



Rural-Urban Outlooks: Unlocking Synergies (ROBUST)

ROBUST receives funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020

*research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727988.**



November 2018
Wageningen University
Henk.Oostindie
Henk.Oostindie@wur.nl

Rural-Urban Governance Arrangements and Planning Instruments Urban Food Policy Making

Ede, Netherlands

1. Overview

Ede's Urban Food Policy is by its very nature characterized by the exploration of novel governance arrangements, as Dutch urban and municipal administrations only recently developed an outspoken interest in regional food policy making as part of wider regional sustainability policy goals and interventions.

Multiple manifestations of interesting novel governance arrangements can be witnessed, ranging from municipal internal institutional anchoring through cross-cutting policy boundaries, a so-called City-deal with other Dutch urban food policy initiatives to share policy experiments and to mobilize further support and European collaboration within the Milan Urban Food Policy pact.

Ongoing experiences and experiments with novel governance arrangements help identify and share a broad spectrum of opportunities, as well as limitations and barriers for urban policy making, ranging from multi-level governance coordination issues, to the pros and cons of new expressions of public-civic and public-private collaboration.

2. Main Challenges

Sustaining both food production and consumption are crucial challenges of increasingly global and complex food systems. As such, it attracts a growing attention within Ede's regional sustainable development thinking and acting. However, this attention has so far been dominated by an urban perspective. Implications in terms of wider rural-urban dynamics and interactions is less explicitly taken into account. Hence, the principal challenges of Ede's urban food policy hinge particularly on following questions:

- > How to better assess urban food policy-making efforts from a wider perspective on regional rural-urban dynamics?
- > How to deal with the competing sustainability views that can be witnessed in ongoing agricultural trajectories and

- > How to move towards a more encompassing and consistent urban food policy?

3. Main Insights

3.1. Insights related to the broad area of “network governance”

Urban Food Policy Making in Ede can't be isolated from a long tradition of Dutch (neo-) liberal agricultural policy, which is characterized by globalizing food chains, loss of attention for food origin, a growing dominance of industrial food quality perceptions, and –above all - a dominant consumer ideology of “freedom of choice”. Shortly, a broader setting where active urban food policy-making faces a variety of lock-in effects and manifold organizational, institutional and challenges. More generally Urban Food Policy Making in Ede hinges particularly on 1) re-localize food chain relations; 2) to re-link municipal policy domains (e.g. social welfare and public health) and 3) to re-create the commitment between regional urban and rural dwellers. Together with an active participation in national (e.g. City Deal Food) and European urban food networks (e.g. Milan Pact), makes Ede's ongoing experimentation with urban food policy rather interesting from a network governance perspective.

3.2. Insights related to mechanisms of cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation

Ede's Urban Food Policy has multiple expressions of meaningful cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation. Firstly, the municipality intends to establish new connections between various municipal policy domains, with particular attention on its engagement in social welfare, public health and sustainable development issues. Secondly, the municipality is actively working on new alliances, partnerships and place-based stakeholder coalitions around topics such as local food chains, public procurement, food waste reduction, food education, food infotainment, etc. A variety of policy activity that critically depends on novel public-civic institutions (including regional knowledge institutions), as well as public-private actor-led manifestations of cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation.

3.3. Insights related to the role of (actual, potential) social, organizational, institutional innovations

Ede's Urban Food Policy touches upon all these innovations, albeit it predominantly as early lifecycle initiatives. Ongoing innovation measures by means of public procurement, food waste reduction, food education, food poverty alleviation, etc. are therefore vulnerable to interruption and disturbance. Simultaneously, it should be emphasized that food policy becomes more and more anchored in Ede's municipal organisation. Obviously, its further organizational and institutional anchoring will depend on a broad spectrum of external factors (e.g., CAP reforms, sugar taxing, etc.), as well as internal ones. Internally, the National Environment and Planning Act (NEPA) comprises an interesting associated field of institutional innovation. NEPA in principle enlarges municipal opportunity to intervene in

rural-urban relations with more active involvement in spatial planning procedures. As such, it may directly and indirectly contribute to municipal food policy making objectives. Ongoing and future interaction between NEPA implementation and food policy making concerns a highly relevant institutional and organisational innovation topic in Ede's specific setting.

4. Effectiveness Indicators

Through active urban food policy making, Ede wants to shed light on the effectiveness of its policy efforts. Some of its urban food policy dashboard indicators suggest above-average Dutch performances, as, for example, reflected in a lower rate of obesity problems in various age categories. Yet, it is all but easy to underpin and substantiate if and to what extent better performances are related to ongoing urban food policy efforts. It explains current municipal participation in projects (i.e., Milan Urban Food Policy Making Pact, National City-Deal Food) that address the issue of how to move towards more refined, adequate and convincing monitoring and evaluation approaches. Also evaluation approaches that succeed in deepening insights with regard to expressions of rural-urban synergies (e.g., eco-system service delivery) are considered to be a crucial step forward to necessary further institutional anchoring and policy support mobilisation for Ede's urban food policy making.

5. Illustration and further information

www.regiofoodvalley.nl

www.foodvalley.nl

www.ede.nl/edekiestvoorfood

www.edefoodstad.nl

www.eetbaarede.nl

www.ede.buurtmonitor.nl/dashboard/Speerpuntenmonitor/Food/

www.foodenveluwe.nl/restaurants-in-de-gemeente-ed

www.destaatvandeboer.trouw.nl

**The content of this publication does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the author(s).*