

# Conditions Enabling Sustainable Citizen Initiatives within the Urban Food System (UFS) of Amsterdam

## BACKGROUND

The food system in the Netherlands relies on intensive monoculture agriculture to reach the rank of second largest exporter of food worldwide. Such food systems are known to damage the environment and to present danger to people's health.

An interesting approach to bring change in food systems is investigated here: the bottom-up approach.

This research is embedded in the FIT4FOOD2030 project which aims to engage with society and integrate its voice into R&I on food systems. Its final goal is to achieve sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems.



## RESEARCH QUESTION

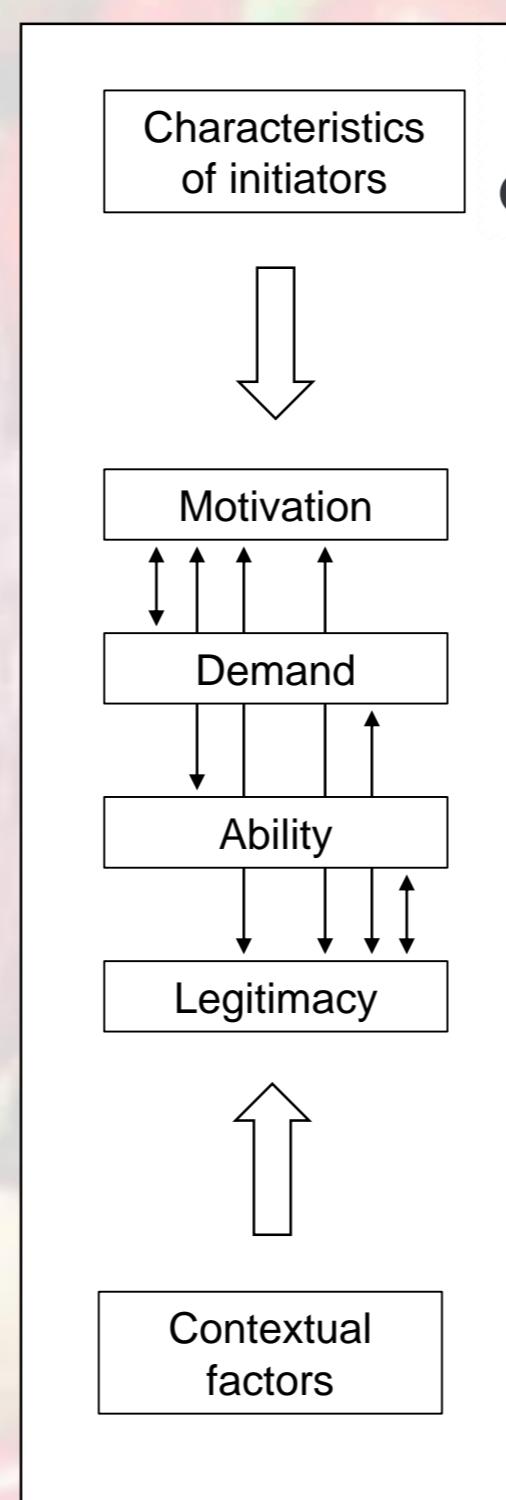
***What conditions enable sustainable initiatives conducted by citizens within the UFS of Amsterdam?***

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Four conditions enabling sustainable citizen initiatives within the UFS of Amsterdam gathered from behaviour change theory publications.
- Conditions originate from contextual factors as well as from characteristics of the initiators themselves.
- Set of factors provided with the model used for coding.
- Conditions supposed to influence each other (see arrows on the model).

## RESEARCH DESIGN

- Methods**
  - Qualitative research to obtain rich and in-depth descriptions of the factors influencing conditions.
- Participant selection**
  - Citizens in Amsterdam who introduced or are actively running a sustainable initiative with a link to an element of the UFS.
- Data collection method**
  - 10 semi-structured, respondent-specific interviews to gain insight in participants' experiences.



## RESULTS

Main factors increasing **motivation** are *values* of environment protection and social cohesion. *Enjoyment* comes second in the motivational factors ranking.

**Ability** is mostly increased by interest and motivation. Many variations across initiatives.

**Demand** observed through a strong volunteer base in Amsterdam and government incentives.

**Legislative legitimacy** is a crucial condition mostly taking the form of resources made available by the municipality (except for food cooperatives).

Investigation of **normative legitimacy** highlighted the anchoring of the commercial value of food in our culture.

The conditions are **interconnected**. Motivation and legitimacy increase ability, while variation in demand and ability may affect the motivation similarly. Moreover, motivation and ability of the participants can increase the legitimacy and reciprocally.

## CONCLUSION

- To conclude, motivation, ability, demand and legitimacy are all enabling the establishment of sustainable citizen initiatives in the UFS of Amsterdam → confirms the relevance of the model.
- The motives for creating all initiatives are values of environment protection and/or social cohesion.
- Legislative legitimacy is especially important when initiatives need funding.
- Conditions exert influence on each other which confirmed the initial model.

## DISCUSSION

- Conditions observed from a positive perspective: questions not formulated to investigate the factors having a negative impact on the conditions → exploratory but lack of consistency in the results.
- Assessment of the conditions not performed with a consistent scale.
- 4 different types of initiatives → lack of consistency and not enough participants per initiative type, but broad results that are interesting from an exploratory point of view.



### References:

- Runhaar, H. A. C., Melman, T. C. P., Boonstra, F. G., Erisman, J. W., Horlings, L. G., de Snoo, G. R., Arts, B. J. M. (2017). *Promoting nature conservation by Dutch farmers: a governance perspective*. International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability, 15(3), 264–281.
- Gliessman, S. R. (2007). *Agroecology The Ecology of Sustainable Food Systems* (Second edn). CRC Press.

### Sources:

- Image 1: <https://www.lifegate.com/people/lifestyle/agroecology-fao-navdanya-international>
- Image 2: <https://www.scapestudio.com/projects/103rd-street-community-garden/>

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