

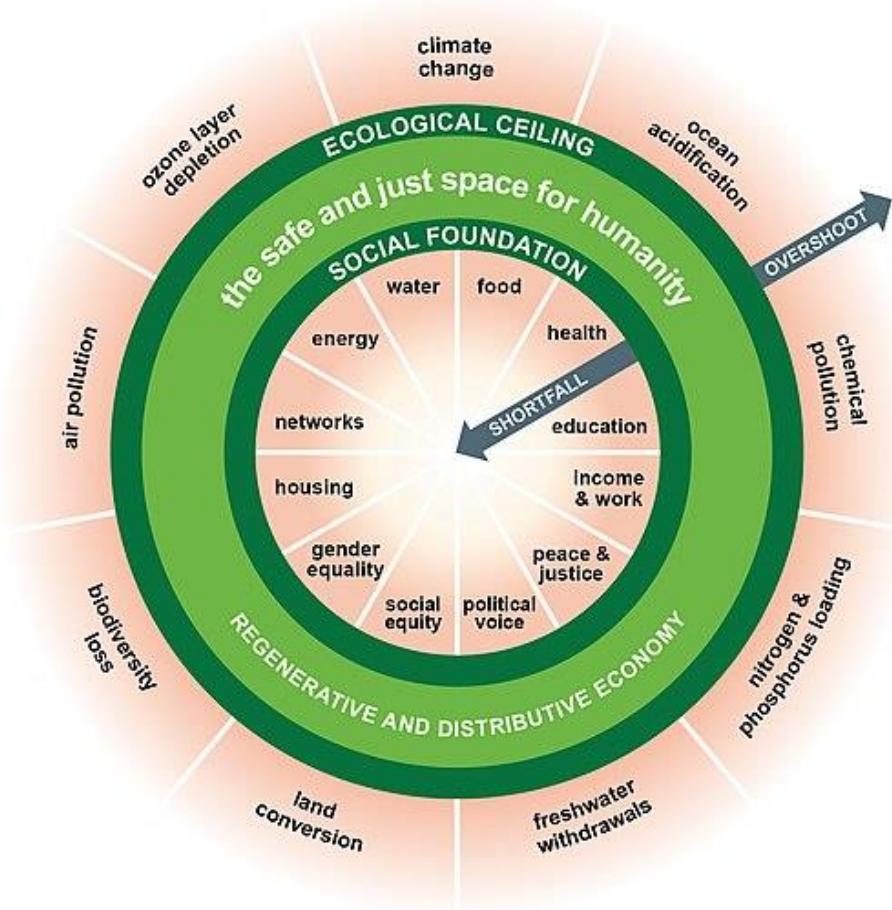
Fostering EU Food Democracy

EESC SG Meeting, 14 April 2023

Jeroen Candel



The challenge: getting inside the doughnut



Raworth, 2017



RDA/ WUR, 2020

Horizontal coordination challenge



Vertical integration challenge

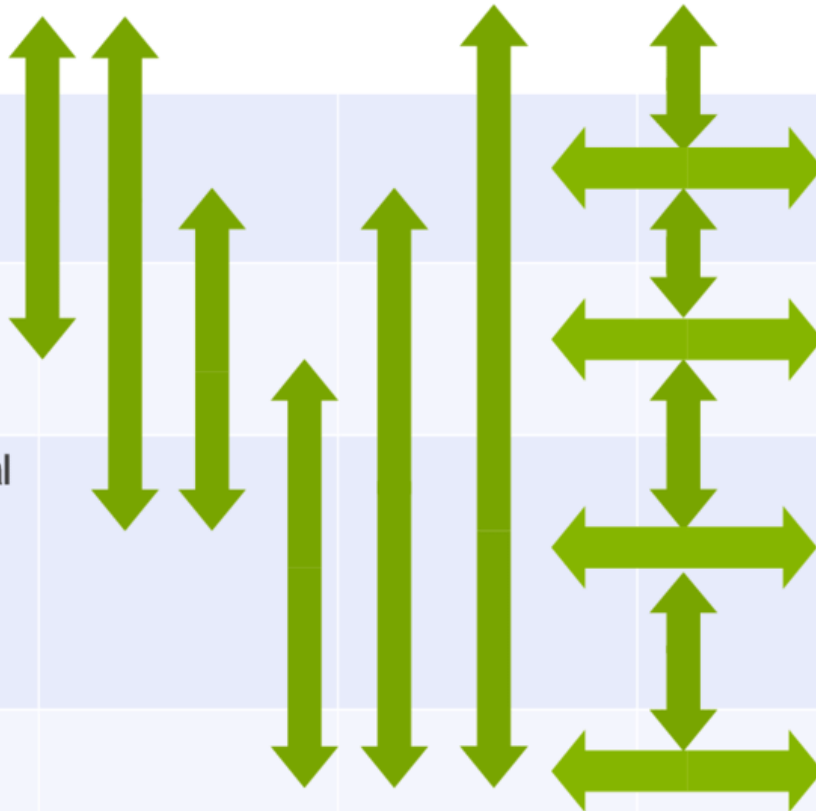
Global level

EU level

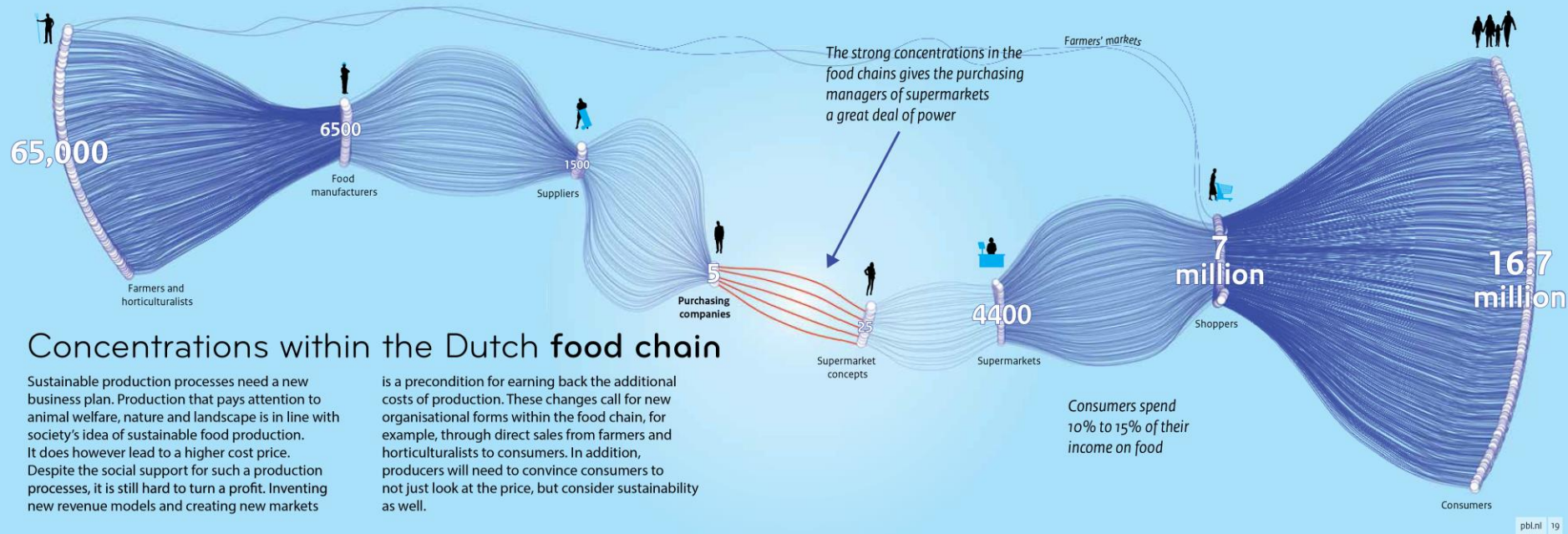
National level

State/provincial level

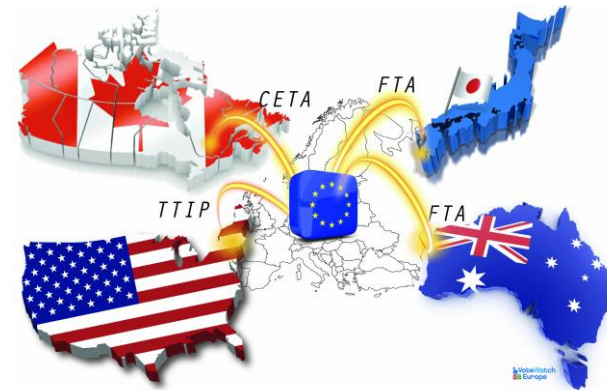
Local level



Behavioural change at unprecedented scale



Moving from food-related to food policy



Post-politics

- Post-ideological consensus ('sustainability')
- Rise of experts: managerialism and technocracy
- Constrained consultation
- Giving rise to populism



Emergence of food democracy initiatives



Conceptualizing food democracy

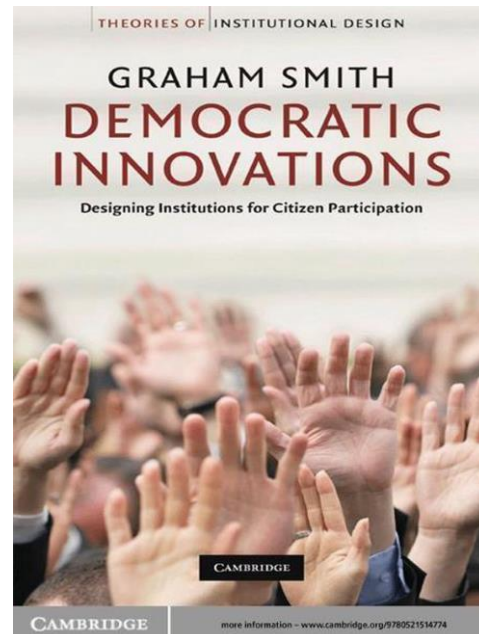
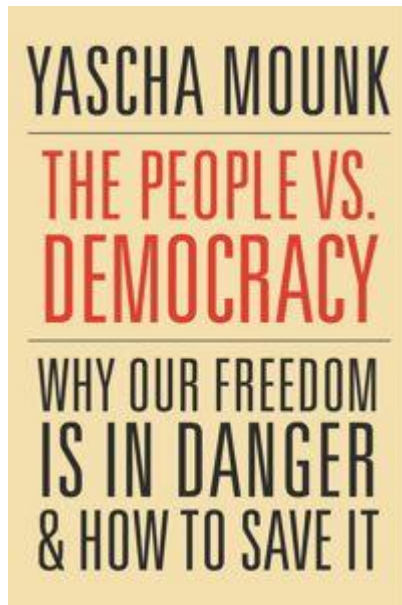
- Degree of control that individuals and communities exert over the functioning of local, national or transnational food systems
- Two articulations (Behringer & Feindt, 2019):
 - 'Liberal food democracy': political consumerism
 - 'Strong food democracy': citizen-led processes to organize participation in novel ways

**VOTE
WITH
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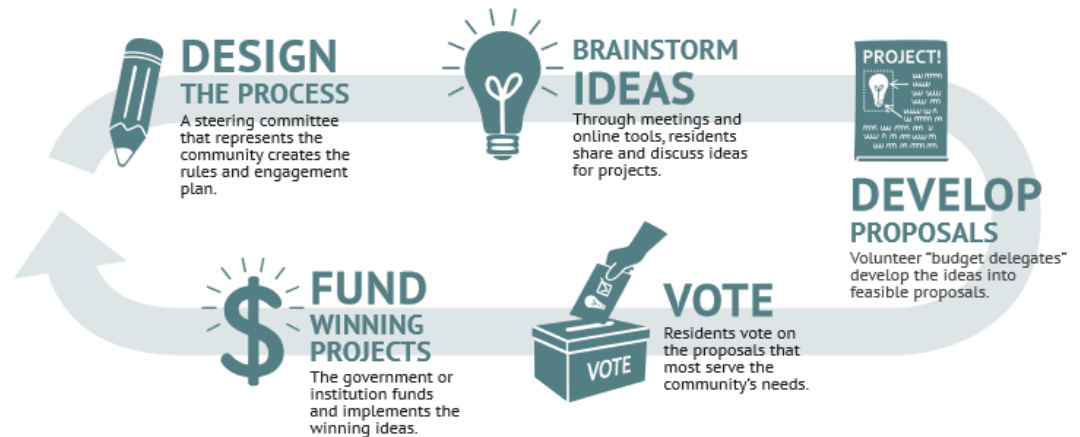
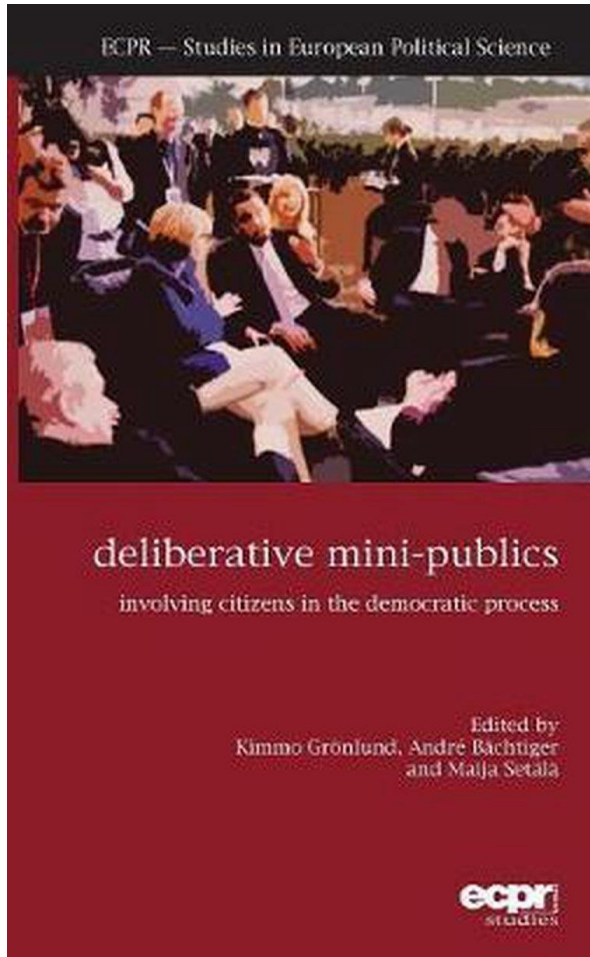


Democratic innovations

- Innovative arrangements designed to mitigate democratic deficits of the policy process in traditional democratic institutions



Types of democratic innovations



Food democracy innovations in the member states



Recent research

- What types of DIs have been applied in the realm of food?
- To what extent have they increased the quality of democratic decision-making?

Table 1 Overview of democratic goods, adopted from Smith 2009

<i>Democratic good</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Inclusiveness	The ability of citizens from across different social groups to evenly participate in political decision-making. Includes both formal characteristics of selection mechanisms and the extent to which in practice institutional inducements motivate the engagement of citizens from across groups, so as to avoid marginalization or exclusion.
Popular control	The degree in which participants are afforded increased influence and control within the decision-making process, covering problem definition, option analysis, option selection and implementation.
Considered judgment	The capacity of citizens to make thoughtful and reflective judgments, including understanding of both the technical details of the issue under consideration and the perspective of other citizens.
Transparency	The openness of proceedings to both participants and the wider public.

Candel 2022

Review of the state-of-the-art

- Main focus has been on local/ regional food policy councils in N-A and Europe
- Limited attention to citizen tribunals, other types of collaborative arrangements, indigenous practices and governance initiatives in the Global South
- Studies largely disconnected from democratic theory



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Inclusiveness: findings

- Highest participation among food system professionals, such as farmers, governmental actors and non-profit organizations
- Limited involvement of citizens from marginalized groups, e.g., with low socio-economic status or with specific ethnic backgrounds
- Scope and depth of participation differs along the resources that groups have available
- Selection mechanisms remain a bit of a black box

Popular control: findings

- DIs mostly involved in agenda-setting, policy formulation and implementation
- Much less influence on ultimate decision-making and evaluation
- Considerable differences between initiatives, partly explained by the competences, resources and political buy-in available

Considered judgment and transparency: findings

- Little scholarly attention to date
- Many initiatives aim at deliberation and/or knowledge exchange, but the precise interactions, types of knowledge included, use of deliberative good practices, and use of language all remain virgin territory
- Transparency blind spot

Conclusions

■ Merits:

- Possibly strengthening input legitimacy through broader participation
- Possibly strengthening output legitimacy by increase scope and depth of policy mixes, implementation 'closer' to citizens

■ Demerits:

- Risk of stakeholder fatigue
- May deepen inequalities
- Reinforcing post-politics? System-reinforcing rather than transformative effects?

Systemic design

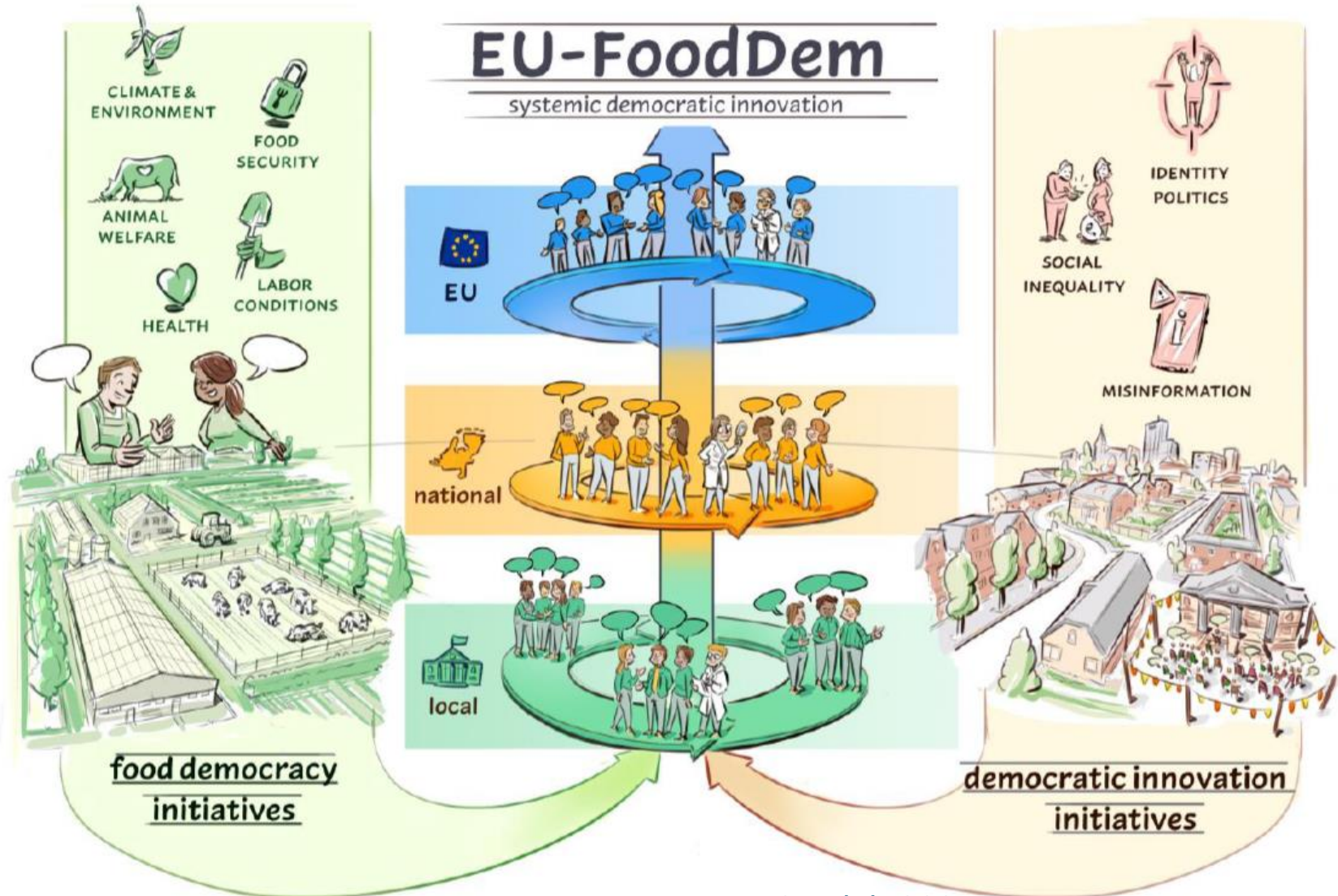
- Food policy fertile experimentation ground for DI
- Connecting initiatives across contexts and levels
- Strengthening linkages with traditional institutions
- Strengthening traditional institutions *themselves*



OMBUDSMAN FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



Systematic design of EU food democracy



PLAN'EAT

- New HE program on healthy and sustainable dietary behaviour (from food environment and systems perspective)
- 9 national policy summits across EU, 1 pan-European policy summit → co-create policy mixes
- Proposals assessed for expected effectiveness by panel of scientific experts
- Resulting in Food System Dashboard

Recap

- Bringing the food system 'inside the Doughnut'
- Increasing citizen involvement may be essential for effective and legitimate policy efforts at changing behaviour
- Democratic innovations are no panacea: have clear merits, but also risks involved
- DIs complementary to, not replacing, traditional institutions

Thank you for your attention!

Q&A

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