difficult to, first of all, establish a distinct typology of visions within the AFM in Utrecht and, subsequently, attribute any type of vision to any type of AFI. This can be partly attributed to the fact that different initiatives cannot easily be classified as a single type of initiative (TRAN, P2P, or CSA). Initiatives like GROUNDED or Koningshof, for instance, present a mix of translation and advocacy intents paired with organising direct producer-to-consumer (P2C) market dynamics, all the while offering chances to engage in community-supported agriculture (CSA). Other initiatives that do not necessarily …

Tables 4.1. and 4.2. respectively show that the rationales and plots the visions of the AFIs are built on do not necessarily overlap with respect to the type of initiative and that the instances in which they do often coincide with similar overlap with other types of initiatives. Hence, the visions formulated in the AFM in Utrecht are best approached as a whole rather than being split up along types. Nevertheless, there are important differences among the initiatives, notably in terms of their appreciation and relation to the institutional context they are embedded in and approaches to viewing an idealised future food system. These points will be addressed further down below.

4.2.1. Rationale

Table 4.1. shows the rationale underlying the visions in the AFIs in Utrecht. These rationales indicate the main grievances observed by some of the main stakeholders in the various AFIs with regard to the incumbent food system; they represent the reasons why these visions are necessary in the first place (Wittmayer et al., 2019). Some of the most prevalent rationales for the visions in the AFIs are based on grievances with regard to the environmental unsustainability of the incumbent food system (R1-8, D1, D3-8, P-3); the existent (R1-14p) and international (R1-3, R5, R6, R8-14p, P2, D7) market dynamics; consumer alienation from the food production processes and a lack of embeddedness in their food production environment (R1,4, R6-9, R11, R13, R14p, P1, P3); a growing disconnect between consumers and food producers (R2, R4-9, R11-14p, P1-3, D1, D2, D8); farmer's work rights (R1-6, R10, R14p, P2, P3, D1); supply chain lengths (R2, R3, R8, R11, R14p/m, P1, P2, D7); and the consumption of animal products (R2-4, R9-12, P1, D4). The rationales, however, notably do not often refer to challenges experienced with the food system in the context of the city specifically. Their grievances with the good system tend to refer to their experience with the food system more broadly, though they do use examples of its manifestation in the city.

The concerns around *environmental sustainability* and the increasing deterioration of the environment as a result of the food system is the most prevalent theme grounding the visions of the AFM in Utrecht. It relates to the increasing eutrophication of soils from fertilizer use (R11), the nitrogen crisis the Netherlands is currently amid (R1, R2, R8), increasing droughts (R2), and an impending water-quality crisis (R8). Not every respondent always gave concrete examples of the sustainability questions they associated with the incumbent food system, but all the initiatives acknowledged that the current modes of intensive agricultural production were harmful to the planet and saw much of their succeeding rationales tied to this problem:

"All those farmers—it's not high-level maths—if you have all the world's food coming here, then you're going to have a fertilizer [nitrogen] problem. And if you see that—what is it, 80% is being exported—well then maybe it could be a bit less." (R1)

Table 4.1. Rationales in the visions of the AFIs in Utrecht

Rationale (temp)	Sustainability/environmental damage	Fair pricing	Long supply chains	International market	Alienation/embeddedness	Market dynamics	Lost knowledge	Land-appropriate production	Disconnected producer & consumer	Food desert	Food justice	Experimenting	Waste	Animal product consumption	Farmer's work rights/financing	Monoculture	Land use and access	Institutions' preferred targets	Health	Resilience/social cohesion
CSA																				
Koningshof	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x			x	x		x
R7		–			–	–			–			–								–
R8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–			–					–	–		
R9	–	–		–	–	–	–	–	–			–		–						
P1	–		–		–		–	–	–			–	–	–						–
Voedseltuin Overvecht	x		x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x							x	x
R13	–		–	–	–	–			–	–	–	–								–
D3	–										–								–	
P2C																				
Voko	x		x	x					x		x		x	x	x				x	
R2	–		–	–					–				–	–	–				–	
D1	–								–		–		–		–					
D2									–				–							
P2	–		–	–					–				–		–					
Markt om de Hoek (R3)	x	x	x	x		x								x	x					
R3	–	–	–	–		–								–	–					
D6																				
Groentetas	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x				x	
R11	–		–	–	–	–	–	–	–				–	–					–	
R12	–			–		–		–	–					–						
TRAN																				
Utrecht Natuurlijk	x	x		x	x	x	x		?					x	x	x			x	x
R1	–	–		–	–	–									–	–				–
D4	–						–							–					–	–
Local2Local (R6)	x			x	x	x		x	x						x	x				x
R6	–			–	–	–		–	–						–	–				–
GROUNDED	x			x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x
R4	–				–	–	–		–					–	–		–	–		–
R5	–			–		–	–		–		–		–		–		–	–	–	–
D5	–																			–
P3	–				–		–	–	–				–		–					–
SFYN	x	x		x		x							x	x	x		x	x	x	
R10	–	–		–		–							–	–	–		–	–	–	
Region/Municipality																				
R14	p/m	p	p/m	p	p	p			p						p				p/m	
D7	–		–	–															–	
D8	–	–	–						–				–							
Total	9	5	5	9	6	8	4	4	6	1	3	2	5	7	7	2	3	3	6	5

The *existent market dynamics* in the incumbent intensive industrial food system are seen to favour large-scale industrial agricultural actors at the expense of smaller-scale, organic or regenerative farmers (R1, R3-6, R8-12). This translates to unfair access to arable lands (R4, R5, R8) as a result of subsidies favouring larger-scale producers (R4, R5). It also presents an inability to compete on the market scale with such producers due to relatively higher production costs while prices within the market structures are seen to be set by large retailers like supermarkets. At the same time, these supermarkets stand in the way of the enactment of meaningful change by giving consumers the choice for convenience, facilitating a mindset demanding constant product availability regardless of seasons, and through their asking of unrealistic prices that do not justly represent farmers' work (R5, R7-12, R14). Municipal actors also recognise the influence of market dynamics on the choices made by consumers, and R14 also relates the embeddedment within neoliberal market dynamics that results in the increased pressures of professional life onto the private sphere to the devaluation of food in daily life. This then favours participation in a convenience-based food economy.

The market dynamics further translate into *the alienation of consumers* from the production of food, and the processes underlying it. In line with this, it has also disconnected consumers from the producers of the food that they eat (R2, R4-6, R8-12, D1,…) as a result of ever-increasing supply chain lengths. This has enabled the devaluation of the value of food and contributed to a race to the bottom of food prices, facilitated by the increasing neoliberalisation of the food system and its market dynamics. As a result, farmers have seen their share of the income continuously decreasing and *fail to be adequately remunerated for their labour*. Where farmers used to be organised in smaller farmer's market structures, or where the purchasing of food occurred more at farm estates directly, the modern food auction system forced farmers to scale up their production at the expense of diversity in their production, incentivising monocropping:

> *"And then the upswing of the auctions came. All these small parties came to the auctions, but later the auctions didn't accept that anymore, saying they wanted larger quantities of this and that. And at the same time, it was being scaled up to serve Amsterdam, and some products were even shipped to Berlin. So, it required larger quantities and larger transport lines. Up until the point where vegetable farmers' role changed; they used to be producers and sellers*

> *and harboured all this all-around knowledge, including crop rotation, and that went really far and deep. And they had to let go of all of that, which they saw as a great loss." (R8)*

The disconnection engendered by these market dynamics is also seen to have impacted the very growth and design of cities:

> *"Up until the industrial revolution, cities were dependent on their surroundings. How much food the city could produce determined how much the city could grow. And that turns out to be completely gone now, the connection between the city and the land, and maybe even the connection between people and the land." (R9)*

The *international nature of the globalised agricultural market* also contributes to this. The main grievance underlying this rationale is the idea that the Dutch are the second largest agricultural exporter in the world, yet all the while important a large amount of their food too (R1-6, R8-12). Given the negative externalities of this food production, there is a definite idea that those emissions should be reserved for domestic production rather than their participation in the globalised food market (R1, R3, R8). Additionally, the successive global crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the current war in Ukraine, and the increasingly visible impacts of climate change—such as droughts and floodings—are highlighting cracks in the globalised food system and highlighting its precarity:

> *"We're scared now—we're seriously scared—because yeah, we really believe that there's a food crisis coming in October. Yeah, it's that soon for us. […] First, because the pandemic still did a lot of damage to the food system, especially, and showed how big the world's food system and the world food chain are. There is all this conflict rising around the world, just the price of olive oil for example, or mustard—you cannot find mustard anymore. And this summer, also; there are massive droughts all around the world; massive fires; and yeah, we are just not ready. We don't have stock… I think in Europe, we have an autonomy of seven days in terms of food, something like that. It's very short. It's very, very short. So we are absolutely not prepared." (R5)*

It is interesting to contrast these rationales with the food system metrics typically held up in researching this topic. Hebinck et al. (2021) highlight that the dominant metrics underlying sustainable food systems are food safety and food waste, while social welfare, the food economy, and animal welfare are often underlit. The AFIs in Utrecht, however, showcase a focus on precisely those areas typically overlooked by other sustainable food system initiatives, presenting their intentions and rationales as being complementary to other sustainable food system movements intervening in the food system transition. Indeed, though only a small minority of AFIs in Utrecht bring up the question of food justice in their rationales for needing changes in the food system, their focus on farmers' rights and consumer alienation from food producers and food production processes show intent to contribute to more social welfare in the food system. At the same time, the attention paid to the supply-chain length, internal and international market dynamics, and—again—the concerns over the distance of producers from consumers, highlights the grievances expressed with regard to the incumbent food economy. Moreover, the advocacy for more plant-based and less animal-product-focused diets throughout the initiatives highlights the need to address animal welfare too in the devising of better food systems.

4.2.2. Plot

Table 4.2. gives an overview of the various plots setting out the formulations of the future visions in the AFIs in Utrecht. Similarly to the rationales grounding the visions, there doesn't appear to be a coherent thread delineating the visions of different types of initiatives. Though there is more variety in the plotlines of the visions, there is, at the same time, also more overlap between the different initiatives. The most prominent narrative plots throughout the AFIs are the reconnection of producers and consumers through some form of co-ownership (R1-8, R10-14p, D2, D3, D6, P3); the adoption of more circular or regenerative agricultural practices (R1, R2, R4-6, R8, R12, R13, D2, D4, D6, P1, P3); forming a hub for knowledge and/or networking (R1, R2, R4-6, R8-10, R12, R13, D2, D4, D5, P1); or presenting themselves as places for pioneering and experimenting with alternative solutions (R1, R2, R5, R6, R8, R9, R11, R13, D4, P1, P3). These ambitions are aimed at being reached by taking a holistic and intersectional approach to the activities related to food production and consumption (R1, R4-6, R8, R10, R11, D3, D4, D6, P1, P3); or the active fostering of community creation (R1, R3-10, R12-14p, D3-6, P1, P3). Most notably, however, is the notion that these visions all contain forms of institutional intervention into the food system (R1-

14p/m, D1, D7, D8). Similarly to the visions' rationales lack of broad mention of the food system in the context of the city specifically, so do their plotlines. Mentions of the value of institutional intervention are an exception thereto as the municipality is often named, yet other solutions envisioned do not necessarily refer to their urban embeddedment explicitly.

The *active fostering of reconnection of consumers and producers* echoes the rationale that this connection has been missing in the existent food system. It promotes efforts at co-ownership over the food system where consumers either financially buy into AFIs or develop a sense of ownership through their active participation in it. One of the notable examples brought up in the co-ownership plot is the *'Herenboeren'* initiative (R1, R4, R7, R8, R13), where consumers collectively finance the development of farms and contribute with manual labour on the farm—to varying degrees—in return for regular produce from the farm.

> *"I think that such a form of crowdfunding of new products, new forms of cultivation, or refinancing farmers, that's a similar model—maybe it's a bit more accessible because you don't need to come and harvest yourself and it's not such a super tight and exclusive community—but I think 'Herenboeren' is a fantastic concept. And that it plays a very important role in an inspiration phase, showing that an alternative is possible." (R6)*

The *'Herenboeren'* example shows how this plot is already being prefigured to some extent yet doesn't need to be the only way of fostering such a reconnection. The involvement of the consumers in the cultivation of their food is reflected in the practices of CSAs, and other types of initiatives also see the value in fostering people's exposure to the food that they eat through such practices. Initiatives like *Voedseltuin Overvecht* hope to see the proliferation of the CSA model, but also hope to see more involvement of other sectors like that of catering and hospitality in connecting their customers to the food served on location (R13, D3). P2C-like initiatives also envision this renewed proximity between consumers, food retailers, and food producers (R2, R11, R13, D2). This plotline incorporates a lot of the values voiced in plots *advocating for SFSCs* as a solution to overcoming the incumbent system's grievances (R1, R2, R4-6, R8, R11, R12, D1, D2,…), with a focus on *implementing this at a local scale* (R2, R4-12, D2,…). Here, the local production of food is, thus, seen as an end in itself while also being a means

of overcoming grievances of the incumbent food system. This, however, echoes some of the criticisms voiced by Tregear (2011) who argues that there is often too much reliance on the goals expressed in AFIs being inherently positive influences on—and alternatives to—the food system. Importantly, the initiatives acknowledge the ambiguity of the term 'local' and strive to provide definitions therefore to some degree at least. Thus, *Voko* determines a maximum range of food provenance between 35 and 60km (D2), the *Koningshof* hints at a 100km range (R9), while others entertain more fluid notions of locality as encompassing provincial, national, or European borders (R3, R4-6, R10-13). The latter understanding of locality is one also professed by the municipality, on the basis that it is maybe too idealistic and unfeasible to attain a self-sustaining food system in the city or Utrecht alone, even when considering the region (R14). This attempt at determining locality sheds light on the difficulties to find definitions thereof in the literature, and the complexity of establishing *local* food systems when these boundaries are not well delineated. It is important, however, not to conflate locality with accessibility, as the prices for locally produced foods tend to be more expensive (R2, R10, R14p), and there is, therefore, a need to intervene in such a way that local, healthy, and sustainable food is rendered more affordable for marginalised populations who would otherwise not be able to partake in such an alternative food system (R2, R8, R13, R14p, D2-4, P1).

Moreover, the extent to which regional or provincial food systems can satisfy local food demands is also questioned by both the AFIs in their visions and municipal actors. There seems to be a consensus that a fully food-autonomous city is near impossible to achieve, though the visions of the AFIs allude to hopes of up to 80% local food production (R3, R6, R8, R9). This is a sentiment that municipal actors echo on a personal level (R14p), but at the political level, these numbers tend to be much less ambitious, with conversations currently comprising a rise in local food consumption from 5% to 20% (D7).

The reconnection of consumers with food producers also hints at the restoration of a more holistic approach to the roles and functions farmers can fulfil, bringing a more *intersectional approach to their practices* (R1, R4-6, R8, R11, R13, D3). The aforementioned long supply chains and the grievances voiced in relation thereto include the loss of knowledge that farmers have traditionally held, regarding their land and the cultivation practices, but also with regards to the retailing of their produce. To counteract the consequences of the food auctions' erosion of sustainable farming practices, the AFIs in Utrecht view a re-concentration of these tasks and practices as a way to

facilitate the emergence and establishment of a more sustainable small-scale, localised SFSCs. At the same time, this intersectionality also extends beyond the wholesale of the produce farmed:

> *"In the last century, we have pulled everything apart: nature became nature, agriculture became agriculture, city became city, and before that everything was mixed together. And the farmer took care of the environment. That's what it came down to and I think we need to get back to that." (R8)*

The majority of the AFIs studied viewed the embedment of farming activities within more *community-building practices* as an important way to raise awareness and garner support for the stakeholders in the AFIs. This community aspect permeates the majority of the initiatives and is seen as an important tool in establishing strong and resilient alternatives.
There is an important connection being made with more artistic and creative activities being tied to the AFIs as a way of seeking the sustenance of the radical edge the AFIs see in themselves, and that they project onto their plotlines for an idealised future food system.

Interestingly, rather than seeing themselves contributing to the realisation of an alternative food system through the production of food, the majority of the AFIs studied saw themselves as becoming *hubs for knowledge and networking* in such a system and serving as *facilitators for likeminded actors* to take up alternative cultivation and food production practices. Initiatives that already incorporated some degree of farming in their activities like the CSAs, GROUNDED, and Utrecht Natuurlijk, displayed intentions to continue with these practices but did not have the ambition to scale that up to any significant extent to compete with the incumbent food system's actors, nor make it their primary role in intervening in it. The knowledge they have already accrued in the course of their activities, and the experience they see themselves garnering in the future is, then, seen as the main tool they have at their disposition in the fostering of a more sustainable food system:

Table 4.2. Plots in the visions of the AFIs in Utrecht

Plot (temp)	SFSC & transparency	Local production	Land and season appropriate diets and production	producer/consumer co—ownership and participation	Circular/regnerative agriculture	Intersecting sectors: bring back multitude of activities under farming	Campaigning	Involve incumbent producers	Hub for knowledge and/or networking	Supporting other initiatives	Pioneering/place of experimentation	Decentralised replication of formula	Invovle and be aware ofpeople from different backgrounds	Community creation	Exposure/inspiration/behavioural change	Conversations with insitutional actors	Staying small	Policy solution	Banking sector investment	Involve schools	Diverting from growth-based economy	Green in public space	Accessibility and visibility
CSA																							
Koningshof	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	
R7		–		–			–							–	–			–			–	–	
R8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–		–		–	–	–	–		–	–				
R9		–	–						–		–			–	–			–					
P1		–	–		–	–			–		–		–	–	–						–	–	
Voedseltuin Overvecht			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	
R13			–	–	–	–	–		–	–	–	–	–	–		–	–	–	–	–		–	
D3		–		–		–				–			–	–						–			
P2C																							
Voko	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x			x		
R2	–	–		–	–		–	–	–	–	–	–	–					–			–		
D1	–											–						–					
D2	–	–		–	–			–	–	–			–										
P2	–	–						–		–		–											
Markt om de Hoek (R3)				x	x	x						x		x			x	x					
R3				–								–		–			–	–					
D6				–	–	–								–									
Groentetas	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x			x				x		x		x	
R11	–	–	–			–	–				–							–		–		–	–
R12	–	–	–	–	–				–	–				–				–					
TRAN																							
Utrecht Natuurlijk	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x			x		x			
R1	–	–		–	–	–			–	–	–			–	–			–		–			
D4		–	–		–	–	–		–	–	–		–	–						–			
Local2Local (R6)	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x			x	
R6	–	–		–	–	–	–		–	–	–	–		–	–	–		–	–			–	
GROUNDED	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		x	x		x	x	x		x				x	
R4		–		–	–	–			–			–		–		–		–					
R5	–	–	–	–	–	–			–		–	–		–	–			–				–	
D5		–				–			–					–									
P3		–		–	–	–					–			–	–						–	–	
SFYN		x	x	x		x	x		x	x				x	x			x					x
R10		–	–	–		–	–		–	–				–	–			–		–			–
Region/Municipality																							
R14		p		p			p						p	p				p/m		p	p	p	
D7		–						–										–		–			
D8	–	–					–											–					
Total	6	7	6	9	8	8	7	2	8	6	7	5	4	8	5	4	2	9	3	3	2	5	1

> *"[We see ourselves] as a small link in the greater whole by staying close to our core—especially in the neighbourhood of Overvecht—what I just said: meeting, connecting, integrating, being busy outside, sustainably grown food. We don't want more, or we would fall in the same growth trap that requires the organisation to become bigger, more bureaucratic and all that" (R13)*

This need for hubs of knowledge and collaboration is also recognised by AFIs that do not necessarily see themselves as fulfilling the role themselves:

> *"A perfect food system is networking and collaboration, and I think that that's like a fundamental reason that* Groentetas *survived this year—if we were doing it by ourselves, we wouldn't have. And there were a lot of moments that we almost didn't. But from the support of other organizations and individuals who had the same vision as us or who were trying to do the same thing as those that got us through. And I mean, you see it on tackling any sustainability issue. It's moving from competition to cooperation." (R12)*

This ties into the AFIs vision as pioneering these alternatives and becoming places of experimentation to discover how the AFM can establish itself as a viable alternative to the incumbent food system, and the ways it can exert pressure on its change. This experimentation is seen as an important facet of the AFIs' current activities and the pathways they will be taking in the future. This includes recurring trials and errors that are seen as being the foundation of the work needing to be done by AFIs to determine what a more sustainable food system could look like:

> *"We have to start doing something; It's enough about planning and we should start doing and using the solutions. And maybe then, we will realise that it is not the solution, or it is not the best solution. But at least we already know then that this doesn't work. So we can try something else. So we are a bit more into the trying, failing, trying, failing." (R5)*

The AFIs' intentions to be places of experimentation and to connect like-minded initiatives also translate into their willingness to educate people about the strategies they themselves have employed so that they may *freely replicate* them elsewhere. The belief undergrounding it is that the proliferation of AFIs will serve to give people better access to alternatives or empower them to establish the alternatives they require themselves (R4-6, R8, R13).

Yet while the AFIs focus on their roles in bringing about the necessary change to establish a more sustainable food system, they all also place a lot of importance on policy solutions to solidify and facilitate the chance for alternative food systems to take root. There is great diversity in the policy interventions mentioned, such as changing the food taxation (R9), scrapping policies that currently stand in the way of circular agricultural practices (R1), and better allocating public space for the ability to incorporate food into it (R5, R7, R11-13), or better allocating subsidies to create a level playing field in which AFIs have a chance to better embed themselves in:

> *"I would like to see earning levels in taxation. One for local-organic at 5% or so, then 15% for regular (non-organic) local, and 20 or 30% for everything that falls outside of that. If you can imagine something for that. I don't know how you could determine that. Maybe it should be within the Netherlands or a 100-kilometre radius. And for example, also just a meat-tax, sugar-tax, that sort of thing. I think that that is all necessary in it" (R9)*

> *"If you see how small circularity still is in the current system… laws and regulations that stand in the way of closing loops need to get thrown own as quickly as possible. Al the talk about crazy cow disease, that closed loops would cause all kinds of problems; nonsense, it's too easy to prohibit that with one in one single pen-stroke. It's completely crazy that you can't feed pigs kitchen waste, it's ridiculous" (R1)*

These policy solutions are deemed important to facilitate the return to holistic farming practices, allowing for the adequate pricing of food and other (ecosystem) services the initiatives perform or transferring subsidies from the incumbent sector towards an alternative food system. This is all intended to ease the market access of SFSCs and AFIs and remove much of the risk factor, while also valuing the positive intervention AFIs hope to play in the context of a sustainability transition in the food system.

Interestingly, one of the municipality's main intervention trajectories on the topic of food—the implementation of school lunches (R14m, D7)—does not directly find much resonance in the AFIs; There is an acknowledgement that schools and education ought to play a role in educating future generations in the sustainable (R1, R11, R13, D3, D4), yet those instances typically refer to knowledge around the practice of sustainable food production, rather than the consumption of sustainable food at school.

The importance of policy solutions in the plotlines of the visions in the AFIs also hints at the last aspect guiding them, namely the actors that they deem necessary to realise these visions.

4.2.3. Actor

Table 4.3. gives an overview of the types of actors most mentioned in the visions of the AFM in Utrecht. This presents an overview of the actors interviewed and herein contributes to painting a picture of the upmake of the AFM. However, the interviews themselves centred on the actors that the adherent to the AFIs themselves envisioned as playing a crucial roles in actualising their visions. The initiatives overwhelmingly see AFIs—themselves included—as important contributors to achieving the visions of a future food system (R1, R2, R4-14p, D1-8) and, echoing the plotlines mentioned above, place a lot of responsibility on the municipality (R1, R3, R4-6, R8-11, R13, 14m D1, D3) and the national government (R1-6, R8-10, 14p, D1, D7) to contribute to the changes they deem necessary. There is also an important role for platforms specifically focused on connecting initiatives or facilitating their access to the market (R1, R3, R4, R6, R8, R10-13, D4), as well as research initiatives and universities (R1, R6, R10-13, D1). Lastly, a majority of initiatives address the need to engage and activate civil society to live the necessary change and put pressure on lawmakers to fulfil the role put aside for them (R1-3, R5, R7, R10-13, D4-7).

Table 4.3. Actors in the visions of the AFIs in Utrecht

Actors	Volunteers	AFIs	Restaurants	Experts	National Government	Region and Muncipality	European Union	Banks	Farmers	Connector/facilitator platforms (Local2Local)	NGOs	Housing associations and construction companies	Research Institutions/ Universities	Consumers / Civil Society
CSA														
Koningshof	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x				x
R7	—	—		—										—
R8		—			—	—		—	—	—				
R9		—			—	—								
P1														
Voedseltuin Overvecht	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
R13	—	—	—			—		—	—	—	—	—	—	
D3		—				—								
P2C														
Voko		x			x	x							x	x
R2		—			—									—
D1		—			—	—							—	
D2		—												
P2														
Markt om de Hoek (R3)					x	x		x		x				x
R3					—	—		—		—				—
D6		—												—
Groentetas	x	x				x	x			x			x	x
R11		—				—							—	—
R12	—	—					—			—			—	—
TRAN														
Utrecht Natuurlijk	x	x			x	x				x			x	x
R1		—			—	—				—			—	—
D4	—	—	—			—				—				—
Local2Local (R6)		x			x	x	x	x	x	x			x	
R6		—			—	—	—	—	—	—			—	
GROUNDED		x	x		x	x	x		x	x				x
R4		—			—	—	—		—	—				
R5		—	—		—	—								—
D5		—	—											—
P3														
SFYN		x	x		x	x	x			x			x	x
R10		—	—		—	—	—			—			—	—
Region/Municipality														
R14		p			p	m								
D7		—		—	—	—								—
D8		—												
Total	4	8		1	7	9	4	4	4	8	1	1	6	7

The AFIs in Utrecht echo the will to enact change that permeates the AFM literature (Kondoh, 2015; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006). Not only do they desire and envision better food futures, they also see themselves as actively taking part in enacting that future, as well as highlighting the role that a plurality of initiatives ought to play herein; they do not view themselves as the sole change-makers in the system. In this appreciation of other initiatives, the AFIs in Utrecht see *'Herenboeren'* initiatives and '*de Moestuin'*—one of the oldest CSAs in Utrecht with its own restaurant—as pioneering projects herein that can continue to exert much influence over the system (R1, R3, R8, R9, R12, R13). Interestingly the AFI '*Markt om de Hoek*' appears to be an exception in seeing itself as an important player in the enactment of change. This can be understood as being the result of their reliance on subsidies to function and them being in a precarious situation creating uncertainty as to their ability to continue their activities in the long run. It can, however, also be attributed to the roles they see as being reserved for the government and municipality. On the institutional side, it is interesting that provincial and municipal actors refer to an expectation of AFIs to take the lead in bringing about the necessary change (R14p, D7, D8):

> *"I do think that the AFM is a serious undercurrent, that indicates where the top current is headed. The top current does not want to engage with it yet, so there's a lot of resistance. But there is a serious movement, also in Utrecht, that's knocking at the door like "this and that is important, in this and that way."" (R14p)*

Governance institutions are seen as being key actors in transitioning towards a better food system. For '*Markt om de Hoek*', the municipality has played an important role in the inception of the market by allowing the repurposing of the old railway tracks in the East of the City—on which the market takes place—for communal use after local inhabitants' pleas not to allocate it for high-density construction (R3). Such interventions could also ensure that the market has a more secure future. Other initiatives see a similarly supportive role being important for the government and the municipality to fulfil.

> *"I think it's a political problem. Or maybe I'm saying it wrong. It might not be a political problem, but it should be a political ambition to make [local sustainable food] better accessible" (R10)*

This is something that is already being realised through the creation of platforms like Food-Print Utrecht or the municipality's Food Agenda that aim to connect and support pioneering initiatives. At the same time, however, AFIs express that governance institutions ought to play a more active in facilitating regulations that discourage the unsustainable practices of the incumbent food system, while also implementing ones that further facilitate the cementing of the AFIs in an alternative food system. This is often times a question of revising policies that stand in the way, or changing their approach to the support of AFIs:

> *"I think that space management is a serious threat to local food. And the municipality needs to do something about that. That's a complicated one" (R3)*

> *"[the government] needs to look to play much more of a facilitating role where they are really open, where they want to look at what needs to happen in an area—where is the request for help—and wait for involved parties, on the basis of what is already going on, to voice their real needs and request like 'hey look, all of us together want to implement food as preventative medicine, we've done this and that already, we have all this knowledge, but now we need money to do experiments for 5 years'" (R6)*

The facilitating role that government and municipalities can help fulfil is one that is also apparent in the perceived need for connecting and facilitating platforms. These are initiatives that help link initiatives together, or networks empowering initiatives to pursue the change they wish to enact. Local2Local is one expression hereof (R4-6, R8, R11-12), having already played an important role in enabling the continuation of *Groentetas* after experiencing difficulties throughout the COVID-19 pandemic (R11, R12). AFIs like *Koningshof* see themselves fulfilling such a role but, again, view the municipality as an important actor in facilitating this:

> *"Ideally, yeah, we could play fulfil a role; we could be more than just a knowledge centre, we could become a knowledge centre for urban agriculture. But also sort of a platform. That's kind of missing now. That's something that the province or the municipality should be more involved in" (R8)*

These connectors and facilitating platforms are also typically depicted as being multi-disciplinary and somewhat holistic environments pooling different types of actors. As such, some of the initiatives that are spoken about in the visions of the AFM in Utrecht that the municipality, for instance, has set in place, are also tied to research institutions like universities. Hence, a role is set aside for Utrecht University and other academic institutes in the city. They are important places to facilitate the experimentation and the development of alternatives and stimulate the safeguarding and discovery of applicable knowledge that has so much presence in the plotlines named. For initiatives like Groentetas that exist in the context of the university, Utrecht University can play a similar role as the municipality or the government in enabling and supporting their initiatives through recognition or financial support (R11, R12).

What becomes apparent is that there is no single actor that will, by themselves, be able to manifest the reality of an alternative food system. The work that AFIs see as necessary to be done would be the result of a multiplicity of actors and initiatives:

> *"In reality, the food system is about an ecosystem: naturally, everything is tied together. If you ask, 'who are the most important actors', then that's like asking 'what animal is the most important in an ecosystem'. You can't really say, it wouldn't be correct. It needs to be robust, and that means that it mostly needs to be complex, with a lot of actors and a lot of feedback loops. Just like nature accidentally designs perfect systems" (R1)*

Finally, consumers and civil society are seen as important groups to involve in changing the food system, both through their choices and the pressure they are able to exert.

The narratives underlying the visions that permeate the AFM distinctly showcase the characteristics of visions as outlined by van der Helm (2009) in that they do represent (i) future, (ii) idealised, projections permeated by (iii) a desire for them to be achieved. There are arguable differences in the radicality of the idealised versions of the future that are voiced by the AFIs, and the distance in the future that they project themselves to; these, however, do not take away the visionary nature of the imaginaries that the AFIs are embedded in. Instead, they are, once again, testimonies to the plurality of the visions underlying the AFM in Utrecht.

The rationales of the visions in the AFIs in Utrecht showcase the purpose of the change they wish to enact. In this, they present a mixture of pro-active and responsive change (van der Helm, 2009). Indeed, the two are often interwoven with grievances leading to imaginaries of a more idealistic alternative to overcome the existent food system's shortcomings. Nevertheless, some rationales can be seen as being characterised more by one than the other. The problem of sustainability and environmental damage attributed to the incumbent food system, for instance, is an example of the responsive nature of the change envisioned by the AFIs; the external, sociomaterial context, is cause for the imagination of alternatives. The market dynamics are similarly responsive as they are seen as important contributors to the unsustainable environmental impact of the food system. Yet, they also represent the interweaving of purposes by highlighting a pro-active and pre-emptive quality in the change they wish to achieve that has distinct idealised and transformational characteristics to it (van der Helm, 2009). The visioning of localised, sustainable, SFSCs where consumers and producers are more directly connected is a bottom-up intention that strives to establish a viable alternative challenging and contesting the incumbent system to establish a new normal; one that is normatively rooted in AFI practitioners' ideals and strengthened, rather than purely incepted, by the context giving rise to their grievances.

4.3. Social innovation aspect of the initiatives

The previous section showcases the contents and narratives that structure the visions in the AFM in Utrecht. It does, however, also serve another purpose; it shows the prevalence of social innovation throughout the AFIs when it comes to framing. As framing

in social innovation consists of meaning, visions, imaginaries, or discourses (Pel et al., 2020), these characteristics can be seen to relate to the plots, rationales, and actor roles that shape the narratives of visions (Wittmayer et al., 2019). The rich diversity and presence of these narrative elements and the social innovation aspects they relate to show that the visions in the AFM contain a socially innovative quality in the way of framing alternatives to the incumbent system. The AFIs, however, also display other characteristics of social innovation in the way of doing, organising, and knowing, though these are arguably less prevalent throughout the AFM.

The literature, indeed, hints at important aspects of social innovation forming much of the foundation of the activities of AFIs (Alberio & Moralli, 2021; Pellicer-Sifres et al., 2017), and this is echoed in the AFM in Utrecht. Table 4.4. provides an overview of the presence of different social innovation characteristics throughout the interrogated AFIs. This shows that the different initiatives and types of initiatives tend to contain some degree of social innovation pertaining to finding new ways of doing, organising, and knowing. The prevalent themes herein are centred around the formulation of new practices (R4-8, R10-13, D1), new forms of governance (R1-9, R13, D1, D3) and decision-making (R1, R2, R4-6, R13), the valorisation of new competences (R4-6, R8, R13, D1), and new approaches to learning (R2, R4-8, R10, R13) and appraisal (R4, R5, R7, R8, R10-13).

Table 4.4. Social Innovation in the visions of the AFIs in Utrecht

Social Innovation	Doing			Organising			Knowing			
	Practice	Technology	Material Commitment	Rules	Decision—making	Governance	Cognitive Resource	Competence	Learning	Appraisal
CSA										
Koningshof	x		x	x		x		x	x	x
R7	—					—			—	—
R8	—		—	—		—		—	—	—
R9				—		—				
P1				—		—				
Voedseltuin Overvecht	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x
R13	—	—	—		—	—		—	—	—
D3	—					—			—	—
P2C										
Voko	x			x	x	x		x	x	
R2					—	—			—	
D1	—			—		—		—	—	
D2										
P2										
Markt om de Hoek (R3)	x	x		x		x				x
R3	—	—		—		—				
D6	—									—
Groentetas	x									x
R11	—									—
R12	—									—
TRAN										
Utrecht Natuurlijk				x	x	x	x			
R1				—	—	—	—			
D4										
Local2Local (R6)	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	
R6	—	—	—		—	—		—	—	
GROUNDED	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
R4	—	—	—		—	—		—	—	—
R5	—	—			—	—	—	—	—	—
D5						—				
P3										
SFYN										x
R10	—		—						—	—
Region/Municipality										
R14	p/m		p	p	p	p/m				p
D7	—			—	—					
D8			—							—
Total	7	4	4	4	5	7	2	5	5	6

4.3.1. Doing

The exploration of new ways of doing within the visions of the AFM is centred around the adoption of new practices over the use of new technologies or the determination of new material commitments. Though seen as innovative, the main theme underlying

the AFIs is not the use of novel practices, but rather the rediscovery and normalisation of old practices in a new context. Characteristically for SFSC (Dubois, 2019), this echoes the idea that social innovation focuses on the innovative assemblage of old technologies rather than the discovery of new ones (Wolfram, 2018), albeit in the context of practices here. It is, thus, often the employment of agricultural and cultivation practices that are already in use in certain areas or that have historically been attributed to the role of the agricultural sector. The reunification of farmers with a more holistic understanding of their tasks in stewarding their lands as well as producing on—roles that were torn apart by the food auctions (R8)—is an example of such a new approach finding its roots in historical practices. Similarly, the circularity advocated for throughout the AFIs refers to a past where this was the norm:

> *"Back in the days everyone fed their scraps to the pigs. […] There was a horse and carriage going through the streets picking up potato peelings—everybody ate potatoes—because that was perfect feed" (R1)*

At the same time, the employment of new practices is also focused on the creation and maintenance of the relevance of historical practices. New practices are also aimed at preventing the same dynamics that tore down these more idealised ways of doing, such as the neoliberalisation of market dynamics (R13) and this is most strongly evidenced in the notion that the AFIs all allude to varying degrees to the importance of moving away from competitive market interactions to collaborative ones (R1, R4-13, D1-3). This also ties into another prevailing practice, namely the effort to change consumption patterns and to seek to deviate from incumbent market institutions that support the competitive dynamics in the food system—supermarkets. Indeed, the plotlines of the visions calling for local production, a more interwoven relationship of consumers and producers, and people with their food, as well as the integration of retailing roles within farming and cultivation practices, showcase an intent to deviate from the incumbent market's traditional food sourcing. There is, instead, a need for more local shops offering visibly and clearly local produce or more direct purchasing from farmers through as few middling actors as possible (R2, R3, R5, R7, R10-14).

4.3.2. Organising

The effort to change practices in the visions of the AFIs also coincides with a willingness, or a necessity, to change forms of governance and decision-making. This occurs at the levels of the AFIs themselves, and in projections of changes in municipal forms of organisation.

Internally to the AFIs, new forms of governance and decision-making are often centred around building relationships within the communities that are based on mutual trust and respect and translate into a certain degree of self-governance that trickles down into more autonomous forms of organisational structures and, therethrough also, decision-making. GROUNDED, for instance, is organised around autonomous 'circles' based on holacracy (*Holacracy*, n.d.) that each tackle the projects and initiatives that they have heart for and meeting to between circles to gain an overview of the greater whole (R4, R5). *Voedseltuin Overvecht* acknowledges the need for some supervision in the process of activating the volunteers that make up the community but simultaneously operates based on communal trust when it comes to the freedom of all volunteers to harvest the produce they collectively cultivate (R13).

In relation to the institutional context, new ways of governance and decision-making relate to the expectations of municipalities and provincial and national governance institutions to embrace a longer-term vision in approaching the food system (R1, R2, R10p) that simultaneously evokes better linkages between top-down institutional actors and bottom-up constituencies that have come from the fragmentation of institutions into separate disconnected offices that lose oversight over one another (R1, R5, R8, R10p, R11):

> *"I do believe that we need the equation between every bottom-up approach and top approach. I think there should work hand in hand, and they shouldn't be disconnected in the way that the government decide on everything, or the people decide everything in the alternative way, and an activist way or whatever. I think all of these should be combined. And that we should both, yeah, find a way to work together. Because this is how things get the fastest done." (R5)*

4.3.3. Knowing

Lastly, the visions in the AFIs speak of innovative approaches to knowing, particularly in terms of the competencies needed for the enactment of the different practices and forms or organising an alternative food system, and different ways of learning and assessing and evaluating—appraising—this system. This is reflected in the general appreciation of the need to incorporate food system knowledge in education, and in initiatives themselves striving to provide a place where education is central. The integration of this didactic quality into the visions of a future food system is also tied to the new forms of appraisal that are seen as having similar importance for its achievement:

> *"I think that giving people more information, more education about [food], that that is just really important for people to become aware of the benefits that [a better food] system can bring. And generally standing still to the daily things that bring us joy." (R7)*

With the distancing of food consumers from their food sources and the food producers, the current food system has contributed to an alienation of people from one of the essentials of the sustenance of their lives. And this is a thought echoed throughout the AFIs and their visions. Food has somehow taken a backseat in our daily lives and is sometimes seen as a necessary chore rather than being appreciated as a culturally physiologically important practice. Thus, the visions speak of the importance of new forms of appraisal of food, of dedicating more attention to the practices that come with nourishing ourselves. Herein, the greatly facilitated access to food that comes with large supermarkets and the globalised food system is, again, seen as culprits. The new forms of appraisal, therefore, also require a transition away from an economy of convenience that obscures these processes through the appreciation of different forms of food provision and a renunciation of convenience (R5, 9, 10p, R11-13).

4.4. Transformative Dimensions of the visions

The narratives of future projections and imaginaries underlying the AFM in Utrecht show the characteristics of being visions. These visions, in turn, display important elements of social innovation, particularly in their framing of a new food system, but also in the practices that they ought to employ, the new forms of governance and decision-making that are necessary to structure these practices, and the forms of knowing in terms of competences, learning and appraisal that inform and sustain the enactment of the visions. Though the descriptions of the visions in passages prior do show intent to change the incumbent food system, this does not necessarily equate to having distinct transformative intent over the system, nor their contribution to the enactment thereof. As the TSI shows, four dimensions of sociomaterial relations can inform how the visions can aim to and enact transformative change over the system, (i) relations within SI initiatives, (ii) relations in network formation, (iii) relations to institutional change, (iv) relations to the socio-material context. The research shows that the visions tend to take all four dimensions into account to a certain degree.

4.4.1. Relations within SI initiatives

The transformative dimension of the relations within the visions of the AFIs and the question of empowerment that prevails in it is reflected in all of the initiatives to some degree. There are, indeed, variations in the extent to which the stakeholders in the AFIs feel that their participation contributes to change on a larger scale in the food system, referring to the butterfly effect—their actions potentially being the one fluttering of wings that results in a storm elsewhere in the world (R3). Others are more hopeful and grateful for their personal contribution to the potential change their actions engender:

> *"I think that our efforts, and my efforts contribute to [change]. Flight shame is a real thing. And someone driving a Hummer is seen as antisocial. And those are enormous changes. […] In that sense, we are collectively making progress." (R1)*

In that sense, current participation—and the prospects of the perpetuation thereof—in a future idealised food system does contribute to a sense of empowerment at the individual level within AFIs.

4.4.2. Relations in Network Formation

The second dimension, that of relations between different initiatives in network formation, is less clearly apparent in the visions of the AFIs. Though the initiatives predominantly refer to some extent to an intention or a desire to collaborate more with different initiatives in the city, this does not always appear to be a priority. The AFIs in Utrecht are all, to some extent, interrelated either directly or indirectly, and the most well-embedded initiatives also have a good awareness of the different projects and approaches carried out in other locations. Moreover, the plotlines that address the creation of learning and networking hubs allude to an intention to be involved in the activities carried out by other initiatives. Yet, it is here also important to note that many of the initiatives are also content with staying within their existing networks and do not actively seek to expand their reach much (R2, R3, R7-9). The fact that they see the importance of coalitions does not always translate to their own ambition to be active in one. This is evidenced in the *Koningshof* who see this hub as more of a municipal responsibility rather than one needing to be initiated by the AFIs (R8). And when this intention is there, some initiatives prefer for this collaboration to remain relatively informal, rather than creating distinct formalised AFNs in the process.

> *"What we practically do is being there. These past years we have been going to all sorts of neighbourhood meetings thanks to our initiators and our garden coordinators, and also now with the board. Or when the municipality organised something around the food agenda. Often times I had the time to go there, and then I'm there, and then people know who I am, or our coordinator presents somewhere. So it's mostly working hard by networking. And explaining what you do." (R13)*

There seems to be a distinction between the act of networking and the creation of distinct networks with which to align the visions and approaches of the AFIs. This distinction contributes to one of the greatest shortcomings encountered throughout the interviews in the transformative intent of the AFM in Utrecht, and that could already be seen in the plurality of visions encountered. Indeed, despite the thematic overlap

underlying many of the visions of the AFIs, the rich diversity in rationales, plotlines, and actors referred to—even within initiatives themselves—showcase a lack of coherence in the vision within the movement as a whole. This diversity of visions is also reflected in the lack of ambition for the formulation of a formalised network, with AFIs being content with engaging in practices of change within their own initiatives, but sometimes struggling with breaching out from there. This translates into a struggle to form a cohesive whole as a movement in and of itself, presenting the AFM in Utrecht as a collective of initiatives operating along *similar* visions and ambitions but not aligning them to form a formalised movement. The difficulty to organise themselves in such a fashion has further repercussions for the initiatives' relations to institutional change.

4.4.3. Relations to Institutional Change

It is, first of all, important to acknowledge that all of the initiatives demonstrate a desire for the intervention of institutional actors to some extent at least and that they voice experience in interacting with them. There are, however, important distinctions in the evaluation of those experiences. Importantly, there are clear positive and negative experiences to the AFIs reference to the institutional context. These negative allusions to institutions such as the national or provincial government, the municipality, or institutions like the university, typically refer to hindrances in the enactment of the changes they wish to engage in. These can be seen as a lack of support for their actions (R4, R6, R8, R9, R11, R12), or the contextual institutional embeddedment in policies that are ill-fitted for the AFIs interventions (R1, R8, R9, R11, R12). Land development plans are an important example of this, as the intersectional and holistic ambitions of the AFIs often fail to conform to the characteristics of either nature, agrarian or recreational plans when they tend to incorporate them all (R8, R9, R11, R12). These experienced shortcomings on behalf of institutions are seen as being the result of lacking the initiative to incorporate food into the municipal policy plans (R6, R14p). This is, however, also often a question of capacity, as food did not make up an integral part of the policy ambitions of the municipality until recently (R14m). The instauration of a food agenda within the municipality and the new municipal coalition accords' first-time mention of food—albeit in the context of school-lunch provisions—is a sign of potential change (R1, R6, R13, R14m). Municipal and provincial ambitions are, how-

ever, not always seen as leading to practical change, with experienced lacklustre activation of the actors in the AFIs to engage with the rising interest in intervening in the food system. The initiatives that refer to these challenges also appear to be ones that embody more ambitions and radical objectives and that have a very clear desire to grow their initiative and present themselves more prevalently as an alternative to the incumbent food system (R4-12).

Initiatives that are more content with their current size and the current state of their intervention, on the other hand, seem to view their interactions with institutions through a more positive lens, and appear to feel more supported in the processes they carry out (R1, R13). This reference to the institutional embeddedment of AFIs, in turn, also informs the pathways to navigating this relationship. The AFIs with more positive relations to relevant institutions showcase a desire to reinforce this connection and involve themselves continuously further with institutional actors. In the case of *Voedseltuin Overvecht*, this means establishing themselves as an intermediary to inform institutional actors of the potential applications and benefits of urban agriculture in the city and pioneering the work where possible.

AFIs that show more scepticism towards the current institutional support mediate their place in the institutional context by finding ways to circumvent the obstacles posed by rules and legislation. This translates to the adaptation of subsidy requests to present a less radical edge and therefore conform more to the institutional expectations (R6), or the pursuit of activities that fall outside of the designated approved practices for the land initiatives hold (R5, R8, R9), demonstrating the positives of the practices they implement and obtaining some forms of legitimacy therethrough. Other actors, instead, turn to other initiatives in the hopes of forming coalitions there when support from institutions proves lacklustre (R10-12).

This divided experience with the institutional context and the varied ways of navigating it, however, do not stand in the way of the AFIs' visons' reference to the need for stronger involvement on their side. It remains a crucial plotline in the devising of an alternative food system. Nevertheless, the plotlines demanding more involvement of institutions in the creation of such a food system do not necessarily coincide with these visions proposing distinct pathways for the institutions' involvement, how they see their own relationship with the institutions unfolding, or ways the AFIs to exert

pressure on the institutional context to enact change. In that sense, the AFIs' predominant intervention in the institutional context is in the facilitation of oases of alternatives where willing participants can find the norms, values, and practices they wished were reflected more broadly in society.

The sentiment that the AFM struggles to constitute a seeming whole with a single united voice is echoed by the municipality (R14m). The same struggles that the fragmentation of bureaucratic governance pose to the AFIs in finding clear guidance and communication channels within the municipality are mirrored in the plurality of visions and approaches of AFIs towards the municipality. Actors in the municipality believe that the AFM in Utrecht has the potential to inform more meaningful change at the institutional level if they formalised their networks more coherently and organised as a stronger bloc to make their demands known.

4.4.4. Relations to the socio-material context

As the rationales in the visions in the AFM indicate, particularly those hinting at responsive change, the AFIs are acutely aware of the socio-material context they are embedded in. This particularly applies to the state of environmental degradation and climate change in which the incumbent food system is anchored, as well as the neoliberal capitalist market dynamics relying on competition between food providers rather than coalition-building develop an alternative. The reference to successive heatwaves, the Dutch nitrogen crisis, and the fears regarding water quality are examples thereof. Moreover, current international crises such as the war in Ukraine and the Covid-19 pandemic's aftermath are seen as playing important roles in the sustenance of food security in the near future (R1, R3, R5, R7, R13, D1, D3D4). The visions in the AFIs in Utrecht account for this shifting and dynamic socio-material context, and their practices strive to form mitigative interventions for its negative consequences. In the case of climate change and other forms of environmental degradation that is more directly caused by the incumbent food system, the AFIs' visions strive to replace the detrimental factors by formulating alternatives and hoping for their wider-scale adoption.

Chapter 5 | Discussion and Conclusions

5.1. Discussion

This thesis looked into what visions are formulated by AFIs in Utrecht, and how these might inform intent to exert transformative change over the incumbent food system. As the literature pointed out that studies of AFMs typically consisted of single initiative case studies (Michel-Villarreal et al., 2019), this research aimed at taking a more holistic view of the AFM, taking the city of Utrecht as its case with a multitude of representative initiatives. This approach is not without its own shortcomings, however, as taking such a broader array of actors to gain a sense of the movement as a whole goes at the expense of taking a deeper look at visions within singular initiatives. This is reflected in the methodology as time and actors' availability constraints did not always allow multiple voices to be heard within each initiative. The research was built on interviews with stakeholders in the AFM realised to identify the contents of the visions underlying their initiatives and the activities they carried out. The findings thereof were then contextualised within the visions and ambitions of the municipality of Utrecht to understand how the visions in the AFM and that of the municipality related to one another. This also shed light on how the AFM as a green niche finds its visions translated at the institutional level, and the ways municipal actors might facilitate its translation into a new or existent sociomaterial reality. The constraints related to the breadth of the research meant that interviews were supplemented with participant observation and document analysis that served to show how the initiatives themselves presented their visions publicly. These did not display information that contended with that voiced by the individual stakeholders, but neither did it always showcase the same elements of the visions. This discrepancy in vision characteristics is, however, not necessarily an indication of misalignments of stakeholder visions and that of the initiatives, instead, they may be seen as complementary information. This might be indicative of a focus on a more concise number of vision aspects in initiatives' public messaging that does not always represent the richness of the AFIs' actual visions. This would need to be confirmed with additional research in which a greater number of documents are analysed for each initiative, taking a more focused single-case study approach.

The research choices also had analytical repercussions. Since each initiative's visions were voiced by a maximum of three people, the individual visions gathered through the various methods were approached as complementary to one another in the analysis. As mentioned in the previous section, this permitted the atonement for the different visions present in the movement as well as the initiatives themselves. This diversity of individual visions paired with the ones gathered from document analysis and participant observation meant that they did permit to give an impression of the vision grounding the initiatives themselves. Yet that does not discount the fact that additional research might be carried out to cement the validity thereof by focusing on a narrower selection of initiatives. In such research, the visions of the movement may be approached as the aggregate of individual visions, rather than the sum of its diversity. Nevertheless, the sum of individual visions in initiatives does provide a reflection of the visions in the AFM in Utrecht, and could therefore lend insights into their composition, their transformative intent, and their prefigurative enactment.

This diversity of visions also showcases one of the more striking findings of the research, namely the lack of adherence to a single unified vision within the AFM in Utrecht. Though there is thematic overlap, the contents of these themes are as diverse as the visions that they are voiced by. This is not necessarily a failure of the initiatives to align their visions, yet it does show that the AFM in Utrecht has yet to find a unified voice with which to fight for their visions' shared themes. In this sense, the AFM seems to still be in the process of finding its footing as a movement in general. Rather than being a unified whole, it is a cluster of individual initiatives providing oases for the prefiguration of the visions each initiative embodies.

In these oases, however, the AFIs do reflect the contentious dynamic addressed in the literature. Their provision of alternatives and their prefiguration of an alternative food system echoes Sharp et al.'s "performance of difference" from the incumbent food system (2015, p. 15), an effort to distinguish itself from it. Watts et al.'s (2005) distinction of 'stronger' and 'weaker' AFIs lends some insight into the degree to which this differentiation may be achieved. The initiatives observed could all be qualified as 'stronger' for their active intervention in the food system and their embodiment of a challenge to the incumbent food system.

It should be noted that this differentiation and challenge of the incumbent food system, though evident, is not necessarily all-encompassing. Most notably, questions

of food sovereignty of food justice were overwhelmingly lacking. The majority of visions fail to make reference thereto. That is not to say, however, that none did and those initiatives that did—*Voedseltuin Overvecht* in particular—made them an integral part of their functioning. They therein also showed the strengths that can be drawn from it and the relevance intersecting food and other social issues has for the advancement of an integral alternative. These initiatives herein embrace Hinrich's "diversity-receptive localisation" (Hinrichs, 2003, p. 36); They show that avoiding perpetuating the social harm of the incumbent food system is as important in bringing about an alternative as the ways it produces food.

This research did not seek to evaluate the sustainability impacts of the AFM, nor its proposed visions. It did, however, contribute to the description of some perceived causal links between their prefigurative actions and the potential sustainability improvements they might engender. Most notably, the research permitted to obtain some definitions of localism and envisioned causal pathways to its positive contributions to sustainability dimensions. In doing so, it addressed one of the main grievances Tregear (2011) expressed concerning the literature.

Rather than an analysis of the impacts of the AFIs' visions, this thesis focused on its transformative intent, and the AFM's role as a niche for this transformative intent. The urban context of the research and the plurality of kinds of initiatives in it reinforces Hebinck et al.'s (2021) notion that cities can nurture the development of (food) niches—understanding the AFM as a green niche highlights its exploratory nature transpiring from the aforementioned variety of visions present in it. Evaluating the potential impact of the avenues showcased in the visions would therefore still be necessary to determine the contribution of the visions to the sustainability of the transitions they inscribe themselves in.

To understand the transformative intent, I have applied an adaptation of the TSI Framework to sketch a conceptual framework that the AFM is embedded in. As the visions in the AFIs, however, aim at providing an alternative established sociomaterial context in which the innovations envisioned have found embeddedment, the adapted TSI framework was also used to evaluate the transformative how that envisioned reality might be transformative.

These visions revealed intent on change on both “ideational” and “transformational” grounds (van der Helm, 2009, p. 100). They are ideational as they call for a very bottom-up, personal approach thereto, that centres on people’s norms, values, and practices in everyday life to change the sociomaterial reality they are embedded in. The emphasis on individual consumption is an example thereof, the need to deviate from conventional sourcing methods in supermarkets, for instance, to foster more connection with the demands of food production and obtain a more realistic perception of the costs of food. They are also transformational in their wish for institutional adoption and enactment of their visions to actively seek the alteration, replacement, or disruption of the incumbent system. The policy demands and the search for municipal and institutional intervention in the system to favour the AFIs rather than its current facilitation of the incumbent industrial food system showcase this. The advocation for co-ownership is another example of this in its provision of concrete market dynamics.

These two forms of visions are not antithetical to one another in their content and can be supplementary: most vision dimension show intent for a combination of both ideational and transformational change rather than just one or the other. Yet, the two also loosely allude to important niche dynamics, namely that of radicalisation and translation as a result of institutional ‘capture’ or adoption (Pel, 2016). The ideational dimension of the visions in the AFIs is intended for the radicalisation of the incumbent system, while transformational change relies on the AFM’s translation of its niche dynamics at institutional levels. As ideational change is the area where the AFIs can more easily prefigure their visions in, this seems to be the area of change with the most promising transformative potential. The transformational visions, on the other hand, rely on translation that is currently struggling to happen as it relies on the AFM finding its footing as an integral movement to more coherently voice a cohesive vision to institutional actors.

5.2. Conclusion

The research shows that the AFM is a constellation of initiatives falling under a similar umbrella term, but whose activities and visions reflect the inherent plurality of the AFM more broadly that transpired in Renting et al.'s (2003) account of the diversity of SFSCs and Sharp et al.’s. (2015) typology of AFIs. This plurality is evidenced in the

multitude of variations of types of initiatives present in the system, their recurrent intersection, and the different types of initiatives' varying adherence to the dimensions of intervention of AFIs.

It, furthermore, also reflects in the AFIs' multiplicity of visions that are not always bound to form a cohesive whole within initiatives, nor along initiative types' lines. This plurality, however, does not mean that there is necessarily a fundamental difference in the narratives of the visions they work towards and manifest. Indeed, some themes prevail throughout the visions. This includes their grounding in the grievances of an unsustainable food system, the disconnection between people and their food sources, and the growing gap between consumers and producers that has allowed many of the negative aspects of today's food system to take hold. Similarly, plotlines formulated to tackle this problem also show overlapping themes. These consist predominantly of the production of forms of co-ownership between consumers and producers, the adoption of more circular or regenerative ways of cultivating food, incorporating food in a rich diversity of complementary practices, and setting up hubs or knowledge and networking to facilitate the adoption and learning of new and existing AFIs. These plotlines are rife with social innovative characteristics, particularly in their approaches to framing an alternative future, but also in the practices they employ, the commitment to incorporating learning in the movement and approaching the themes of food production, consumption, and procurement with renewed forms of appreciation, and a different outlook. The visions and the social innovation practices involved in them are often rooted in existent practices that the AFIs themselves already engage in, or which they see reflected in other AFIs or related endeavours.

Moreover, there is an important role being put aside for the municipality and other institutional actors in the formulation of policies, regulations, or strategies that facilitate the experimentation and implementation of AFI practices. This is done by creating a level playing field or actively encouraging the growth and proliferation of AFIs. Institutional actors, in turn, acknowledge their role in being able to facilitate the transition, yet view the AFIs as the necessary actors to take initiative in engaging in the food system's change. These expectations create a context in which both parties struggle to enact fundamentally transformative change, and these are perpetuated in the future projections voiced by both AFIs and municipal actors.

This does, however, showcase keen awareness of the institutional context the AFIs are embedded in, supported by an acknowledgement of the sociomaterial context

defining their sphere of operation. This awareness, in turn, leads to the devising of ways to navigate the institutional context. There are two distinct approaches to the relations in the institutional context, a positive one, and a more critical one. These stances seem to be somewhat tied to the levels of respectively low and high ambition. For the positive one, the pursuit of existent relationship dynamics is sought after, as well as a deepening of it through continued interaction, thereby establishing themselves as a mediator for the AFM. For the more critical one, stakeholders attempt to tread a line around institutional hindrances and limitations; they change their rhetoric when engaging in conversation with institutional actors or proceed to put their visions and ambitions to practice while awaiting institutional approval thereof.

On the municipal side, the anticipation for AFIs to spearhead the change coincides with an expectation that they provide resistance to institutional hindrances through the provision of a unified voice, organising themselves as a coherent movement whose visions and ambitions are aligned. As there do not seem to be different distinct types of visions throughout the AFI, nor between specific types of AFIs, this organisation as a single coherent movement is very apparent. This, however, does not mean that the visions in the AFI and their tentative enactment thereof is lost to the institutional context. The increasing presence of the AFM in Utrecht does appear to resonate with increasing attention for the topic of food in the municipality, and provincial and municipal actors are increasingly dedicating themselves to the instauration of advocacy platforms to learn about and encourage change and capacity for AFIs.

The visions in the AFM in Utrecht showcase distinct aims to enact transformative change over the existent food system, and many initiatives actively take steps to begin enacting—prefiguring—this change. The plurality and variety of visions that underly the AFM in Utrecht showcase a distinct drive to explore the best solutions to overcome the problems of the incumbent food system. This plurality, however, simultaneously stands in the way of achieving the profundity of change the AFIs seek, most notably through their failure to form a coherent social movement that institutional actors can adequately engage with, and whose platform could increase pressure on said institutional actors. These shortcomings appear to apply to similar degrees to the different types of AFIs identified. Though the AFIs seek to establish networks of solidarity and cooperation, there is a certain degree of reluctance from some initiatives to do so in a committed and formalised manner. It is, therefore, important for AFIs in Utrecht to

seek to overcome this hurdle and find ways to coalesce into a more unified and formalised movement to create a comprehensive Alternative Food *Movement*. Future research should, therefore, explore how AFIs may organise themselves to form a more cohesive movement and understand how this formalisation of the AFM may impact the institutional incorporation of the movement's demands.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A – Interview Questions

Appendix A.1. Guiding questions for practitioner interviews.

Legend: Vi: visions; TD: Transformative dimensions; SI: Social innovation; Ge: General

Introduction	
	Thank you for taking the time for this interview, I would like to begin by asking if it is alright for me to record this interview? Then I will begin by giving a brief introduction to my research; I am doing research for my master's thesis at Leiden University and the TU Delft, where I am looking at the visions of the Alternative Food Movement and what they mean for the incumbent food system. The aim of this interview is to get a sense of the ways you think that your organisation conceives a future food system, and how it sees itself located in it and contributing to it.
General Information	
Ge	What is your name and what role do you have within the organisation? How and why did you get involved with the organisation?
Questions	
Vi	What do you see as the main drawbacks and problems of the incumbent food system?
Vi	What are the practices within you organisation that contribute to overcoming those shortcomings?
Ge	Who are the main participants in the initiative's activities?
Vi	What do you conceive an ideal future food system in Utrecht would look like?
Vi	What about this future food system leads you to believe it is ideal?
Vi	How do you think such a food system can be brought about?

SI	What new (material) practices or technologies would be needed to realise that vision?
SI	What forms of organisation would be needed to accomplish this?
Vi	How do you think your organisation fits into this future food system?
Vi	What steps are you taking in bringing these visions about already?
TD	How does your participation in this organisation make you feel about your ability to bring change to the incumbent food system?
Vi/TD	Who should be involved in the realisation of this food system?
Ge/Vi/TD	What is your relation to other like-minded initiatives in the city, and what is your perspective on their approach?
TD	What steps do you take to collaborate with other initiatives, and what do you see is the impact of this collaboration?
TD	What has been the response of the municipality to your actions, and how do you think this response will change over time?
Final Comments	
Ge	Is there anything that you would like to add, or any questions that you have for me?
Ge	As part of my research I am also looking to carry out participant observation in public events that relate to the city's food system. Are you aware of any that could be interesting, or is your organisation partaking in any in the near future? In case you come across any, would you like to keep me informed about it? In the coming weeks I will process the information from this interview. In the interest of transparency and informed consent, I want to give you a chance to review the information I use in my thesis. Could I send you a final draft of the thesis with the sections applicable to you highlighted so that you may review and approve of this? I will then conclude this interview and thank you very much for your time today. I will keep you updated on the evolution of my research.

Appendix A.2. Guiding questions for municipality interviews.

Legend: Vi: visions; TD: Transformative dimensions; Ge: General

Introduction	
	Thank you for taking the time for this interview, I would like to begin by asking if it is alright for me to record this interview? Then I will begin by giving a brief introduction to my research; I am doing research for my master's thesis at Leiden University and the TU Delft, where I am looking at the visions of the Alternative Food Movement and what they mean for the incumbent food system. The aim of this interview is to get a sense of the ways you think that your organisation conceives a future food system, and how it sees itself located in it and contributing to it.
General Information	
Ge	What is your name and what role do you have within the organisation? How and why did you get involved with the organisation?
Questions	
Vi	What do you see as the main drawbacks and problems of the incumbent food system?
Vi	What would an ideal food system look like in Utrecht?
Vi	How can the municipality contribute to the realisation of this ideal food system?
Vi	What sort of place is reserved for initiatives within the AFM in Utrecht?
TD	What sort of influence have these initiatives had on the municipality with regards to food?
TD	What is the relationship of the municipality with different initiatives within the AFM in Utrecht?
Final Comments	
Ge	Is there anything that you would like to add, or any questions that you have for me?

Ge	As part of my research I am also looking to carry out participant observation in public events that relate to the city's food system. Are you aware of any that could be interesting, or is your organisation partaking in any in the near future? In case you come across any, would you like to keep me informed about it? In the coming weeks I will process the information from this interview. In the interest of transparency and informed consent, I want to give you a chance to review the information I use in my thesis. Could I send you a final draft of the thesis with the sections applicable to you highlighted so that you may review and approve of this? I will then conclude this interview and thank you very much for your time today. I will keep you updated on the evolution of my research.

Appendix B – Analytical Questions and Coding

Appendix B.1. Overview of analytical questions to explore the visions of the AFM.
(*similar code for other dimensions of analysis)

AFM	Analytical questions	Code
Description of Initiative	What are the main activities of the AFI?	**Activities**
	Who are the participants in the AFI?	**Participants**
	How does the AFI collaborate with other initiatives?	**Network Formation***
Type of Initiative	In what ways is the AFI about facilitating access?	**Access**
	In what ways is the AFI about production?	**Production**
	In what ways is the AFI about procurement?	**Procurement**

Appendix B.2. Overview of analytical questions to explore the visions of the AFM.
([1]Mother code node; *similar code for other dimensions of analysis)

Vision Dimension	Analytical questions	Code
Description of the visions	What is the content of the visions proposed by the AFM?	**Content[1]**
	• What are the rationales of the visions?	**Rationale**
	• Who are the actors involved in the accomplishment of the vision?	**Actor***
	• What are the plots devised by the visions?	**Plot**
	In what ways does the AFM project itself into the future?	**Future Projection**

	In what ways does it propose an idealised version of the future?	**Idealised Future**
	In what ways does it propose ways to enact this idealised future?	**Enacting Future**
Nature of the visions	In what ways do the visions present intent towards ideational change?	**Ideational Change**
	In what ways do the visions present intent for transformational change?	**Transformational Change**
Purpose of the visions	In what ways are the visions representative of a pro-active attempt at bringing about change?	**Pro-active Change**
	In what ways are the visions intended to serve as response to changes and instabilities in the incumbent food regime?	**Responsive Change**

Appendix B.3. Overview of analytical questions as to the socially innovative intent of the visions of the AFM.

SI Aspect	Analytical questions	Code
Doing	What new practices, technologies, or material commitments do the visions express?	**Practice**
		Technology

		Material Commitment
Organising	What new rules, forms of decision-making, or modes of governance are advocated for in the visions?	**Rules**
		Decision-making
		Governance
Framing	What new forms of meaning, visions, imaginaries, or discourses permeate the visions and their expression?	*Refer to Vision Dimensions*
Knowing	What new cognitive resources, competences, learnings, or appraisals are underlying the visions?	**Cognitive resource**
		Competence
		Learning
		Appraisal

Table Appendix B.4. Overview of analytical questions as to the transformative intent of the visions of the AFM.
(*similar code for other dimensions of analysis)

Transformative Dimension	**Analytical questions**	**Code**
Relations within SI initiatives	In what ways do the visions in the AFM contribute to a sense of empowerment within the movement?	**Empowerment**

Relations in Network Formation	To what extent do the visions embrace wider network formation?	**Network Formation***
	How do they include other actors in their visions?	**Actor***
Relations to Institutional Change	To what extent do the visions of the AFM refer to the institutional context of the municipality of Utrecht?	**Reference to Institutional Context**
	How do these references pertain to navigate this institutional embeddedment?	**Navigation of Institutional Context**
Relations to the socio-material context	To what extent do the visions of the AFM acknowledge the shifting nature of the socio-material context they are embedded in?	**Dynamic Socio-material Context**
	How do they navigate its path dependencies and the structures of dominance emanating therefrom?	**Navigation of Socio-material Context**