Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through enhanced cross-sector collaboration with a multi-stakeholder approach

A case-study on the Food Partnership of the city of Malmö

Eoghan Kelly and Katharina Lange
Acknowledgements

While Malmö Stad did not in any way sponsor this research, we would like to thank Miljöförvaltningen for their cooperative engagement in our study of the Food Partnership of the city of Malmö, and especially the project leader Carlos Rojas Carvajal for his supportive nature and openness for suggestions of study participants. This work would not have otherwise resulted in equal richness. Moreover, we would like to thank all of the participants of the study for the time they took and insights they gave to contribute to the thesis. Finally, we want to thank our supervisor Ju Liu for the great support she gave us throughout the thesis process and the numerous Chinese proverbs which helped guide us to see the light at the end of the tunnel!
Abstract

This research aims to explore the links between cross-sector collaboration, a holistic multi-stakeholder approach, and Sustainable Development, and identify whether such a holistic approach can lead to better collaboration processes, and ultimately results. Specifically, it focuses on sustainability in relation to food, through the lense of a qualitative case-study on the city of Malmö, which aims to identify and implement a more sustainable food system through the development of a Food Partnership where diverse stakeholders from across society are invited to actively engage in the process on a relatively equal basis. The study explores these theoretical concepts through the research question: How can a cross-sector collaboration with a holistic multi-stakeholder approach be developed and sustained in the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals?

The research uncovers the key factors which should be considered in order to form a holistic and long-term partnership, and based on these factors, an analytical framework is developed and used to assess the empirical findings and develop recommendations for the Malmö Food Partnership.

This thesis provides a theoretical contribution by bridging the research gap between the concepts of cross-sector collaboration, a holistic multi-stakeholder approach and Sustainable Development. Furthermore, it also provides a practical contribution with its analytical framework model, which can be adapted to future partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals in urban settings.

Keywords: cross-sector collaboration, holistic multi-stakeholder approach, Sustainable Development Goals, governance, leadership, collaboration structure, partnership model
# Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations  
List of Figures and Tables

1. **Introduction** ......................................................................................................................1  
   1.1. Background .......................................................................................................................1  
      1.1.1. Sustainable development, cross-sector collaboration, a multi-stakeholder approach and cities as leaders for change .................................................................1  
      1.1.2. Sustainable food systems in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals ........2  
      1.1.3. Case background: city of Malmö Food Partnership ................................................3  
   1.2. Research problem ............................................................................................................4  
   1.3. Purpose ............................................................................................................................5  
   1.4. Research question ............................................................................................................5  
   1.5. Structure ...........................................................................................................................5

2. **Theoretical background, literature review and analytical framework** .....................6  
   2.1. Cross-sector collaboration, a multi-stakeholder approach, and connecting the three sectors .................................................................................................................................6  
      2.1.1. Cross-sector collaboration, networks and collective action .....................................6  
      2.1.2. A holistic multi-stakeholder approach .................................................................7  
      2.1.3. The benefits of public, private and third sector interaction .....................................7  
   2.2. Key factors of successful cross-sector collaboration based on a holistic multi-stakeholder approach .........................................................................................................................8  
      2.2.1. Antecedent factors: strengths, weaknesses and incentives of each sector with a focus on the public sector .................................................................9  
      2.2.2. Early stages .............................................................................................................10  
      2.2.3. Structure ...............................................................................................................11  
      2.2.4. Processes ..............................................................................................................12  
      2.2.5. The role of leadership and governance throughout the partnership .......................14  
   2.3. Summary and development of analytical framework .....................................................17

3. **Methodology and Methods** ...........................................................................................19  
   3.1. Research design .............................................................................................................19  
      3.1.1. Research philosophy and approach ......................................................................19  
      3.1.2. Research focus and strategy ...............................................................................19  
   3.2. Empirical methods .........................................................................................................20  
      3.2.1. Data collection methods .....................................................................................20
3.2.2. Data analysis methods .................................................................22
3.2.3. Quality and ethics in research .......................................................22
3.2.4. Limitations ..................................................................................22

4. Main Findings ..................................................................................25
4.1. Interviews .....................................................................................25
   4.1.1. Antecedent factors .................................................................25
   4.1.2. Early stages ...........................................................................26
   4.1.3. Structure ...............................................................................27
   4.1.4. Processes ..............................................................................28
   4.1.5. Leadership and governance ......................................................28
4.2. Focus Group ................................................................................29

5. Analysis .........................................................................................32
5.1. Antecedent factors ........................................................................32
5.2. Early stages .................................................................................33
5.3. Structure ......................................................................................33
5.4. Processes ....................................................................................34
5.5. Leadership and Governance ...........................................................35

6. Discussion and Recommendation .......................................................37

7. Conclusion ....................................................................................39

References .................................................................................................i

Appendix ....................................................................................................vii
List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Food System Map
Figure 2: A holistic MSA model of Cross-Sector Collaboration

Table 1: Key categories comprising the key factors for cross-sector collaboration
Table 2: Key Predictors of Effectiveness of Network Governance Forms
Table 3: Table of interviewees
Table 4: Table of focus group participants
Table 5: Table of thematic codes

List of Abbreviations

EU - European Union
MFP - Malmö Food Partnership
MSA - Multi-Stakeholder Approach
NAO - Network Administrative Organisation
NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO - Non-Profit Organisation
SD - Sustainable Development
SDG - Sustainable Development Goals
SEK - Swedish Crowns
UN - United Nations
UNSD - United Nations Sustainable Development
USD - US Dollars
1. Introduction

This last decade has seen, on one hand, continued insistence on transformative action and on the other, uncertainty and instability with respect to traditional, established institutions, such as the state. As a response, new configurations of actors are aiming to participate in food system governance. New governance arrangements that increasingly lean on civic actors are considered as windows of opportunity.

(Hebinck, 2018, p.1)

1.1. Background

1.1.1. Sustainable development, cross-sector collaboration, a multi-stakeholder approach and cities as leaders for change

Humankind is arriving at a critical juncture when it comes to the challenge of Sustainable Development (SD) (Monkelbaan, 2019). In spite of varying definitions, it is widely agreed that SD implies development of human society through economic forces, while adhering to social norms such as human rights, and respecting environmental planetary boundaries (Malmö Stad, 2010; Monkelbaan, 2019; UNSD, 2015). In this sense its original definition from 1987 is still relevant: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987). Yet, over 30 years since the term was coined, little progress has been made, rather the opposite; as global issues such as the climate crisis are most certainly threatening the current population, let alone future generations (IPCC, 2018).

Following decades of negotiations and loose agreements, the United Nations (UN) finally succeeded in setting a global agenda in 2015 comprising 17 overarching Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to tackle the world’s most pressing challenges, and improve global well-being by 2030 (UNSD, 2015). There was near unanimous support from member states, and despite slow progress and setbacks, we are beginning to see actors across society using the SDGs as frameworks for their projects and longer-term operations which is particularly relevant in urban environments (OECD, 2018).

Indeed, the world is rapidly becoming more urbanised. The number of people living in cities has increased dramatically from 751 million in 1950 to 4.2 billion in 2018 - 55% of the global population - and it is foreseen that this percentage will increase to 68% by 2050 (UN DESA, 2018). Due to this unprecedented shift in human habitation, cities are taking on a leading role in the pursuit of environmental, social, and economic targets (Keiner & Kim, 2007; Marceau, 2008; Martin & Upham, 2016; McCormick & Kiss, 2015; Mejia-Dugand, Kanda & Hjelm, 2016; Ofei-Manu et al., 2017). Thus, local municipalities have a crucial role in incorporating the 17 SDGs into the elaboration and implementation of strategies and policies within their jurisdiction.

Furthermore, networks of cities are becoming increasingly influential (Marceau, 2008); in fact, Keiner and Kim (2007) believe that cities and city networks which comprise the new form of “glocal governance” have overtaken nation states in influencing sustainability due to the “territoriality trap” of national politics (p. 1371). Thus, municipalities have the opportunity to become pioneers for new methods of formulating strategies and targets, thus best practices can be established on a global scale (Mejia-Dugand et al., 2016).

However, over the last decades, the multi-faceted issues public sector institutions are responsible for addressing have been increasing, while their budgets have been decreasing (Solding, 2015), and there is a growing consensus that they cannot face these challenges alone (Bodin, 2017; De Wit & Meyer, 2010). Indeed, the increased interconnectivity of all actors and systems on a global level
means it is now very difficult for an individual or organisational entity to work independently (Billis, 2010; De Wit & Meyer, 2010; Eriksson, Andersson, Hellström, Gadolin & Lifvergren, 2019). This is where SDG 17 “Partnerships for the Goals” comes in: this goal was formulated with the notion that only through collaboration can the other 16 goals be achieved (UNSD, 2015).

In particular, cross-sector collaboration which can be described as collaboration between organisations or actors from different sectors is crucial in order to utilise their collective “information, resources, activities and capabilities” (Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, 2006, p.44). It has to be noted that although the terms ‘collaboration’ and ‘partnership’ can be distinguished in that partnerships tend to be developed over the long-term, whereas collaboration is a broader term that also implies short-term cooperation, we will nevertheless use them interchangeably in this work.

While there are various understandings of the societal or organisational sectors, in this work, we will use the common tri-sector approach: comprising public, private and third sector (Billis, 2010). By public sector, we refer to public and/or governmental institutions; private sector refers to for-profit, private companies (including social businesses1); while third sector implies non-governmental and/or non-profit organisations (NGOs or NPOs), as well as individual citizens, and more broadly, the community or society in general.

While including partners from all sectors is admirable, it is crucial that these stakeholders take an active role in the partnership, and this is what we will refer to as a multi-stakeholder approach (MSA). This implies that instead of a limited number of stakeholders being actively involved in a partnership, a diverse range of stakeholders who can affect or be affected by the process and outcome are invited to actively participate on a relatively equal basis (Freeman, 1984, cited by Shafique & Warren, 2018). In this work, our understanding of a holistic MSA comprises conceptual terms such as collective action, engagement, equal-basis, inclusion, integration, involvement and participation.

1.1.2. Sustainable food systems in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals

One of the key global challenges of SD which requires a cross-sector MSA relates to sustainable food systems. The current food system is set up in a linear manner and does not allow for a growing world population to be fed nutritiously (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2018). Unequal distribution, unsustainable consumption and production methods are just some of the problems facing the food industry. For example, it is estimated that about one-third of global food production is lost per year or goes to waste. This equals 1.3 billion tonnes of food which is worth about one trillion USD (FAO, 2011). Additionally, it has been reported that in the European Union (EU), about 20 percent of food produced for human consumption is wasted per year, of which 70 percent is generated by households and 30 percent through production, retail, processing and the service sector (European Commission, 2016). At the same time, as mentioned before, urbanisation is growing which leads to a loss in agricultural land, unsustainable dietary changes, etc., and thus puts pressure on cities and local communities to find innovative solutions to implement a sustainable food system that is regenerative and inclusive (Satterthwaite, McGranahan & Tacoli, 2010).

The SDGs aim to cover all the complex and interrelated challenges and opportunities of SD. Despite the interconnectivity of the Goals, there are several which stand out more vividly in this study related to an urban sustainable food system.

1 It should be noted that there is quite a fine line as regards the categorisation of social businesses, as they often exhibit traits more similar to NGOs than traditional for-profit businesses. Nonetheless we will consider them in the private sector category as they are generally registered as such in Sweden, and do not rely on public money as much as NGOs (Björk, Hansson, Lundborg & Olofsson, 2014).
● **SDG 2:** “Zero Hunger” advocates for ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, promoting sustainable agriculture as well as reducing food waste. Cities can contribute to this through their policies, thus leading by example on a local and global stage (UNSD, 2015).

● **SDG 11:** “Sustainable Cities and Communities” is crucial due to the aforementioned pressures of urbanisation: municipalities will have to incorporate the SDGs into all of their policies in order to achieve more sustainable human settlements (UNSD, 2015).

● **SDG 12:** “Responsible Consumption and Production” also closely relates to the subject of food systems and it addresses different stakeholders including producers and retailers who can make efforts to ensure sustainability is a core value of their operations, and consumers who are responsible for rational and sustainable consumption, especially in relation to food (UNSD, 2015).

● **SDG 17:** And last, but certainly not least, as mentioned before, “Partnerships for the Goals” truly reflects the purpose of this study which is to explore the importance of all actors collaborating at multiple levels in order to achieve the SDGs (UNSD, 2015).

1.1.3. Case background: city of Malmö Food Partnership

To narrow down to our case background, the Swedish Institute for Food and Biotechnology reported that 10-25 percent of food is wasted every year in Sweden (cited in Malmö Stad, 2010). The food industry is the fourth largest in Sweden in terms of production value and number of employees, with an annual turnover of 177 billion SEK (Livsmedelsföretagen, 2019). Zooming in, the Skåne county of which Malmö is the largest city is considered the main agricultural region of Sweden (Jordbruksverket, 2018), and in recent years due to various factors, Malmö has built up its reputation in terms of food and aspires to be a role model for other cities in Sweden (Malmö Stad, 2019b). Since the turn of the millennium, the city has begun to recognise the importance of SD and of integrating it into its food-related strategies. It has become a leader in this regard in Sweden and became the country’s first Fair Trade City in 2006 (Malmö Stad, 2016a).

To further promote a sustainable food system, Malmö Stad (the Municipality of the city of Malmö) initiated their 10-year “Policy for Sustainable Development and Food” in 2010 with goals which included achieving 100 percent sustainable food purchasing and reducing CO2 emissions connected to food transportation by 40 percent by 2020 (Malmö Stad, 2010). Much initiative has also been taken in areas such as reducing food waste in the hospitality and education sector, investing in energy creation through biomass, and achieving 100% organic food procurement, (Malmö Stad, 2010).

The Food Policy covers all the Municipality’s institutions and activities in Malmö, including for example their municipal offices, schools and hospitals, affecting over 24,000 salaried employees, not to mention the many thousands of citizens who benefit from their services (Malmö Stad, 2010; 2016b). Although it focuses primarily on the public sector, i.e. the Municipality and its activities, the Policy indirectly influences the private and third sector through, for example, procurement policies, as well as society in general through changing of norms and behaviours (Malmö Stad, 2010; Sadler, Gilliland & Arku, 2014). In order to achieve the set goals, Malmö Stad has targeted active stakeholder engagement and cross-sector participation of many actors, however this has been somewhat neglected (Malmö Stad, 2010).

In 2018, as the 2020 Food Policy neared its expiration date, Malmö Stad began considering the elaboration of a new policy. However, this was hampered by political uncertainty at national level (Schofield, 2018) which led to indecision at local level. Nevertheless Miljöförvaltningen (the Environmental Department of Malmö Stad) took the initiative to launch a pre-study in 2018 which aimed to explore the interest and possibility of creating a food strategy through an enhanced partnership, where the municipality would eventually be an equal stakeholder as any other (Malmö Stad, 2019a). During this process they have already engaged with many diverse stakeholders, undertaken research on best practices from other regions, and identified several possible targets (Malmö Stad, 2019a). A Handbook for Collective Action (Malmö Stad, 2019a; Malmö Stad, 2019b) was published which described the process so far, and emphasised the need for collective action within its idea of a sustainable food system.
as depicted in Figure 1. This model links different socially constructed systems and how they interact in the broader system encompassing farming and the three pillars of sustainability (environmental, social and economic) to eventually influence an individual’s food awareness and thus, consumption choices.

![Figure 1: Food System Map - Source: nourishlife.org](image)

At the time of writing, Malmö Stad succeeded in obtaining funding in April 2019 and an initial 2-year project is being planned (Personal communication, April 26, 2019). Although the impending partnership does not yet have a formal title, we will hereafter refer to it as the city of Malmö Food Partnership (MFP).

1.2. Research problem

SDG 17 states that partnerships across all sectors of society are required in order to advance in the pursuit of the SDGs. With urbanisation rapidly rising, cities are becoming increasingly influential actors in forwarding sustainability initiatives. One of a city’s central responsibilities in this regard is coordinating a sustainable food system, dealing with several issues such as food production and distribution, consumption and waste management.

It is increasingly understood that local municipalities must engage in cross-sector collaboration through a holistic MSA. However complexity arises due to the challenges of collaborating across multiple sectors and coordinating multiple stakeholders, meaning that such collaborations are often ineffective and inefficient (Eriksson et al., 2019).

In order to circumvent these challenges, innovative partnership frameworks are required. However, while there is a lot of generic research on the independent concepts of cross-sector collaboration, MSA, and sustainable and urban development, the literature has not yet sufficiently connected these concepts. Thus there is a gap in the research which explores innovative partnership models incorporating a holistic MSA as a central focus whereby stakeholders from the three sectors are...
invited to actively participate on a relatively equal basis. This type of partnership is what the city of Malmö aims to develop concerning a sustainable food system.

1.3. Purpose

Given the importance of this research problem, this thesis aims to:

1. explore theory and concepts of cross-sector collaboration and thereby identify the key factors which lead to a holistic multi-stakeholder approach within the collaboration;

2. based on these, assess the early stages of the impending Food Partnership of the city of Malmö;

3. and, discuss innovative ideas which can serve to ensure the success and long-term sustainability of the Partnership as well as suggest a framework to guide future partnerships for the SDGs in urban settings.

1.4. Research question

RQ: How can a cross-sector collaboration with a holistic multi-stakeholder approach be developed and sustained in the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals?

1.5. Structure

The structure of this thesis will be as follows: in Chapter 2 a review of literature will be conducted exploring cross-sector collaboration, MSA, and SD, as well as the key factors for a successful cross-sector, multi-stakeholder collaboration. The review will allow us to develop an analytical framework to later analyse the empirical data.

Following this in Chapter 3, we will present our methodological approach, by explaining our research philosophy, design and strategy, the focus of the study, as well as explain the process of data collection and analysis of the results, while considering issues of quality, ethics, and limitations of the study. In Chapter 4 we will present the main findings from our research, and in Chapter 5, critically analyse the findings in line with our analytical framework.

In Chapter 6, we will discuss the key points which arose from the analysis of empirical findings and identify recommendations, and finally in Chapter 7, conclude with a general summary which explores the study in relation to the research purpose and question, present our contribution to theory and practice, and suggest avenues for future research.
2. Theoretical background, literature review and analytical framework

Collaboration is successful only when the partnership is correctly designed and managed, resources of organisations constituting the partnership are complementary and the logic behind how individual organisations and their leaders operate is in line with the needs of the local community.

(Frączkiewicz-Wronka & Wronka-Pośpiech, 2018, p. 2)

In this chapter we will firstly peruse the literature which focuses on the concepts of cross-sector collaboration, MSA, and SD. This will be followed by a comprehensive study of the key factors and challenges to such partnerships, and finally with these concepts in mind, an analytical framework will be developed with which we will analyse the research data.

2.1. Cross-sector collaboration, a multi-stakeholder approach, and connecting the three sectors

SDG 17 “Partnerships for the Goals” (UNSD, 2015) accurately describes the importance of cross-sector collaboration between the three overarching sectors of society which, as mentioned and defined in the introduction, we will refer to as public, private, and third sector, for the achievement of the SDGs. However, we will go further and argue that a holistic MSA is key for a successful collaboration process and ultimately, results.

2.1.1. Cross-sector collaboration, networks and collective action

Cross-sector collaboration is defined by Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006, p.44) as:

the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organizations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately.

The crux of the definition is that no one organisation from a single sector can achieve the defined outcome alone. When it comes to issues of SD, the inherent complexity indeed implies that efforts from across all sectors of society are needed to achieve progress (Candel & Pereira, 2017; Monkelbaan, 2019), but also that these sectors and organisations, instead of working on these issues individually with a ‘silo’ mentality (Eriksson et al., 2019), should pool all of their “information, resources, activities and capabilities” to achieve better results, in a more efficient manner (Bryson et al., 2006).

The entire cross-sector approach is nested within the concept of a well-functioning and emerging network that has developed due to the drive to create something new, reduce groupthink and escape structural and procedural barriers, increase creativity and generate new ideas. In fact, the significance of connections beyond a formal pre-existing group can be derived from the need to tackle complex problems that require new approaches with new ideas through extending the pre-existing network. Indeed, Burt (2004) suggests that “opinion and behavior are more homogenous within than between groups, so people connected across groups are more familiar with alternative ways of thinking and behaving” (pp. 349–50). Thus, according to Borgatti and Halgin (2011) the idea behind extending the network is that people are exposed to novel ideas that are not circulating in their own network and creativity is increased (Liu, Chiu & Chiu, 2010).

Interestingly, Provan and Kenis’ (2007) definition of a network bears striking resemblance to the above definition of cross-sector collaboration: “groups of three or more legally autonomous

---

A tendency of conforming behaviour in group settings (Basadur, 2004).
organizations that work together to achieve not only their own goals but also a collective goal” (p.231), and for this reason, also have to engage in collective action, which is described as a collaborative effort that leads to solution-oriented cooperation to alleviate striking issues (Rudd, 2000). However, in order to achieve collective action, an MSA is necessary, as will be elaborated on next.

2.1.2. A holistic multi-stakeholder approach

The vast majority of the literature studied argues for the positive benefits of a holistic MSA which comprises the concepts of collective action, engagement, equal-basis, inclusion, integration, involvement and participation. (Shafique & Warren, 2018). Bryson et al. (2015) speak of the importance of an inclusive process over the course of the partnership and that it will help to “bridge differences among stakeholders and help partners establish inclusive structures, create a unifying vision, and manage power imbalances.” (p. 652). Ofei-Manu et al. (2017) remind us that the development of sustainable cities requires inclusive policies as highlighted in the description of SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities (UNSD, 2015). Candel and Pereira (2017) refer to the acknowledgement of policymakers that a sustainable food system requires an integrated policy which transcends jurisdictions, and Eriksson et al. (2019) elaborate that even within a single public organisation, the traditional ‘siló’ approach of tackling issues is considered to be ineffective and thus, better collaboration is required when addressing public service issues. And furthermore, Frączkiewicz-Wronka and Wronka-Pośpiech (2018) suggest that multi-stakeholder collaboration in social service delivery “is conducive to attaining cohesion, competitiveness, and sustainability” (p. 1). Despite these arguments in favour of a MSA, such a process is often neglected or poorly coordinated in cross-sector partnerships (Bodin, 2017). Next we will overview some of the arguments in favour of bridging the three sectors.

2.1.3. The benefits of public, private and third sector interaction

The interest in cross-sector collaboration has been growing in recent years due to the characteristic limitations of the public, private and third sectors, as well as the increasingly blurring lines which differentiate them (Billis, 2010). The role of the public sector is constantly evolving and transforming due to external factors such as globalisation, technology, human rights and SD, all of which have drastically altered human norms and behaviours, and will continue to do so at ever-increasing paces (Björk et al., 2014; Monkelbaan, 2019). When elaborating and implementing policies in today’s society, a municipality, for example, must take into account all of those complex factors and consider every stakeholder concerned, all while ensuring that economic stability is not disregarded (Eskerod & Huemann, 2013). However it can be argued that the structural traits of the public sector are not as quick to adapt to the changing society. Therefore, it is no wonder that the ability of the public sector to solve increasingly complex environmental, social, and economic challenges is being seriously questioned (Bevir & Trentmann, 2007; Biggeri, Testi, Bellucci, During, & Persson, 2019; Björk et al., 2014; Forrer, Kee & Boyer, 2014).

Engaging with the private and third sector and considering innovative partnerships where the city can be an equal partner or allow a better-placed actor to take the lead on SD initiatives is gathering support in the literature. Bryson et al. (2015) argue that governmental institutions are struggling to solve problems on their own, and that “[n]ongovernment partners may have additional expertise, technology, relationships, and financial resources that can be deployed in a joint endeavor” (Demirag et al. 2012; Holmes and Moir 2007, cited by Bryson et al., 2015, p. 652) as well as spread the risk and accountability of failed endeavours. By identifying and involving cross-sector actors in their action plans and strategies, the municipality will adopt a holistic MSA, thus bridging the gap between politics, business and citizens and enabling a SD strategy that appeals to the largest number of stakeholders possible.

Ironically, the stakeholder who is most affected by SD policy issues, yet frequently sidelined during elaboration and implementation of such policies is the third sector: specifically, the private citizen (Fox & Cundill, 2018). This could occur because municipalities are governed by politics at multiple levels and influenced by other powerful stakeholders such as corporations, thus their primary
responsibility towards the citizens can be misguided (Bornstein & Davis, 2010; May, 2015; Ofei-Manu et al., 2017). Fox and Cundill (2018) argue that the logic and power of science and technology are often prioritised over the opinions and values of local community stakeholders, and thus crucial local information and ideas can be lost. Seyfang and Smith (2007) note the importance of a community feeling that they have ‘ownership’ of the sustainability initiative, and that only through involving them can long-term transformational change of social behaviours be achieved. Former British Prime-Minister Tony Blair also referred to the importance of involving the community in these processes: “I want to reinvigorate community action for sustainable development” (HM Government, 2005, cited by Seyfang & Smith, 2007, p. 586). And Prugh, Costanza and Daly (2000) argue further that global sustainability requires community involvement: “The political structure and process necessary for regionally, nationally and globally sustainable society must be built on the foundation of local communities” (p. XVI).

Related to this is the concept of ‘grassroots’ or ‘bottom-up’ initiatives. Seyfang and Smith (2007) define grassroots innovations as “networks of activists and organisations generating novel bottom–up solutions for sustainable development; solutions that respond to the local situation and the interests and values of the communities involved” (p.585). Martin and Upham (2016) concur, and Sadler et al. (2014) narrow this argument to the food system and believe that local citizens can co-create value by initiating local food movements. However Seyfang and Smith (2007) caution on the trend of the public sector ‘outsourcing’ social projects to the third sector, a theme which is particularly relevant in Sweden, where traditionally, trust in the State has been very high, and thus NGOs or private entrepreneurs may question why they should get involved in these initiatives in the first place (Björk et al., 2014).

The private sector can bring vast expertise, money and industry-specific know-how to collaborations (May, 2015). MacDonald, Clarke, Huang and Seitandini (2019) propose that partners from the private sector should take more responsibility in collaborations in order to build capacity, especially when financial issues are at stake. However Crosby and Bryson (2010) argue that public-private collaborations are more difficult to engineer than public-third due to their competing institutional logics, and the public sector’s sensitivity to conflict of interest and favouritism toward certain businesses. Further, Eriksson et al. (2019) believe there may be competition “between the individual service user’s private value and the collective citizenry’s public value” (p. 4).

Despite the overwhelming arguments in the literature studied in favour of cross-sector collaborations for sustainability which entail a holistic MSA, it must be stressed that such an ideal approach is difficult to elaborate and manage in practice. The more complex the sustainability issue, the more complex a partnership will be required to solve it (Eriksson et al., 2019).

In this section, we have compiled from the literature studied, a strong argument in favour of cross-sector collaboration and a holistic MSA. Next, we will examine what we have identified in the literature as being the key factors which can lead to a successful cross-sector, multi-stakeholder collaboration for the SDGs.

### 2.2. Key factors of successful cross-sector collaboration based on a holistic multi-stakeholder approach

Previous literature has identified several key factors which are important to consider when engaging in cross-sector collaboration. It has predominantly dealt with structures and processes of collaborations (e.g. Bryson et al., 2006; 2015) and categorised them into different stages (e.g. Branzei & Le Ber, 2014). This section summarises these factors by drawing on some of the most relevant contributions and discussing consistent and diverging viewpoints and research outcomes, with a special focus on the most recent developments. We identified four categories, each comprising several factors that are highly important to consider when trying to understand how cross-sector collaboration works:
Antecedent factors, Early stages, Structure, and Processes. These categories are encompassed by two key themes, leadership and governance, which have an overarching function (Table 1). The division of the key factors will allow us to establish an analytical framework which will then be used to assess the MFP and identify how a partnership which incorporates a holistic MSA can be developed.

Table 1: Key categories comprising the key factors for cross-sector collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent factors</th>
<th>Early stages</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Leadership and Governance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incentives and Motivations</td>
<td>Common agenda/ vision/ goals</td>
<td>Formal agreements and Accountability</td>
<td>Deliberate and emergent planning (flexibility vs. stability)</td>
<td>Collaborative Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector-specific structural and procedural characteristics</td>
<td>Building relationships, trust, and legitimacy</td>
<td>Roles and Responsibilities</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Emergent Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Decision-making</td>
<td>Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning, experimentation and evaluation</td>
<td>Monitoring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.1. Antecedent factors: strengths, weaknesses and incentives of each sector with a focus on the public sector

Bryson et al. (2015) highlight that antecedent factors are crucial to consider before the initiation of a collaboration. They can be seen as preconditions for joint action and relate to concepts such as each sector’s incentives, as well as sector-specific structural and procedural characteristics including governance and accountability, organisational structure and processes, financing, and the overall collaborative advantage (Huxham & Vangen, 2004). Each of these will be now elaborated with regard to each sector, with a special focus on the public sector due to the nature of our study.

Incentives and motivations

Huxham and Vangen (2004) posit that conflicts of interest arise due to varying incentives to collaborate. The public sector’s incentive to initiate cross-sector collaborations for sustainability challenges comes from the aforementioned belief that governmental institutions cannot address these issues alone (Candel & Pereira, 2017; MacDonald et al., 2019; Sadler et al., 2014). In theory, its motivation is to improve conditions for the citizens it serves, without a monetary motive (Candel & Pereira, 2017). For the private sector, Vurro, Dacin and Perrini (2010) explain that, contrary to popular belief, business often gets involved in such projects and partnerships for altruistic, and not necessarily profit-driven motives. Indeed, in recent times, businesses are beginning to see the potential of ‘doing well while doing good’, and there has hence been a rise in social entrepreneurship (Björk et al., 2014; Bornstein & Davis, 2010; Vurro et al., 2010). In terms of the third sector, their incentive is often a drive and desire to achieve social and environmental goals over profit, allowing for a better balance of these often competing issues (Fox & Cundill, 2018; Martin & Upham, 2016; Ofei-Manu et al., 2017; Seyfang & Smith, 2007).

Sector-specific structural and procedural characteristics

With regard to governance and accountability, as the public sector is managed and influenced by a political system, this can lead to handicaps such as delays in decision-making, sudden changes in political ideologies, and short-term goals driven by elections (Bornstein & Davis, 2010; Ofei-Manu et al., 2017). The municipality in this study for example, is also accountable to other, sometimes competing levels of governance, such as regional (Swedish Länssstyrelsen), and national and international (e.g. EU law or UN guidelines), as well as to the citizens it serves. Due to this, risk-taking may be avoided and initiatives are tailored to meet accountability measures, rather than target real, systemic change (Bornstein & Davis, 2010). On the other hand, the private sector is primarily affected by market forces, while the third sector tends to have more freedom in its self-governance (Billis, 2010).
The formalised, hierarchical and bureaucratic organisational structure and processes of most public institutions are often in contradiction of sustainability initiatives, which require creativity, flexibility, and risk-taking (Bornstein & Davis, 2010; Milbourne, 2009). Rigid deadlines and inflexible processes can impede progress and compromise goals (Bornstein & Davis, 2010). The policy approach of the public sector generally favours a top-down strategy which is in contrast to grassroots initiatives (Frączkiewicz-Wronka and Wronka-Pośpiech, 2018). As Bornstein and Davis (2010) put it: “major initiatives advanced by governments [...] flow in the reverse direction, beginning with policy battles and ending with programs” and “public policies often lack a nuanced appreciation for ground-level details” (p. 35). The private sector tends to have a more streamlined structure and processes, and therefore they are much more resource-efficient (e.g. time, budget, HR) than their public counterparts, as their very survival in the market is at stake (May, 2015). Third sector organisations can also self-organise with less rigidity than public institutions, and adapt more easily to changing circumstances (Billis, 2010).

In terms of finance, public budgets are diminishing, which means less funding for projects as well as increased competition between project owners seeking grants or subsidies (Milbourne, 2009). The current procurement system means that in general, initiatives that can guarantee a quick and quantifiable social value return will gain funding. However, many SD initiatives require a long-term approach, and results can be difficult to measure, thus public sector money will often bypass them (Björk et al., 2014). The third sector also often relies on public money to fund their projects, which is typically only granted for one or two years (Björk et al., 2014). As for the private sector, larger businesses can provide sizeable budgets, but it must be taken into account that for the MFP, many small and medium enterprises will be involved, and they may have as little money to contribute as NGOs (Björk et al., 2014).

A final point to make refers to what Huxham and Vangen (2004) call ‘collaborative advantage’. This means that there must be added value for all actors in forming and engaging in a collaboration, and not ‘collaborative inertia’ which can occur when the generated output of the collaboration is later insignificant, slow, or marked by hardship.

We can see from the above antecedent factors that single-sector organisations are struggling to adequately address the SDGs alone; thus Frączkiewicz-Wronka and Wronka-Pośpiech (2018) conclude that collaborating together can lead to “a competitive advantage by combining the best skills or core competencies and resources of two or more organisations” (p. 3) to “achieve goals that the parties would not be able to achieve individually” (p. 4).

### 2.2.2. Early stages

**Common agenda / vision / goals**

One of the first activities that a budding partnership should ensure is the discussion and agreement of a common agenda, vision and goals (Bodin, 2017; Bryson et al., 2015; Huxham & Vangen, 2004; Kania & Kramer, 2013). In order to align this vision, the core partnership team should have identified and initiated dialogue with key stakeholders, so that the core problem or need can be identified, and thus goal consensus will be broad and owned by all partners (Frączkiewicz-Wronka & Wronka-Pośpiech, 2018; Ofei-Manu et al., 2017). Provan and Kenis (2007) argue that if such a consensus has been reached, “network participants are more likely to be involved and committed to the network” (p. 239). Eriksson et al. (2019) however warn of the difficulty of reaching goal consensus across such a broad spectrum of stakeholders where varying motives will certainly be present. In line with that, as mentioned earlier, Huxham and Vangen (2004) suggest that conflicts of interest can arise. However, they also suggest that regular meetings, discussions, and negotiations can be effective to overcoming these challenges and working towards the same goals.

**Building relationships, trust, and legitimacy**
Very much intertwined with the above is the importance of building relationships at the very beginning of a partnership, which will enhance trust amongst partners, and create legitimacy (Bryson et al., 2015; Fox & Cundill, 2018). In fact, in the early stages of a new collaboration with actors who have not or only scarcely worked together before and come from different sectors, the notions of trust and legitimacy play a central role. A starting point can be as simple as initiating early dialogue with cross-sector stakeholders in order to understand and accept each organisation’s values, motivations and working methods (Mitchell & Karoff, 2015). Legitimacy can be built by behaving according to the given structures and processes considered to be appropriate in an environment (Bryson et al. (2006; 2015). With connection to this, Bryson et al. (2006; 2015) allude to the importance of the network, which can give information about the trustworthiness and legitimacy of a partner. In line with this, research shows that network relationships and ideas can be more easily developed collaboratively when there is trust (Ebbers, 2013; Martinez & Aldrich, 2011).

Furthermore, Huxham and Vangen (2004) name trust a precondition for collaboration but also admit that this is a rather ideal situation that can never fully be present, therefore, it is natural that there may be some suspicion in the early stages of a collaboration. Also, a challenge according to Frączkiewicz-Wronka and Wronka-Pośpiech (2018) is that considerable time needs to be invested “in order to understand the corporate cultures and strategies of every organisation involved in the partnership” (p. 5), and Provan and Kenis (2007) warn that allocating time to trust-building takes away efficiency from the actual outputs of a partnership. In addition to that, Huxham and Vangen (2004) highlight that trust can fade due to dynamic changes of a collaboration.

Especially with regard to participatory collaboration design where partners have a democratic say and are encouraged to find common approaches, trust, relationship building, respectful interaction and clear communication are key (Fox & Cundill, 2018). These ingredients work in symbiosis with one another.

2.2.3. Structure

Formal agreements and Accountability

Before, it was mentioned that goal alignment and a common vision are key in order to find mutual ground and collaborate, yet, when taking it one step further and developing a collaboration, the question of formality emerges (Crosby & Bryson, 2010; Bryson et al., 2015). While some literature refers to a somewhat loose concept of formal agreement, most of the literature suggests it is very important to set up formal agreements for the course of the partnership in order to be successful and prevent failure. Austin and Seitandini (2012b) describe this as “setting objectives and structural specifications, formulating rules and regulations, drafting a memorandum of understanding, establishing leadership positions, deciding organizational structures, and agreeing on the partnership management” (p.937). Additionally, they suggest that being vague about this can lead to a malfunctioning partnership.

Moreover, the level of formality is dependent on what basis the partnership is formed and which partners are involved. For example, if the collaboration happens on a voluntary basis the agreements might be less formal than when the private sector or large organisations are involved, or when legal or monetary requirements are applicable (Gazley, 2008; Weihe, 2008). While such contracts can be helpful in supporting the achievement of a certain outcome and tying the different actors to expected deliveries, research also suggests that formal contracts have to be regarded critically, as they can be restrictive (Weihe, 2008). In fact, Klitsie, Ansari and Volberda (2018) suggest that unanimous agreement is unlikely to be reached, and that some degree of disagreement, which they refer to as productive tension, can even be beneficial.

Furthermore, Huxham and Vangen (2004) found that formal contracts and agreements also have a significant impact on trust within a partnership, e.g. through formally binding the partners that may not have had previous collaboration experiences. However, it is important to note that every form of
collaboration is unique due to the partner set-up, therefore, through dialogue and exchanges, a common ground should be established that fits to the respective partnership (Kramer & Kania, 2013).

**Roles and Responsibilities**

In order to achieve certain collaborative goals, roles and responsibilities have to be eventually divided and tasks distributed so that progress can be made (Babiak & Thibault, 2007; Crosby & Bryson, 2010). Yet, in cross-sector collaboration, role and task division can often lack clarity and cause confusion within the partnership, leading to challenges and inefficiency (Babiak & Thibault, 2007). In fact, Lanier et al. (2018) identified several challenges within interdisciplinary projects where multiple actors were involved, that were mainly characterised by task uncertainty, interdependence of tasks and communication issues through geographical dispersion of partners. Ways to mitigate these challenges appear to be through special leadership capabilities, facilitating coordination through the design of structures and processes, allowing sufficient adaptability and flexibility, and learning (Lanier et al., 2018).

Kania and Kramer (2013) allude to collaborative management and suggest that with the right organisational setup, collective action is possible. For this, however, a steering committee and working groups with partners and community members should be established. In fact, they suggest that within the partnership there needs to be a clear distinction between activities which are attributed to each partner, and that coordination should happen collectively. In line with this, MacDonald et al. (2019) discovered, through hiring professionals skilled in coordinating initiatives and creating processes which are sustainability-related, that shared capacity can be created, and partnerships are more likely to be successful.

**2.2.4. Processes**

Creating a structural framework for collaborations is necessary to make them work and create room for interaction. Yet, having only a structure is not enough. Collaboration processes within the set framework are equally important and they work hand-in-hand.

**Deliberate and emergent planning (flexibility vs. stability)**

Planning of activities is seen to be important when it comes to reaching common goals: Kania and Kramer (2013) underline that in order to reach collective impact, there needs to be some sort of plan and rule system so that goal alignment can happen. Yet, they also point out that flexibility is needed and that too narrow a formalisation is problematic under complex conditions where unpredictable outcomes occur. In line with that, Bryson et al. (2015) and Crosby and Bryson (2010) concur that some balance between deliberate and emergent planning is required for a successful partnership, so as to concretise a strategy, while allowing for fluidity and flexibility which are inherently present in SD challenges.

In fact, with regard to this it becomes important to view collaboration as a more dynamic rather than static concept, since external factors influence collaborations (e.g. policy changes, changes in personnel). Huxham and Vangen (2004) point out that “[a]ll organizations are dynamic to the extent that they will gradually transform” (p.197). Thus, there is nothing to prevent external factors from influencing collaborative settings and processes.

The notion of emergence has also been addressed by Kania and Kramer (2013). They suggest, when looking at collective impact, that the process is what is important:

[The process and results of collective impact are emergent rather than predetermined, the necessary resources and innovations often already exist but have not yet been recognized, learning is continuous, and adoption happens simultaneously among many different organizations. (p.1)]
However, the authors stress that collective impact needs to be distinguished from collaboration as “[a]t its core, collective impact is about creating and implementing coordinated strategy among aligned stakeholders.” (Kania & Kramer, 2013, p.7). Moreover, they propose that there is no perfect recipe for success. In fact, they warn against predetermined, standardised plans which target a specific issue and its solution and the expectation that those plans fit to solve all problems. On the contrary, the researchers suggest that in complex systems, these prefabricated programs often do not work, or at least do not deliver the expected outcomes, due to the unpredictability of interactions of collaborating actors. For this reason, collaboration can only be planned limitedly and as it evolves be adjusted.

**Communication**

Communication within partnerships is an essential condition in order to find consensus, plan and coordinate, and make decisions on a democratic basis (Bryson et al., 2015; Fox & Cundill, 2018; Frączkiewicz-Wronka & Wronka-Pośpiech, 2018). A lack of communication or miscommunication can severely impair the course of a collaboration and lead to inefficiency and partnership failure (Babiak & Thibault, 2007; Eriksson et al., 2019). Crosby and Bryson (2010) suggest hosting fora for communication (cf. Bodin, 2017), where no one is wholly in charge, a tool which could solve the fear of Eriksson et al. (2019) that miscommunication comes about due to the differing power and status of collaborators.

Moreover, Ansell and Gash (2008) suggest that face-to-face communication is most useful especially with respect to negotiating and conveying meaning (Bryson et al., 2015; Koschmann, Kuhn & Pfarrer, 2012). With regard to sustaining collaborations over the long-term, Kania and Kramer (2013) highlight the importance of continuous communication, which increases trust, helps to ensure common objectives and supports motivation of partners.

**Decision-making**

Decision-making in collaborative settings is highly important. Depending on the partnership design and agreements, decisions can be centrally or decentrally made (MacDonald, Clarke & Huang, 2018; Mintzberg, 1979). While centralised decision-making power is given to one central actor and exerted across the organisation, decentralised decision-making happens in a dispersed way by different actors (MacDonald et al. 2018; Mintzberg, 1979). The latter is especially suited for collaborative settings where different actors strive for collective action and uncertainty of tasks is prevalent and all stakeholders need to offer input, establish a common understanding and find joint solutions (Burns & Stalker, 1968; Fox & Cundill, 2018; Frączkiewicz-Wronka & Wronka-Pośpiech, 2018; MacDonald et al. 2018; Ofei-Manu et al. 2017). Moreover, Ofei-Manu et al. (2017) and Swann (2015) suggest that a collaborative approach can facilitate information sharing, integration of decision-making authority, policy consensus and learning. In fact, Shafique and Warren (2018) elaborate on participatory decision-making and suggest that “individuals who are affected by a decision, should be fully, fairly and democratically involved in the normative process of decision making” (Rawley, 2016, cited by Shafique & Warren, 2018, p. 1172). Provan and Kenis (2007) however, warn of the risk of inefficiency of attempting to include every stakeholder in the decision-making process.

**Learning, experimentation and evaluation for long-term sustainability**

The themes of learning, experimentation and evaluation throughout the process of a cross-sector collaboration are also crucial. Provan and Kenis (2007) argue that enhanced learning can happen through “the advantages of network coordination” (p. 229). Frączkiewicz-Wronka and Wronka-Pośpiech (2018) posit that in cross-sector collaboration, an “attitude of experimentation and entrepreneurship” (p. 4) is required - this is particularly relevant in a complicated multi-stakeholder partnership which aims to find innovative solutions to complex problems of SD. Bodin (2017), Martin and Upham (2016), McCormick and Kiss (2015), Metcalf and Benn (2013), Ofei-Manu et al. (2017) and Seyfang and Smith (2007) concur on the importance of innovation, and Frączkiewicz-Wronka and
Wronka-Pośpiech (2018) suggest that “building a metaorganisation requires a new innovation culture” (p. 19).

Frączkiewicz-Wronka and Wronka-Pośpiech (2018) emphasise the concept of organisations learning to collaborate with one another, whether within-sector situations, or in cross-sector partnerships. Keiner and Kim (2007) refer to the relatively recent trend of organisations cooperating rather than competing, and that the “essential bottlenecks to urban sustainability” are collaboration and implementation, rather than a “lack of scientific knowledge, technology, funding, or international agreements” (p. 1371).

Kania and Kramer (2013) encourage continuous learning through ongoing feedback loops which focuses on relationships over numbers, as well as developmental evaluation over episodic evaluation. As touched upon previously, measuring short-term economic or social value in initiatives for sustainable development can be very difficult, so it is important rather that the process be continuously evaluated. Bodin (2017), in the context of environmental governance, stresses the importance of “developing better knowledge of ecosystem dynamics through continual learning” (p. 1).

Finally, the concept of city learning networks was touched upon. Mejía-Dugand et al. (2016) stress the importance of city networks for joint learning of best practices, which can lead to win-win situations for all. McCormick and Kiss (2015) and Ofei-Manu et al. (2017) add that collaborative education and learning allows for identification of sustainable solutions for specific urban problem areas.

2.2.5. The role of leadership and governance throughout the partnership

Leadership

As explained previously, a theme which recurs throughout the literature and has been found to influence and encompass all factors of cross-sector collaboration is that of leadership (Bryson et al., 2015; Candel & Pereira, 2017; Fox & Cundill, 2018; Kania & Kramer, 2013; Seyfang & Smith, 2007). Metcalf and Benn (2013) link leadership and sustainability by stressing the importance of a leader as the mediator who must understand the complexity of the external environment. Throughout the literature there are several leadership concepts that emerged.

Collaborative leadership, also referred to as integrative, participative, shared, or team leadership is the standout style of leadership in the literature studied. Eriksson et al. (2019) believe that modern leadership implies that “single public managers cannot act as ‘heroic strategists’, but rather ‘orchestrators of networked interaction and mutual learning’” (Crosby et al., 2017, cited by Eriksson et al., 2019, p. 5). Crosby and Bryson (2010) define ‘integrative public leadership’ as “bringing diverse groups and organizations together in semi-permanent ways, and typically across sector boundaries, to remedy complex public problems and achieve the common good” (2010, p. 211). Interestingly, this definition is not dissimilar to our earlier definition of cross-sector collaboration, highlighting the elevated importance that leadership has throughout the entire process. Vogel and Masal (2014) also stress the significance of leadership at both the initial stage of a collaboration as it “fosters the collaborative capacity of public agencies” (p. 1178), and for the longer-term sustainability and results.

The literature at times diverges on identifying who should be the key leading actor for a complex cross-sector collaboration. Ofei-Manu et al. (2017) found that high-level public or political leadership can positively influence complex sustainability initiatives, in their comparative case-study involving Bristol and the contribution of the Mayor who chaired the decision-making body (p. 384). Candel and Pereira (2017) go even further and state that “only when politicians assume such leadership, genuine integrated food policy may become a reality” (p. 91). On a similar theme, Keiner and Kim (2007) and Mejia-Dugand et al. (2016) signify the growing importance of cities as leaders for sustainable change.
However in contrast, several authors such as Martin and Upham (2016) and Seyfang and Smith (2007) rather focus on the importance of grassroots or emergent leadership as key when tackling SD issues, while Fox and Cundill (2018) warn of the danger of “biased or corrupt leadership” if political leaders ignore local stakeholders (p. 210). In the middle of the debate, Crosby and Bryson (2010) describe the concept of ‘sponsors’ and ‘champions’. A leading sponsor is the formal authority that is required for a partnership to endure (e.g. financially and politically), whereas a champion is the emergent leader who carries engaging, albeit more informal authority and influence, and is key for integrating and appeasing all of the sectors and stakeholders involved. Their conclusion then, is that “collaborations provide multiple roles for formal and informal leaders” (Crosby and Bryson, 2010, p. 222).

Eriksson et al. (2019), Frączkiewicz-Wronka and Wronka-Pośpiech (2018) and Huxham and Vangen (2004) refer to the ability of leaders to be able to manage complex collaborations. There is often a fine line between the concepts of leadership and management. Northouse (2015), referring to Kotter (1990), argues that the “overriding function of management is to provide order and consistency to organizations, whereas the primary function of leadership is to produce change and movement.”, yet concedes that there is a considerable overlap between the two positions. (Northouse, 2015, pp.12-13). Frączkiewicz-Wronka and Wronka-Pośpiech (2018) agree with this overlap, stating that “leaders use managerial practices that are better suited for running a partnership and this way they achieve better outcomes” (p. 17) and that “the manager must undertake actions that will provide him with stakeholders support.” (p. 7).

Finally, the concept of longevity or stability of leadership was mentioned. As we have concluded that both SD and complex cross-sector collaboration requires a long-term approach, it is rational to argue that leadership within these parameters should also be of a long-term nature. This is backed up by several authors including Mejía-Dugand et al. (2016) and Ofei-Manu et al. (2018) in the context of sustainability of politics and a city’s motives for addressing such issues; by Vogel and Masal (2014) regarding inter-organisational collaboration at public sector level; and by Bryson et al. (2015; also cf. Ivery, 2010; Koliba et al., 2011; Simo, 2009) in terms of long-term planning in transitional times and to ensure long-term involvement of all collaborators:

Because collaborations are likely to extend over years, original champions or sponsors may move on to other causes or positions; therefore, collaborators need strategies for managing transitions in these roles (p.654)

**Governance**

Governance is also an overarching theme, and closely relates to leadership itself. Bryson et al. (2015) state that “governance of a collaborative entity entails the design and use of a structure and processes that enable actors to direct, coordinate, and allocate resources for the collaboration as a whole and to account for its activities” (Vangen et al., 2014, cited by Bryson et al., 2015, p. 655). To avoid overlap with previously mentioned factors, we will focus here on power balance, monitoring and control from governmental levels, and types of network governance structure.

The notion of power has been well researched with respect to cross-sector collaboration, and becomes especially relevant in traditional settings that are characterised by hierarchy. In addition to that, it has been connected to financial terms in that those who have more financial weight tend to exert more influence (Bryson et al., 2015; Fox & Cundill, 2018). Huxham and Vangen (2004) suggest that power constantly shifts in collaborative settings, and that everyone has some kind of power at a certain point in time, and actors can empower themselves. They propose that in order to allow power shifts, there has to be acceptance that ‘manipulative behavior’ is appropriate. Moreover, power stands in relation with legitimacy, in that those awarded power can be seen as legitimate partners (Provan & Kenis, 2007), and Eriksson et al. (2019) add that “actors around the table are not equal – they have different strengths such as power, mandate, and status” (Agranoff, 2006; McGuire, 2006, cited by Eriksson et al., 2019, p. 6) and thus good governance will involve reducing those disparities into more equal recognition.
Following on from that, it is argued that, despite the importance of a holistic, multi-level governance structure in complex sustainability projects which can affect a large population sector, some form of high-level support and monitoring will be required (Too & Weaver, 2014). Ofei-Manu et al. (2017) further point out that “collaborative governance processes that actively engaged the cities’ leadership” (p. 387) led to better cooperation and results.

Provan and Kenis (2007) attempt to disprove the assumption that governance inherently suggests hierarchy and control and thus is inappropriate for network structures which should be based on flexibility and a horizontal structure. For “goal-directed organizational networks with a distinct identity, however, some form of governance is necessary” (Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 231). The authors state that a successful governance structure will be based on trust, number of participants, goal consensus, and need for network-level competencies (Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 237). Therefore, they put forward three distinct types of network structure which can be transferred to the concept of cross-sector collaboration, and will be briefly described below (Table 2).

Table 2: Key Predictors of Effectiveness of Network Governance Forms by Provan and Kenis (2007, p.237, own depiction)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance Forms</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Goal Consensus</th>
<th>Need for Network Level Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared governance</td>
<td>High density</td>
<td>Few</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead organisation</td>
<td>Low density, highly centralized</td>
<td>Moderate number</td>
<td>Moderately low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network administrative organisation</td>
<td>Moderate density, NAO monitored by members</td>
<td>Moderate to many</td>
<td>Moderately high</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Participant-Governed Networks**: This refers to a shared coordination structure with relatively equal power, decision-making and roles distribution. It is most relevant for collaborations with high trust, fewer members, strong goal consensus and lower competency needs.

2. **Lead Organization–Governed Networks**: Here, one powerful organisation will be in charge and thus coordination and decision-making will be centralised. It is most apt for networks with low trust, medium number of members, lower goal consensus and medium competency needs.

3. **Network Administrative Organization (NAO)**: This means that an intermediary stakeholder (an individual or an organisation) takes the lead on coordinating the partnership, and can be effective at involving and bridging the diverse members. It is most useful for partnerships with moderate trust, a high number of members, moderate goal consensus and high need for competencies. (Provan & Kenis, 2007, pp. 234-237)

Provan and Kenis (2007) follow that there are three tensions that can occur in these structures: firstly, the struggle of achieving “administrative efficiency in network governance and the need for member involvement, through inclusive decision making”. Secondly, the need to promote both internal legitimacy (partners respecting each other) and external legitimacy (the network as a whole being accepted on a wider scale). Thirdly, finding the balance between stability and flexibility, which has been explored previously (Provan & Kenis, 2007, pp. 242-245).
2.3. Summary and development of analytical framework

In this review of academic literature, we have remarked that cross-sector collaboration between actors across society is necessary in the pursuit of the SDGs. Concurrently, the literature stresses the historical struggles of such collaborations, and growing challenges they are likely to face going forward.

Although less directly addressed, the benefits and challenges of applying a holistic MSA, thus involving multiple stakeholders from society in the structure and processes of a partnership were also highlighted in several articles. For the most part however, a strong link between cross-sector collaboration, a MSA, and the SDGs is lacking in the literature, thus strengthening our purpose which is to connect these dots.

The key factors of successful cross-sector collaboration were addressed in detail in the second part of the review: the literature defined several factors and particularly striking was the fluidity and interrelations between these themes. In particular, leadership and governance were key concepts which affected every other factor. Likewise, antecedent factors and early stages were closely related, and structural factors influence procedural factors and vice-versa. A key conclusion then, which will be reflected in our analytical framework, is that these categories are neither chronological nor separate, rather they all affect and influence each other on a constant basis. Once collaborators begin to understand the above linkages, a short-term project can evolve into a long-term partnership. A further standout conclusion is that identifying the balance between paradoxes such as stability and flexibility, efficiency and inclusivity, and rigidity versus emergence is a critical success factor for cross-sector collaboration.

We began this review by exploring why cross-sector collaboration with a holistic MSA is important for achieving the SDGs We then looked at what are the key factors for achieving a successful and more holistic collaboration. Later, when we analyse our empirical findings, we will look at the how: How can a cross-sector collaboration with a holistic multi-stakeholder approach be developed and sustained in the pursuit of the SDGs? To do this we developed an analytical framework (Figure 2) based on the aforementioned key categories, with which we will analyse our findings in relation to our case-study on the MFP.

![Figure 2: A holistic MSA model of Cross-Sector Collaboration (own depiction)](image-url)
Our model depicts the four categories (*Antecedent factors, Early stages, Structure, Processes*) which comprise the main factors that must be considered for a successful cross-sector collaboration. Encircling these are the key concepts of *leadership and governance*, which overarch all other factors. In the centre we depict *MS4* as a core element which represents both a result of the successful integration of those factors in a collaboration as well as the driver for sustaining the collaboration in the long-term. As mentioned above, we wanted to highlight that these categories are neither chronological nor hierarchical, but rather that they are all interrelated and influence each other constantly, hence the circular pattern.
3. Methodology and Methods

The essence of qualitative research is to make sense of and recognize patterns among words in order to build up a meaningful picture without compromising its richness and dimensionality. (Leung, 2015, p.324).

3.1. Research design

3.1.1. Research philosophy and approach

The research approach, design and methods selected in this work follow an interpretivist and relativist ontology in that the authors regard reality to be contextual and dependent on the meaning given by people to certain entities in a specific context (in this case the MFP) (Yilmaz, 2013). Additionally, this research follows a social constructionist epistemology in that it assumes that realities are dynamic and the complexity of interrelated phenomena require holistic consideration that is not objectively assessable but dependent on attributed meaning in a specific context. For the purpose of this research an in-depth case-study on the MFP has been selected which seeks to describe phenomena though the perception and experience of those actors involved (e.g. challenges and opinions in improving cross-sector collaboration), therefore creating subjective meaning (Yilmaz, 2013).

Therefore, this thesis will inform a qualitative research paradigm that allows the researchers to analyse and understand phenomena in their natural environment of real-life, social situations while enabling emergent processes and inductive reasoning, and generating interpretive understanding (Yilmaz, 2013).

The research conducted within the scope of this thesis is of an exploratory nature with a preliminary structuralist categorisation and deductive reasoning using theoretical models with the aim of understanding the structural, procedural and social processes relevant for cross-sector collaboration, and then exploring how developing partnerships can lead to more inclusive and participatory processes (Weston, 2001). After this, inductive reasoning will be applied in the analytical processes with the aim of leading to generalisations of specific situations (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Finally, the approach and research philosophy are in line with approaches traditionally applied in case-study research in the field of cross-sector collaboration and MSA that are heavily dependent on the context of operation and the social interrelations between different actors.

3.1.2. Research focus and strategy

In order to research and analyse the phenomena and particularities in this specific setting, a case-study focusing on the MFP was identified as an appropriate research frame to explore the underlying conditions for a successful cross-sectoral partnership for the SDGs (Gerring, 2007). With this, broad understanding can be inferred by regarding the dynamics of a real-life situation within a complex system (Gerring, 2007; Yin, 2012).

According to Yin (2012), case-based research can be used to holistically observe entire systems with interacting factors, in this case a multifaceted cross-sectoral partnership for a sustainable food system. This helps to enhance the understanding of complex systems. In support of this, it has to be emphasised that this study does not seek to build theory nor falsify previous theoretical frameworks, but rather to explore specific phenomena within the boundaries of the identified case and based on this, create a framework that allows adaptability to different scenarios, as well as provide information useful for future research. Moreover, McCormick and Kiss (2015) emphasise that case-study research can help in increasing “the knowledge base, developing skills, clarifying values and developing people's capacity to contribute to their communities” (p. 45).
3.2. Empirical methods

3.2.1. Data collection methods

This thesis uses a multi-method approach to respond to the purpose and research question and comprises two techniques - semi-structured individual interviews and a focus group. According to Rowley (2012) semi-structured interviews can be used to gain an in-depth insight and assess personal experiences, attitudes and opinions, which will enable us to gather information and gain an understanding of the successes and challenges of previous cross-sector partnerships with respect to, e.g. the structure and individual roles within the process. Focus groups are a useful tool to gather information and involve a group of people sharing the same characteristics in a group discussion (Silverman, 2011), and this method will be useful to gather stakeholders from different sectors and perspectives and enable a natural exchange, with minimal interference from the researchers. We were able to identify most of our interviewees after meeting with the project leader of the MFP, who himself was subsequently interviewed.

Firstly, nine individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders who were either directly involved in the pre-study or early elaboration stages of the MFP, or are in some other way connected to the food industry, and thus could be future collaborators (see Table 3 of interviewees below). In line with suggestions by Rowley (2012), 10 carefully elaborated questions, each with several sub-questions were developed. The questions were structured to lead the interview to some extent but allow flexibility by integrating follow-up questions when relevant. Due to the complex nature of the subject and diversity of stakeholders interviewed, the interview questions were adjusted to fit the interviewee and her/his sector background to allow for a natural discussion. The participants were contacted via email. All interviews were held face-to-face at various locations around Malmö between 24 April 2019 and 16 May 2019, and the durations lasted between 21 and 49 minutes. They were recorded with a mobile phone. Both researchers were present at 5 of the interviews; due to logistics, the other 4 interviews were held with one of the researchers. All interviews were held in English.

During the interviews, the respondents were first asked to introduce themselves and briefly describe their organisation, role, and motivation to work with the question of food. They were then asked if they had prior experience in cross-sector collaborations, and if yes, to elaborate. They were also asked if they had engaged with the previous 2020 Food Policy of Malmö Stad, and if so to elaborate on positive aspects and challenges within the process in terms of roles and responsibilities, incentives, evaluation, leadership, communication, etc. Next they were asked if they had been involved in the pre-study or early stages of the impending MFP, and once again asked to elaborate on similar themes. Following that, more specific questions on themes such as formal structure, planning and monitoring, and inclusivity of the future partnership were asked, as well as final reflections or ideas. Even if they had not been directly involved in the partnership yet, they were asked more generally on how such an initiative could be developed and sustained (see detailed interview guide in Appendix I).
Table 3: Table of interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Place/Date</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 1</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Umbrella network of several urban garden/farming NGOs</td>
<td>The organisation’s premises 24.4.19 - 10:04</td>
<td>47.40 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 2</td>
<td>Project leader</td>
<td>Miljöförvaltningen, Malmö Stad</td>
<td>Miljöförvaltningen 25.4.19 - 14:00 h</td>
<td>45.43 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 3</td>
<td>Social entrepreneur in food</td>
<td>A food start-up social business; A local food network</td>
<td>Minc cafe 26.4.19 - 9:30 h</td>
<td>28.23 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 4</td>
<td>Project leader</td>
<td>Miljöförvaltningen, Malmö Stad</td>
<td>Café No. 6, 26.4.19 - 13:50h</td>
<td>43.46 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 5</td>
<td>Food Strategist and consultant</td>
<td>Freelance; Social sustainability NPO</td>
<td>Spoonery Cafe 30.4.19 - 15:41h</td>
<td>48.33 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 6</td>
<td>Project leader</td>
<td>Waste Management Organisation (public)</td>
<td>Malmö University 6.5.19 - 9:00h</td>
<td>49:38 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 7</td>
<td>Chef</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Solde Cafe, 10.05.19 - 10:45h</td>
<td>21:46 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 8</td>
<td>Project officer</td>
<td>Miljöförvaltningen, Malmö Stad</td>
<td>Miljöförvaltningen 10.05.19 - 13:30h</td>
<td>24:39 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 9</td>
<td>Project leader/social entrepreneur</td>
<td>AB/ NGO working with urban farming and social inclusion</td>
<td>The organisation’s premises 16.5.19 - 8:30h</td>
<td>30:09 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A *focus group* was then held on 23 May 2019 at Malmö University lasting for 1 hour and 11 minutes and consisting of 4 people, 3 of whom had been among the 9 individual interviewees (see Table 4 of focus group participants below). One of the researchers moderated the session, while the other assisted, observed, and took notes. Whereas the interviews had mostly concentrated on the past, the Focus Group aimed to look into the future, and on how to ensure engagement and involvement of many diverse stakeholders, while managing the complexities of coordinating the partnership. Through this we hoped to identify possible recommendations for the partnership.

*During the Focus Group*, participants were first asked to introduce themselves and their organisation, role and motivation to work with food. They were also asked to name their favourite food, as an ice-breaker. Then 4 broad questions were asked, where participants were first asked to note down on paper their initial thoughts, then briefly state them, and finally discuss collectively. With this method, we hoped to allow each participant to firstly note their own individual thoughts, without being influenced by other speakers. The questions were within the context of a scenario, to add reality to the discussion. The questions related to how you would see an ideal structure of the partnership, how would you share responsibility, who should lead it, how would you involve the private sector without the motivation of money, how could you involve all stakeholders equally, and how would you sustain the partnership in the long-term (see detailed focus group guide in Appendix I).
Aside from these main methods, we also spoke off the record to one urban farmer following our arranged interview on 16 May, and we attended on 24 May 2019 a one-day conference on “Food and the city” held in the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Alnarp, recommended to us by one of our interviewees, who also spoke at the event. While any findings from these occasions will not be directly addressed in our empirical data, they contributed to our broader understanding of the issues at stake.

### 3.2.2. Data analysis methods

Serving the purpose to find overarching, consistent, structural and procedural themes in the data, our previously identified analytical framework was used as a basis to categorise the findings. Prior to analysis the data was transcribed supported by the transcription tool Otter. The final transcription was reviewed and polished in order to ensure accuracy and prepare the raw data for analysis (Appendix II).

For the analysis, thematic content analysis was applied. This method has been recognised as useful and valid in qualitative data analysis especially with regard to identification of recurring themes and patterns in textual data that aligns with the authors’ philosophical understanding within the qualitative research paradigm (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In order to draw linkages between the data collected and theoretical assumptions the transcribed text was codified to make the results comparable. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) six steps are necessary to identify codes which are: familiarising with the collected data, generating initial codes, looking for themes, reviewing themes, defining them, and lastly, writing them up.

Following a deductive approach, and taking the research question as well as the theoretical findings of this work as a referential frame, the authors applied a coding technique in line with Braun and Clarke (2006) and Weston et al. (2001) which is applied throughout the process of analysis in a shared interpretive understanding of the researchers. After familiarising with the data, a colour scheme was developed in order to demarcate the themes. Themes that appeared, but were not identified in the analytical framework, were highlighted and will be elaborated in the discussion.

In line with Weston et al. (2001) the predefined thematic codes follow the authors’ shared understanding of structure and processes of participatory cross-sector collaboration and are divided into Antecedent factors, Early stages, Structure, Processes, and Leadership and Governance. The central theme of MSA is considered throughout the previous five categories.

Within the overall themes, several factors were identified and can be seen in Table 5 and will be presented in the findings, analysis and discussion in the following chapters.

---

3 This participant was not one of the individual interviewees
Table 5: Table of thematic codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent factors</th>
<th>Early stages</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Leadership and Governance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivations and incentives</td>
<td>Common agenda/vision/goals</td>
<td>Formal agreements and Accountability</td>
<td>Deliberate and emergent planning (flexibility vs. stability)</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector-specific structural and procedural characteristics</td>
<td>Building relationships, trust, and legitimacy</td>
<td>Roles and Responsibilities</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Collaborative Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Decision-making</td>
<td>Emergent Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning, experimentation and evaluation</td>
<td>Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Governance structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-stakeholder approach</td>
<td>Collective action, Engagement, Equal-basis, Inclusion, Integration, Involvement, Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.3. Quality and ethics in research

The authors were careful to take into account quality and ethical concerns during the course of the research, from defining the case-study to selecting the research methods as well as collection and analysis of data. It has to be acknowledged that this work has been influenced by the researchers' background, conceptual understanding and approach to how they view reality and how knowledge is being created (Weston et al. 2001). However, the broad consideration of previous literature along with the interpretive capacity of this constellation makes the knowledge contribution unique and valuable.

Importantly, each interviewee and focus group participant was informed about the anonymity and confidentiality of their input; they were asked permission to record; and sign a confidentiality form. All participants were satisfied and agreed.

The authors were conscious of providing valid and reliable data during this research process. This is a particular concern during qualitative research, where the sample size is small, and data gathered is not numerical but analysed based on a social constructionist perspective of the authors, where some degree of human bias is inevitable (Leung, 2015; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

To reduce these concerns, we constructed an interview guide which would be used for each interview as well as a focus group guide. However, due to the complex nature of the research focus, and diversity of stakeholders interviewed, flexibility was required during these processes. The strategy of the interviewers/focus group moderator was to intervene as little as possible to avoid leading statements, and only to do so when the discussion was going too far off topic.

Leung (2015) describes data reliability as the consistency to which data is analysed and will reveal the same results, concluding that the method used was reliable. The use of a recorder ensured more reliable data than only taking handwritten notes or observing, and transcriptions could be rechecked at any time if necessary.

Data validity refers to the quality of data concerning clarity, coherence and appropriateness (Leung, 2015). These aspects were addressed through the alignment of the research purpose and question, theoretical framework as well as the selection of research methods, interview partners and data analysis, within the researchers' ontological and epistemological research paradigm. In fact, the interviewees and focus group participants were selected because of their close relation to the MFP, or
to the food industry in general, thus they were a valid source of data. The authors then made efforts to keep the focus of the dialogue in line with the research purpose as, due to the complexity and interest of the subject, it was quite common that participants would veer into related, but rather irrelevant subjects. Validity also reflects whether interview participants are comfortable to share truthful data with the researcher (Silverman, 2011). In this regard, we are convinced that all participants were open and honest with us, which reflects the desire of all stakeholders to move this project forward. Moreover, with respect to data analysis and improving the quality of the coding technique, individual reading and peer-discussion between the authors was undertaken (Weston et al., 2001).

Finally, as regards quality of the literature, we selected peer-reviewed academic sources which focused on themes such as cross-sector collaboration, MSA, SD, cities and urbanism, sustainable food systems, etc. The majority of these came from reputable academic journals. We studied recent literature where possible from the last ten years, however we did not discount relevant older literature, which is important so as to see the evolution of the theoretical concepts we are looking into. This literature was supplemented by non-academic sources where necessary, such as from reputable international organisations websites, or Swedish websites (e.g. Malmö Stad) to gather the relevant background and case data.

3.2.4. Limitations

With respect to the scope of the research some limitations have to be acknowledged. This study was conducted over a period of two months in April/May 2019, thus the restricted time to gather data can be seen as a limitation. Although nine interviews and a focus group of four people (albeit with three of the same participants) provided sufficient data, the authors would have liked to approach more stakeholders with diverse relations to food or the MFP. In particular, despite our efforts, a participant from a large private sector organisation was lacking from the data collection, which limits the perspectives we could gather. It should also be mentioned that most participants were recommended to us by the project leader from Malmö Stad, nevertheless, we did not perceive any bias during interviews. The project leader was unfortunately unable to attend the focus group, which we believe would have added a strong perspective to the discussion. None of the interviewees were native English speakers, however language boundaries were never perceived to be an issue during interviews.

In terms of the case-study itself, it must be noted that the MFP is still in its formation phase, thus profound structural characteristics are not yet in place. This is why we also referred to the previous 2020 Strategy in the interviews, to act as a comparison model. However, our study is of an exploratory nature, and therefore fulfils its purpose.

Finally, the study focuses on the Swedish context, particularly on the city of Malmö, which of course can be seen as a limiting factor with regard to the generalisability. However, as will be discussed in the findings we hope that our findings can still be relevant and adapted on an international level.
4. Main Findings

“The biggest challenge is that we are trying to connect two different worlds”
(Personal communication, April 24, 2019)

In this section, we will present the main data that we have gathered during the nine individual interviews and one focus group. For the interviews, findings will be grouped within the five categories defined in our analytical framework: Antecedent factors, Early stages, Structure, Processes, and Leadership and Governance, while the central theme of MSA is considered throughout (see Figure 2). There will then be a separate sub-section containing the findings of the focus group. This is because the purpose of the two data collection activities was different, so it is illogical for now to combine each set of findings. That will be done later in the analysis.

4.1. Interviews

4.1.1. Antecedent factors

A common theme in the findings in relation to antecedent factors for a collaboration was the strengths and weaknesses of each sector, with a particular emphasis on the public sector (i.e. Malmö Stad). Most interviewees agreed that Malmö Stad has a very good network, is dedicated to cross-sector collaboration, and is an organisation that they can trust and believe in, as well as noting the general confidence in the public sector in Sweden: “in Sweden, we have very high trust for the public sector” (Personal communication, April 25, 2019). Although Interviewee 9 noted it had been easier to garner support in other cities compared to Malmö. There was however, equally general consensus regarding the structural limitations of the public sector: “The government, they have their bureaucracy layers” (Personal communication, April 26, 2019), “The Municipality has a limited way of working” (Personal communication, April 26, 2019), “they really work in silos” (Personal communication, April 30, 2019). Allusions were also made to the size of the Municipality, that things take time, the dependence on politics, and that the structural characteristics of projects in terms of budget and time were a constraining factor. For example, Interviewee 1, in complaint of the steps that NGOs have to retake each time they initiate or renew a project stated that “… most fundings are for a year, for [a] shorter period of time. And then what that means [is] that we have to do the dance all over again” (Personal communication, April 24, 2019). Interviewee 9 had a similar complaint in regard to the repetitiveness of the process.

In contrast, for NGOs and social start-up’s, it was considered that there is more freedom to experiment and innovate and “just do it” (Person communication, May 10, 2019); “But for us just like, burn the ship, you know, that's what we do as entrepreneurs, because the entrepreneurs tend to take more risk.” (Personal communication, April 26, 2019). However, the same interviewee also spoke of the challenges that entrepreneurs in the food industry face in terms of needing labs to experiment, money, time, adhering to health and safety guidelines, etc. Interviewee 1 mentioned that Malmö Stad lacks the social value part, and that’s where the third sector can add value. Interviewee 9 spoke of the contrasting time frames that different sectors were working on: “[The public sector,] they work on a 15 year vision, we are on a six month to month thing you know, we’re like trying to make things happen quickly” (Personal communication, May 16, 2019).

It was widely agreed then that cross-sector collaboration is crucial for addressing today’s complex environmental and social issues, and that each sector can “complement each other” (Personal communication, May 6, 2019). Interviewee 5 argued that “[different sectors] think they have diverging interests. And instead, we actually have the exact same interests. It’s just that it takes a different form in the public sector and the private sector” (Personal communication, April 30, 2019). More specifically for food, Interviewee 2 believed that the partnership could allow the consumer and producer to find each other in this complex system, however Interviewee 8 warned that every stakeholder must have something to offer to the partnership.
Also touched upon was the importance of individual or organisational actors having *prior experience in cross-sector collaboration*. All three representatives of Malmö Stad who we interviewed had experience in at least one other sector apart from Malmö Stad, and the project leader had experience in all three sectors. The consultant (Interviewee 5)- as well as a colleague- hired to elaborate the pre-study and workshops of the MFP also had almost exclusively worked with cross-sector issues in the past: “my job is to create a network or sort of a database where all different sectors can find each other” (Personal communication, April 30, 2019).

Regarding the *incentive or motivation* of getting involved, whether personal or organisational, one interviewee said that the goal of Malmö Stad was “part of the social sustainability to have more equal possibilities for all the citizens to have access to good food” (Personal communication, April 25, 2019). Further, the idea for involving diverse stakeholders in a strategy had been there for a long time, but before there had been a lack of money or willingness (interviewees 2 & 4). Now, there was both, as well as a lot of collaborative work having taken place in Sweden over the last 3 years (Interviewee 4). Related to that, inspiration had been taken from other city’s best practices such as Gothenburg (Interviewee 6), Bristol and other British cities (interviewees 2 & 4).

One respondent claimed that “the biggest challenge I'm seeing always is the people's motivation. What's their goal, what they're trying to get out of this, we're a private company, we need to make a profit. [...] and sometimes that can collide with someone who's only looking at it from the public sector” (Personal communication, May 16, 2019). Several of the non-Malmö Stad interviewees offered personal reasons for their involvement: “it's important for me to show myself and tell my side of the story.” (Personal communication, April 24, 2019), “It is the incentive to see something happen, to be part of creating something good, to make impact within the city… the personal gratification. That's like a big incentive for entrepreneurship.” (Personal communication, April 26, 2019), and “I think the only thing restaurants can contribute with is their view on things” (Personal communication, May 10, 2019). One interviewee further stated that he wanted to be a link between Malmö Stad and the NGOs in Malmö and “the voice of the organisations that are providing Malmö Stad with the greens” (Personal communication, April 24, 2019).

### 4.1.2. Early stages

In regard to the early stages of a partnership, firstly the challenge of identifying relevant stakeholders was mentioned (interviewees 2, 4, 5 & 8). Next, many of the interviewees stressed the importance of stakeholders simply meeting to discuss issues of food and thereby define a *common vision, agenda and goals* (Interviewee 9); “the first step would be to just gather people around the question of food and how we want to work with food in our city.” (Personal communication, April 26, 2019). The workshops held during the pre-study in 2018 aimed to make people who had not met before sit together and not in their old common groups, and used gamification to make them talk and engage and “encourage them to think outside the box” (Personal communication, April 30, 2019). Technology was mentioned as a useful tool to engage stakeholders in dialogue, although with the caveat that it may exclude older people (Interviewee 5). Overall, most of the findings pointed to the fact that Malmö Stad has been active in efforts to engage stakeholders and organise early meetings and workshops (interviewees 1 & 6). One respondent also alluded to SD: “I also think that we have to, somehow, already in the beginning, have a clear view how to see the three pillars of sustainability, when it comes to social engagement, the environment and the economy” (Personal communication, May 6, 2019).

Closely linked to this is the factor of *building relationships to establish trust and legitimacy*. Several respondents referred to the need for stakeholders to feel ownership and that they will gain something from the project (Interviewee 9); “we have to work with a lot of confidence between us as stakeholders, also work with responsibilities, ownership, trust.” (Personal communication, April 26, 2019), and another respondent referred to a previous collaboration which was successful as the initiative “developed from their suggestions” (Personal communication, April 25, 2019). Along these lines, the importance of listening to stakeholders, including those at grassroots levels was mentioned (Interviewee
1). One respondent however pointed to the difficulties of establishing trust in complex partnerships and that it cannot be inherently present from day one: “For people who never talked to each other, you get them together, just because they exist right now in the same room at the same time, doesn't mean they can automatically become partners” (Personal communication, May 6, 2019). Although relationship building and trust were frequent mentions, legitimacy did not appear much in the findings.

### 4.1.3. Structure

In terms of structural factors, there were conflicting views when the discussion came to issues of formal agreements/contracts and accountability in the MFP. Interviewees 1 and 9 for example believed that formal contracts will be required for all partners. Interviewee 3 did not feel the need for such formality and Interviewee 6 agreed that if mutual trust is built, there would be no need for a contract. Interviewee 4 believed some forms of agreements would be needed, but only once an organisational setup had been established, and Interviewee 5 agreed that contracts have to be formed within the process, especially once the private sector is involved. Another respondent believed that there should be a “combination of loose, and contracts that are actually binding so you have something to rely on” (Personal communication, May 10, 2019). Meanwhile, accountability was not a significant finding, except that Interviewee 5 referred to the freedom of accountability of her professional role as opposed to that of a public sector worker, and in the context of Malmö Stad, Interviewee 4 mentioned that the MFP would not be directly accountable to other levels of governance, e.g. regional or national.

There were several findings as regards responsibilities and structural coordination. Interviewee 4 suggested that a steering group or core member structure would be required, or that an intermediary organisation may take the responsibility, an opinion shared by many of the interviewees, including Interviewee 1, who suggested that his umbrella NGO organisation could be an option. On the other hand, interviewees 2 and 8 argued that the responsibility must come from a grassroots perspective: “people actually taking control of the situation and creating what they wanted” (Personal communication, May 10, 2019). Closely overlapping with this are the findings on leadership, which will be addressed in the Leadership and Governance Section (ch. 4.1.5.)

In relation to division and setting of roles, Interviewees 4 and 6 believed that the project needed to be divided into 2 or 3 perspectives, possibly in terms of sector, and then roles could be better defined. Interviewee 9 suggested that each organisation could do a task they were most proficient in, and have a representative in the steering group. Interviewees 2 and 4 stated that Malmö Stad should have a core role as a “big player organisation”, even if it was not coordinator. Another respondent argued that a drastic overhaul of the current structural norms was needed, that work-related titles had become obsolete, and that equal roles instead of a hierarchy were necessary: “we need to also come back to a level where we're all just human” (Personal communication, April 30, 2019). However she also pointed out that, from a cultural context, Swedish people prefer to have well-defined roles: “People in Sweden are very risk averse and need a manual that they can follow, otherwise they become anxious” (Personal communication, April 30, 2019).

An emergent topic which surfaced in several interviews was the importance of finding a physical location where the Partnership could conduct its meetings and activities (interviewees 4, 5 & 6). This was a factor during the pre-study workshops, one of which was held in a cider factory (interviewees 4 & 5). Interviewee 5 wants to “create a physical space, and an entity that doesn't fit in any sector” (Personal communication, April 30, 2019). Similarly, there was general reference to finding an “innovative” (Personal communication, May 10, 2019) structure for the partnership where each sector could “meet in the middle” (Personal communication, April 24, 2019) and see the “other sides [way of thinking]” (Personal communication, April 26, 2019).
4.1.4. Processes

In terms of processes, communication was a key finding. Several participants referred to the problems that Malmö Stad has with communicating in regard to its partners, the citizens and even within its own organisation: “we don't share with each other because everyone is so focused on their own projects” (Personal communication, May 10, 2019). Interviewee 5 criticised the way that the old Food Policy had been communicated to the public, and with the new partnership Interviewee 4 wants to enhance the awareness and the accessibility of local food and beverages for all the citizens of Malmö. For the collaboration, most interviewees agreed that more meetings, especially face-to-face, were required (interviewees 2, 5, 6, 8 & 9), with Interviewee 5 in particular advising maintaining meetings even when “nothing is happening” in order to keep motivation and “spirit” strong. There was however quite a disparity on how many meetings this would entail: for example Interviewee 1 suggested 4 meetings a year would suffice, whereas Interviewee 4 expected to have 20 meetings over the 2-year period. Interviewee 6 however warned of the challenge of organising so many physical meetings, and Interviewee 9 urged that the number of participants per meeting be limited so that each could have more of a say.

Linked to this was the concept of learning within an emergent process. Knowledge-sharing both with and between organisations was highlighted (interviewees 2, 3, 6 & 8). Interviewee 2 mentioned the importance of educating food stakeholders such as managers, chefs, carers, teachers, etc.: “the more you learn from each other, the better you can design product flow and information” (Personal communication, April 25, 2019). Most respondents also referred to their belief that the partnership would be an ‘emergent’, ‘risk-taking’ and ‘experimental’ process (interviewees 3, 5, 6, 8 & 9): “I think we don't know what the end result would be. That is not so important, it’s the process along the road that is important” (Personal communication, April 25, 2019); “it has to grow organically, no puns intended” (Personal communication, May 10, 2019). This is in contrast to the prior Food Policy which Interviewee 2 described as a “strict process” and “hierarchical” (Personal communication, April 25, 2019).

Planning did not appear as a common topic, except that Interviewee 6 mentioned the importance of long-term, sustainable planning and knowing “how the trends are when it comes to the legislation, the economy, the politics” (Personal communication, May 6, 2019), and along similar lines Interviewee 4 stressed the importance of envisioning a long-term plan for the MFP and its goals: “that is also the goal to, when we actually create something, a partnership, it will sustain after that also, yeah, so we also need to create a plan on how to achieve that sustainability” (Personal communication, April 26, 2019). Following on from the long-term perspective, Interviewee 2 cautioned of the challenge of keeping the previous Food Policy “hot” (active) over a long period, and that this is an important part of the planning processes.

Evaluation was not touched upon a lot, except that Interviewee 4 mentioned that a collective evaluation would be needed after some time, to see if the process and results correlated to what had been written in the funding application. Likewise, decision-making did not provide many results, however Interviewee 4 stated that it would be important to share decision-making during the process.

4.1.5. Leadership and governance

As explained previously, the themes of leadership and governance encompass and influence all the above factors. Leadership was a key finding with varying opinions on who the leader should be and their role. Several respondents specifically referred to the current project leader and alluded to his importance for the collaboration (interviewees 3, 8 & 9):

He was able … to make the link between the two works. Not too many people can do that. He was able to, like go and operate there, being employed by the government. But he was like this entrepreneurial mindset. He was able to just like, yeah, reach to this, go this, network with this,
email that, you know like, bring it like everyone on the same table. I think maybe without project leader this collaboration wouldn’t happen. (Personal communication, April 26, 2019)

However the project leader detached Malmö Stad from a leading role going forward, insisting that “Malmö City’s not supposed to own [the partnership]” (Personal communication, April 26, 2019), a feeling backed up by other participants (Interviewee 2): “I can see a problem that we are taking the initiative of this, because we don't want this to be a municipal driven thing. We just want to kick the ball and see what happens” (Personal communication, April 25, 2019). Interviewee 4 further stated that “there must be a transparent, democratic way of choosing who will lead” (Personal communication, April 26, 2019). Interviewee 9 stated that “the environmental department, they have this strong capacity to create this strategy, but they don't have the acting power, because this is not their own deal... you get the politicians involved” (Personal communication, May 16, 2019).

While Interviewee 6 believed initiative needed to come from a top-down, high-level source, Interviewee 5 cautioned of the dangers of only one person carrying all the responsibility. Interviewee 2 argued that the leader should be someone who understands food, understands the complexity and is also good at managing, organising and treating everybody equally.

In relation to the concept of equality, power balance came into the equation: Interviewee 1 stated that NGOs need to have a stronger voice, yet admitted that Malmö Stad is “still the government” and “If they say no, then it’s no” (Personal communication, April 24, 2019), however concluded that the influence of NGOs has been increasing in the last years. Interviewees 2 and 7 spoke about the importance of status and recognition of stakeholders and that with higher status you can stand up for your values. Closely correlated to power was money. One respondent stated that “money is always where the power is… And that very often causes schism as well” (Personal communication, April 30, 2019). She also mentioned that the private sector would not typically get involved if there was not a monetary return, whereas Interviewee 3 repeatedly stressed that he and most social entrepreneurs were in it for the passion, and that he wouldn’t work with people who were only motivated by money. Interviewees 5, 6 and 8 all emphasised that a long-term, non-monetary value may have to be placed on such partnerships, and that stakeholders would have to be convinced of the sustainability benefits.

Related to leadership and power, governance and monitoring were referred to in regard to the complexity of collaborations such as budget issues, number of stakeholders, roles and responsibilities, legal boundaries, etc. (interviewees 2, 5, 6 & 8). In particular, Interviewee 6 mentioned that Malmö Stad had underestimated the legal obstacles during a previous project, and also spoke of the challenge of monitoring due to there being no standardised methods in this domain. Interviewees 6 and 8 mentioned that ensuring transparency and openness could alleviate these problems. Finally, the importance of governance and support from higher levels was emphasised by several (interviewees 6 & 9) and in particular by Interviewee 4 whose vision of the partnership hoped that:

it has a broad anchoring within, especially for my part the municipality, because the ambition or dream scenario will be that, for example, the mayor or something, would like [say], hey, this is great, you know, signing approval. (Personal communication, April 26, 2019)

4.2. Focus Group

As explained earlier (ch. 3.2.1.), the focus group aimed to conglomerate different sector representatives and find out more about how to incorporate a holistic MSA in cross-sector collaborations with the focus on the MFP. This gave us the opportunity to observe the different dynamics and colliding views of these actors.

In response to the first open question on what key aspects would you address first if you were forming and coordinating the new Food Partnership, Participant 1 began by stressing the importance of defining clear goals at the very beginning to have everybody on the same page. She also mentioned
having agreements and signed commitments, and finally alluded to the importance of using both online (internet communication) and offline (face-to-face) communication. Participants 2 and 3 highlighted the importance of a spirit of shared responsibility, openness, and that someone needs to take over the initiative from Malmö Stad. Participant 3 also said that society needs to look at costs differently, and that generally the private sector needs a monetary argument to get involved, whereas the public sector often does not have significant funding. He highlighted social value in this regard. He also spoke about the problem that is it relatively easy to get short-term project money and initiate it, but much more difficult to sustain that partnership and get further funding. Finally he emphasised the importance of social interaction, but that that was quite lacking in a Swedish context “there's a reason why we don’t have a Swedish word for community, because we don't have it” (Personal communication, May 23, 2019). Participant 4 argued for simple solutions and not overcomplicating issues, especially with regard to laws, and find out what it is that stops the achievement of the goals. She also mentioned accessibility for all citizens to the partnership, and that a user-friendly community platform should be considered.

During the general discussion, the question of defining goals at the very beginning, or collectively during the process was debated. The former may allow for more clarity when approaching potential partners, especially from the private sector (Participant 3), the latter allow for a more emergent and inclusive approach (Participant 2). However it was agreed that some flexibility in reaction to external circumstances should be allowed. Participant 1 suggested first having a pre-network meeting to define goals, before structuring a partnership; Participant 2 said that forming and sustaining the partnership was a goal in itself; Participant 4 suggested making general citizens aware of the goals of the partnership; and Participant 3 spoke of the tendency of goals to be established but never implemented in these kind of projects “So we have spent an awful amount of time talking strategy? And then, okay, now we have strategy, let's do another strategy, But how to implement the strategy?” (Personal communication, May 23, 2019). Participant 1 clarified that boundaries could be strict, but goals flexible, which would develop further sub-goals, which would evolve into action plans which could be a “little more ambitious, so that they force people to think out of the box and force them to think out of their usual business mind” (Personal communication, May 23, 2019). In terms of an experimental process, Participant 2 stated that “you should always know that you learn much more from failure than from success” (Personal communication, May 23, 2019).

The question of offline versus online communication was raised. Participant 1 spoke of the importance of utilising online communication technology. Participant 3 responded that while physical meetings were not entirely necessary, “as human beings, we need face to face… there's a much higher social value in meeting” (Personal communication, May 23, 2019). Participant 4 agreed that there was higher enthusiasm during physical meetings. All agreed that a combination of both was needed, but Participant 1 reminded that attracting the private sector to physical meetings was a challenge as the public and third sector “are more generous with our time” (Personal communication, May 23, 2019). There was a difference in the pace of work, as well as possible conflict of interest.

To follow on from that, the question of how to attract and involve the private sector without a monetary motivation was raised. Participant 4 mentioned gamification such as sustainability challenges for businesses. All agreed that the private sector needed some sort of return, even if not directly monetary-related. Participant 1 argued that there was a risk of losing valuable private sector actors and thus contact with their business: “you should not be person based, it should be organization based. Otherwise the risk is too high” (Personal communication, May 23, 2019). Participant 3 expressed the same for the third sector: “they are driven by people who have a very strong drive, and when they find something else that drives them, they might just, 'poof', disappear” (Personal communication, May 23, 2019). He also complained that the other sectors wrongly believed that NGOs could do all of the work for free, but of course they need money to survive.

Next, the question: How would you share responsibilities with other members in a small working group on food waste? was posed. Participant 3 said that in his experience, shared leadership doesn’t work: “non hierarchy [leadership] doesn't work… because there is no one who makes the final decision. It's always difficult to get it further” (Personal communication, May 23, 2019). Participant 2
agreed for partnerships which require action and not just meetings. However she suggested that leadership could rotate. She also mentioned that a more ‘concrete’ task might lead to better cohesion. Participant 1 proposed that there should be several working groups based on different issues/goals. Stakeholders could join a group if it was of interest to them or their organisation. A ‘goal keeper’ should coordinate the group, and when pressed, she said that the goal keeper would likely have to come from the public or third sector, and dedicate some of their working hours to the task. The goal keepers would then meet as part of a steering group. Group member should have different backgrounds and competencies for best results.

The question *How do you think the partnership can be sustained in the long-term?* was next raised. Participant 3 again referred to the vicious circle of project funding, and that even a well-functioning project providing clear value could not receive prolonged funding “And then you have to go and start from scratch again” (Personal communication, May 23, 2019). Participant 2 said that you have to find a way to “make the social value so obvious that someone wants to pay for it. But that is difficult” (Personal communication, May 23, 2019). She also suggested that if every collaborating organisation could contribute a small amount of funding, then a partnership could be sustained, but organisationally, this was very difficult to do.

our world is based on a monetary value that we made up somewhere on the way, and that doesn't go together with the rest of the world or the planet, and it’s difficult to try to find a way that both can survive, both the monetary value and other non monetary value. (Personal communication, May 23, 2019)

Finally, the question of *how do you keep stakeholders motivated to stay involved in a group?* was asked. Participant 3 said you need to ensure the basic needs of every member. But Participant 2 highlighted the importance of participants:

having fun and feeling valuable. What you do has a great value for saving the planet or to help other people or some kind of... I think that is very important for people. And also actually having fun, you shouldn't ignore that. And meet with nice people, hang out with nice people. (Personal communication, May 23, 2019)

Participant 1 mentioned organising study trips, and that private companies want to provide their employees with community volunteering opportunities, and not feel left out of successful cross-sector partnerships. Participant 2 stressed that this would have to not seem like ‘greenwashing’. Finally, Participant 4 mentioned that collaborations were places of knowledge-sharing.
5. Analysis

“We need to change the climate about the food issues”
(Personal communication, May 23, 2019).

In this section, we will analyse all of the previous findings within our analytical framework which, to recall, consists of the five categories: Antecedent factors, Early stages, Structure, Processes, and Leadership and Governance, with the central theme of MSA being considered within each category (see Figure 2).

5.1. Antecedent factors

There was general agreement with Huxham and Vangen’s (2004) belief that conflict of interest can arise due to differing incentives of actors in a collaboration. It was also abundantly clear that despite general appreciation and belief in Malmö Stad’s approach focusing on the citizens and the environment, the municipality would be unable to achieve much progress alone, in line with much theory to that end (e.g. Candel & Pereira, 2017; Sadler et al., 2014). There was also convergence between the theory and the data (e.g. Fox & Cundill, 2018; Martin & Upham, 2016) as regards the tendency of third sector actors (as well as social entrepreneurs) to exhibit personal and altruistic motivations for contributing to these partnerships and goals, even at the cost of financial difficulties. However the findings diverged from some of the theory with regard to the private sector’s motive, as most interviewees stressed that businesses will need some form of monetary incentive to get involved, unlike Vurro et al. (2010) who found that there is a move toward more altruistic incentives from the private sector.

In terms of structural and procedural strengths and weaknesses of each sector, there was general unanimity, even amongst Malmö Stad interviewees, that the public sector is limited in its work due to factors which are supported in the literature (e.g. Bornstein & Davis, 2010; Bryson et al., 2015). These include the sheer scope of the Municipality, financing restrictions, time delays due to politics and bureaucracy, and typical organisational characteristics of hierarchy, formalisation and rigidity. One standout example was the outdated and ineffective process of procurement and project funding, which Björk et al. (2014) and Milbourne (2009) said do not enable the long-term and flexible approach required for SDG initiatives, and was strongly condemned by several of the interviewees, especially from the third sector.

Linked to this, the question of top-down versus bottom-up (grassroots) strategies brought up conflicting opinions. Although Bornstein and Davis (2010) and Frączkiewicz-Wronka and Wronka-Pośpiech (2018) argue that grassroots initiatives can lead to more sustainable processes and outcomes - an argument agreed on by several findings - there was also some belief that top-down direction, especially coming from powerful political leaders would be needed to advance strategies.

It was mentioned that NGOs and social businesses in particular can bring elements of ‘social value’, ‘risk-taking’ and ‘experimentation’ to cross-sector collaborations to help offset the rigidity of the municipality: they also have lower levels of accountability, which is what Bornstein and Davis (2010) describe as a key obstacle for public institutions.

Finally, an important antecedent condition which appeared in the findings was the importance of collaborating organisations having prior experience in similar collaborations, as noted by Murphy, Arenas and Batista (2014). And related, a new finding which was not directly addressed in the theory remarked upon the importance of individual collaboration actors having worked previously in different sectors. In this regard, it referred in particular to the Malmö Stad project personnel who all had such experience.
All in all, we can say that our findings as regards antecedent factors of cross-sector collaborations were closely aligned with the literature studied. Thus, while there was unanimous agreement that cross-sector collaboration with a holistic MSA is needed, it would be crucial to consider these antecedent factors so that such a partnership could be correctly and holistically developed.

5.2. Early stages

Frączkiewicz-Wronka and Wronka-Pośpiech (2018) and Ofei-Manu et al.’s (2017) insistence on the importance of investing time in identifying all relevant stakeholders in the beginning of the partnership was strongly backed up by the findings, although it was agreed that in the case of this ambitious, city-wide partnership, identifying and including all relevant stakeholders would be a monumental challenge, an issue Eriksson et al. (2019) allude to when suggesting complex challenges require complex partnerships. Further, meeting at early stages to initiate dialogue and thereby agree on a common agenda, vision and goals was also clearly linked between the literature (e.g. Bodin, 2017; Kania & Kramer, 2013) and the data. In order to reduce the typical sector boundaries, the data suggested innovative ideas such as gamification, better use of technology, and ‘thinking outside the box’. Literature and findings tended to agree that all actors inherently have the same mutual goals, but that the motives and methods to achieve them were often in conflict.

Closely intertwined is the factor of building relationships, trust, and legitimacy. An interesting analysis, one which is linked to antecedent factors, was that of having pre-existing relationships within a network, where some degree of trust has already been established (Bryson et al., 2015; Huxham & Vangen, 2004), which came to light with regard to some of the NGOs’ previous collaborations with Malmö Stad. Even for smaller organisations, if there is a proven track record of successful collaboration and results, legitimacy will have been developed. Concurrently, the challenge of building relationships and trust amongst many, diverse, and newly collaborating stakeholders (e.g. Frączkiewicz-Wronka & Wronka-Pośpiech, 2017; Provan & Kenis, 2007) was strongly supported in the findings, especially in terms of time investment and acceptance of each other’s working methods and values.

Overall, the literature and findings aligned in arguing that building relationships and trust and finding common ground at the beginning of a partnership are crucial for both the early stages, and longer-term sustainability of the partnership. Such factors can be enhanced simply through regular meetings and dialogue, all stakeholders feeling a sense of ownership, and if possible, the use of a network where pre-existing relationships have already been formed between stakeholders.

5.3. Structure

In an analysis of structural factors, formal agreements/contracts and accountability emerged with varying results. Several findings, in line with Austin and Seitandini (2012a; 2012b), suggested that the question of formality will depend on the basis of the partnership and its members; there was a particular link between Weihe’s (2008) suggestion and several interviewees that once the private sector gets involved, contracts are central. Other findings, especially from a social entrepreneurship perspective, argued that contracts can be too restrictive and curtail the very nature of flexibility and innovation that those organisations can bring to partnerships; an opinion in line with Klitsie et al. (2018). However some NGO findings favoured the use of contracts, and the question of the specific context of the Swedish bureaucratic system came up; however this is an issue outside the scope of this paper.

Babiak and Thibault (2007) and Lanier et al. (2018) among others stress the difficulty of structuring shared responsibility and division of roles. This is reflected in the empirical findings, as although there were several suggestions on how best to structure this, there was little consensus, and relatively low assurity that any structure could work well for the MFP. In terms of responsibility, Kania and Kramer (2013) suggest collaborative management through the structuring of a steering committee or intermediary organisation: a standout match with several of the interviewee’s ideas. Along similar lines, MacDonald et al. (2019) suggest outsourcing responsibility to an expert or organisation skilled in
coordination of multiple stakeholders; which brings to mind the views of the food strategist/consultant hired to elaborate the pre-study of Malmö Stad. For roles, a recurring theme in both the literature (e.g. Kania and Kramer, 2013) and the interviews, was the division into clearly defined working groups with assigned goals and roles, and competent and diverse members. Linked to that but absent from the theory was the suggestion to divide these groups by sector, however that does not seem in line with most of the theory and data on how to facilitate successful collective action.

Another emerging theme from the data was the interest in establishing a physical location which could symbolise the partnership, and allow for the conduct of meetings and activities for all stakeholders. Direct reference to this is lacking in the literature studied although McCormick and Kiss (2015) refer to the importance of a physical space in the context of collaborative education and the Malmö Innovation Platform.

A conclusion to take would be that some degree of formality and accountability would be required, either at the very initiation, or as a more emergent process in a partnership (Kramer & Kania, 2013). As to the structuring of shared responsibility and roles, a consensus is missing, although this will be further analysed during the leadership and governance section. A physical location for the partnership also appears to be an appealing idea for many of the interviewees, although we did not come across specific research on that theme to back it up.

5.4. Processes

The concept of an emergent process was a key factor in this section. In fact, ‘emergence’ is a recurring theme throughout the study: a process orientation (Fox and Cundill, 2018) which is inclusive and participatory (e.g. Bryson et al., 2015; Lanier et al., 2018) is strongly supported in the findings which also refer to ‘experimental,’ ‘risk-taking’ and not fearing ‘failure’. Further findings debated the setting of goals at the earliest stage or allowing them to emerge and evolve throughout the process.

Learning in this regard was highlighted: Kania and Kramer (2013) among others argue the importance of pooling all of the shared knowledge of stakeholders, a concept which came up in the findings which also elaborated on intra-organisational learning (in the context of Malmö Stad). Best-practice sharing between cities was also a common factor (e.g. Mejía-Dugand et al., 2016), suggesting that collaboration over competition will be the way forward.

Communication was a factor unanimously supported amongst both academics and research participants, and thus we can argue it is another all-encompassing theme throughout a cross-sector collaboration process. It came to light on several levels in the findings (intra-organisational, cross-sectoral, and external, i.e. to the public) although the literature studied focused mostly on the use of communication in cross-sector collaborations (e.g. Babiak & Thibault, 2007; Bryson et al., 2015). An interesting connection was Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) detailed exploration of hosting fora for large meetings, where no one is fully in charge, and thus power and status miscommunications can be alleviated: this reminds us of the workshops held during the pre-study of 2018, and suggests continuation of these kinds of meetings could be fruitful. However there was disparity amongst the findings on the need for, number of, and size of physical meetings, despite Ansell and Gash’s (2008) allusion to the importance of face-to-face meetings. Communications technology such as internet platforms was a strong theme in the findings, which was not prevalent in the literature.

Other factors such as planning, decision-making and evaluation did not constitute a major part of the empirical findings. However, a theme which did emerge and links these as well as other factors was that of long-term sustainability. Many authors allude to the importance of establishing effective collaboration processes in order to ensure a lasting partnership (e.g. Huxham & Vangen, 2004; Kania & Kramer, 2013). This correlates to findings related to acknowledging external environmental factors when planning such as political or legislative changes; keeping a strategy well-publicised over a long period; and continuous evaluation with a focus on the process, rather than any end goal.
To sum up, although it will be important to have some formalised planning and processes at the beginning, it was generally agreed that this new innovative partnership will be emergent and experimental. The importance of learning and communication were also emphasised in the process. A new finding would be that improving intra-organisational communication (within Malmö Stad) is just as important as enhancing cross-sectoral communication, and that communications technology must be further utilised to facilitate these partnerships, while not replacing the basic human need for physical interaction.

5.5. Leadership and Governance

Several key findings arose from the analysis of leadership and governance in relation to a cross-sector collaboration. A notable point is the similarity between Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) definition of ‘integrative public leadership’ and one of the interviewee’s praise of the current MFP project leader, in relation to the ability to connect the different sectors, i.e. exhibit signs of collaborative leadership.

Following this, several other findings agreed that a central and legitimate leader would be required to enhance progress, (akin to e.g. Candel & Pereira, 2017; Keiner & Kim, 2007) and in terms of political support, there was a striking connection between Ofie-Manu et al.’s (2017) comparative city study and the leading role Bristol’s mayor took, and the wish of the current MFP project leader to have the partnership “anchored” in the municipality with, for example, the mayor’s support.

Other findings however diverged and believed that grassroots, shared, or rotating leadership would be needed to tackle a complex challenge of this nature, which was also identified in some of the literature (e.g. Martin & Upham, 2016; Seyfang & Smith, 2007). However there was some strong data which disagreed and stated that shared leadership does not work in action based organisations.

There was also a strong connection between Frączkiewicz-Wronka and Wronka-Pośpiech (2018) among others belief that collaboration leaders must have good management skills, which reflected findings on the importance of managerial and organisational skills for the leader.

In terms of power, Eriksson et al. (2019) state that stakeholders in cross-sector collaborations are not equal, and this reflected many of the findings especially in relation to the third sector who were not backed up with money. Indeed, money was only briefly reviewed in the literature, e.g. Bryson et al. (2015) and Fox and Cundill (2018) linked power to money; but it was a very strong theme in the empirical data. Most findings suggested that in spite of everything, money was still the most powerful resource you could offer, and therefore the private sector often could exert more influence in partnerships. They also would need to have some form of guarantee of monetary return before they would join, unlike the third sector or social businesses.

Good governance based on transparency and openness were further findings and reflect Bryson et al.’s (2015) definition of the governance of a collaborative entity. Finally, we assessed Provan and Kenis’ (2007) three governance structures in line with findings. The data we gathered aligned mostly with the “Network Administrative Organization (NAO)”, as findings referred to an intermediary organisation coordinating the partnership, and the four factors of trust, number of participants, goal consensus, and need for network-level competencies in an NAO also aligned very closely with the likely status of the MFP. We will elaborate on this concept in the recommendations.

Finally, the long-term governance of a partnership with sustained stakeholder involvement was a recurring topic in the findings. Some data proposed that drastic changes in approaches to project funding and social value versus monetary value (akin to Björk et al., 2014) and traditional work titles/roles (unfound in the literature) were required. A further governance suggestion unsupported by the literature was that every organisation could donate a small amount of funding, thereby leading to long-term sustainability. In order to keep stakeholders involved, findings referred to ensuring their basic
needs (e.g. Candel & Pereira, 2017), and an interesting final suggestion was to make the partnership activities fun and stimulating, an idea also not directly identified in the literature studied.
6. Discussion and Recommendation

“But it’s just this like amoeba that can sort of move and form as it goes, and we would work, we have different tools, like we use food as a social tool to drive change in a sustainable way”

(Personal communication, April 30, 2019)

Several interesting discussion points arose from the analysis of empirical findings. These themes stood out either due to frequent recurrence, or novelty in their approach, and thus we believe are the most important to discuss in relation to our case-study. These themes imply recommendations for the MFP, which could be adapted for similar future partnerships for the SDGs in urban settings.

Firstly, it appears that organisations which have prior experience in cross-sector collaboration will have the means to better coordinate and/or collaborate in such partnerships which incorporate a holistic MSA. Further, if individual actors or organisations have collaborated together before, they have already established some degree of trust and legitimacy, and therefore a new partnership will have a head-start in this regard, as less time will be needed to build relationships and integrate a common vision and goals, etc. And essentially, at least at the initiation phase, actors who have previous work experience in several sectors will be able to better understand, link and coordinate the various sectors and stakeholders.

In terms of incentives, it seems that money remains a powerful resource: at the very least, the basic needs of stakeholders will have to be covered as, despite their altruistic reasons, it is evident that the vast majority cannot indefinitely commit their time to projects without being compensated. As regards the private sector, they will need some assurance of financial benefit from the collaboration, whether in terms of direct return, or indirect reputational benefits. On the other hand, we can conclude that not all stakeholders are driven by profit, and thus other motivational tools such as gamification, communications technology and simply making partnership activities ‘fun’ can be powerful tools to keep stakeholders engaged.

To follow on from that in relation to communication, establishing a physical location to host events, workshops and fora where all stakeholders are considered equal, status and power are thrown out the window, and innovative, stimulating activities are organised can be a powerful way to both keep stakeholders interested, and prove that the vision of the partnership is based on equal participation and collective action. Nevertheless, realistic targets in terms of number of meetings and number of participants in each meeting should be made so as to enable as rich and diverse a participation as possible. To enhance these, communication technology such as internet platforms should be used in conjunction, but not in lieu, of such meetings.

The paradox of emergence and flexibility versus rigidity was a highly interesting theme, especially as regards the structure and processes of a partnership. Too much flexibility can lead to ambiguity in terms of goals and roles, and may result in the demotivation of participants and ineffective policies. In contrast, too much rigidity can restrict innovative and experimental solutions also leading to the disillusionment of actors, and again, ineffective policies. The general conclusion then is that a balance between these factors should be identified.

The themes of coordination, leadership, and governance were heavily interlinked. As mentioned above, actors who possess good skills or experience in collaborative leadership can be highly valuable at the development stages of a new partnership. Similarly, support from powerful and legitimate (political) stakeholders can give the partnership credibility and enhanced, large-scale potential. On the other hand, as this type of partnership aims to be based on equal participation and shared responsibility with the municipality a stakeholder as any other, a new form of coordination and governance structure must be defined.
In that regard, numerous ideas led to a similar conclusion: that in order to ensure some degree of direction and long-term sustainability, an independent, centralised stakeholder (individual or intermediary organisation) should be mandated with managing the partnership. This reflects Provan and Kenis’ (2007) “Network Administrative Organisation” (NAO). The NAO should be neutral from other stakeholders (especially not directly affiliated with the municipality), and its primary objectives should be to coordinate all actors, guide the partnership, and integrate both short-term projects and a long-term vision in its goals.

Once this responsibility has been ensured, division of roles can be developed: a common suggestion was the formation of working groups divided by a theme or challenge, e.g. food waste group, urban farming group, etc. Stakeholders who are relevant to, and competent in the activities of such a group will be invited to participate. A group coordinator will be assigned and will report, with the other group coordinators, to the NAO. As mentioned above, the number of groups, members, and meetings will have to be decided with realistic ambitions so as not to sideline certain stakeholders. Further, the financing of the NAO, and the status of the group coordinators (volunteers, partly-financed by the NAOs, etc) are complex questions which must be addressed.

Finally, several issues came to light as regards the future and long-term sustainability of the partnership. On a general note, systematic changes were called for in certain areas: for example, that social (and environmental) value should be a stated and recognised variable, so that purely financial factors will be less influential in issues such as project funding and procurement policies, motivations of certain stakeholders, and evaluation of (especially short-term) ‘results’. For the partnership in question, many of the previously described factors could help to sustain the collaboration in the long-term, as the key is to have an established coordination organisation (e.g. an NAO), and ensure the continued involvement of multiple stakeholders through innovative and stimulating activities.
7. Conclusion

“A successful sustainable development agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society”

(UNSD, 2015)

As declared by the UN, cross-sector collaboration between diverse actors is needed in the attempt to alleviate complex issues and work in alignment with the SDGs (UNSD, 2015). However, due to the idiosyncrasies of collaboration formats and complexity of partnerships it is important to gain an understanding of how they can be developed to incorporate a holistic MSA for improved processes and results.

Led by the research question: How can a cross-sector collaboration with a holistic multi-stakeholder approach be developed and sustained in the pursuit of the SDGs?, this thesis aimed to explore theoretical concepts of and identify relevant key factors for successful cross-sector collaboration with a holistic MSA as a tool to achieve the SDGs from a case perspective with the example of the impending Malmö Food Partnership (MFP). The case was an ideal selection for investigating this matter since the city of Malmö’s old Food Policy is nearing its expiration date, and in order to develop a more holistic process, Malmö Stad is currently in the formation phase of an innovative partnership dedicated to developing a sustainable food system in Malmö through engaging multiple stakeholders.

Through the extensive review of literature, an analytical framework was developed that made it possible to categorise the findings from the conducted interviews and focus group. Five overall themes were categorised that were found to be distinctive but at the same time linked: Antecedent factors, Early stages, Structure, Processes, and Leadership and Governance, with the central theme of MSA recurring within each of the five themes. A key finding of the reviewed literature highlights the need for balancing capacity of potential opposing entities within cross-sector collaboration, such as stability and flexibility, efficiency and inclusivity, and rigidity versus emergence.

The analysis of the empirical data revealed several key findings of the study that we identify as the most important factors to take into account in developing an innovative partnership: Antecedent factors, especially with regard to the incentives of each actor, sector-specific characteristics, and prior cross-sectoral experience or relationships were seen to be essential. Communication was also a strong theme, especially with regard to establishing a physical location and involving stakeholders through novel and stimulating activities. The theme of emergence, experimentation and flexibility throughout the process of a partnership was highlighted, albeit with some degree of structure and formality. Collaborative leadership proved an important factor during the formation of a partnership. In the longer term however, an independent governance structure will be required to facilitate an engaging, innovative and lasting partnership.

This research provides a theoretical contribution in that it fills a gap through bridging the topics of cross-sector collaboration, a multi-stakeholder approach, and goals for sustainable development, and in addition to that synthesises theory with a real-life application to the case of the MFP. Moreover, with our analytical framework, we have developed a tool that allows flexibility to be applied to different case scenarios within the field of cross-sector collaboration.

Our research provides useful information for practitioners, such as managers of municipal departments or consultants who seek theoretical support when assessing a particular collaborative setting or developing a comparable innovative partnership. In addition to that, the findings can serve representatives of the public, private and third sectors in their attempts to gain understanding of cross-sector collaboration and engage with a broader stakeholder network.

Since the topic of cross-sector collaboration is central and partnerships are complex constructs, future research could investigate more specific factors with regard to the dynamics in partnership.
constellations, and how to sustain them in the long-term. A further interesting research topic could be on the monitoring and evaluation of multi-stakeholder partnerships, as this study did not find sufficient data concerning this.

Finally, we hope that our research can serve as a medium of information for those seeking to understand the complex field of cross-sector collaboration and as an inspiration for researchers as well as individuals and organisations from across society who aim to apply it in their attempt to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
References


Public Management Review, 17(8), 1165-1189. doi: 10.1080/14719037.2014.895031

doi:10.1007/s10551-011-0778-0


doi:10.1023/a:1010690908200

Press.

Yilmaz, K. (2013). Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Traditions: epistemological, theoretical, 

## Appendix

### Appendix I: Interview guide and Focus Group guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disclaimer</th>
<th>Do you agree that I can record this interview?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>1. Could you please introduce yourself and tell me a little bit about your role in the organization?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| General Experience | 2. Have you engaged in CSPs in the past?  
3. Why do you want to engage in CSPs?  
3.1. Why do you think that it is necessary?  
4. Can you briefly elaborate on your experiences with CSP?  
5. Have you worked before with the prior 2020 Malmö food strategy? |
| Specific Experience 2020 | 6. Concerning your experience working on the 2020 strategy  
6.1. Can you briefly describe your role in the partnership?  
6.2. How would you evaluate the process?  
6.3.1. Were there any particular challenges you recall? (roles, responsibilities, communication, leadership, etc.)?  
6.3.2. Was there any particular positive aspect which stood out for you?  
6.3.3. How did you deal with challenges or even process failure? |
| Specific Experience 2030 | 7. Concerning your ongoing experience in collaborating for the upcoming Food Strategy Partnership...  
7.1. Can you briefly describe your role in the partnership?  
7.2. What was the incentive of Malmö Stad to get involved?  
7.3. What would you hope to gain from this?  
7.4. What competency or knowledge do you feel you bring to the partnership?  
7.5. At this point in the initiative, how would you evaluate the process?  
7.5.1. Are you experiencing any challenges?  
7.5.2. Does anything work particularly well?  
7.5.3. How are you dealing with challenges? |
| Collaboration structure & processes | 8. Concerning the formal structure of the partnership...  
8.1. At initiation, was a contract or agreement established for the partnership? Was it the same for every partner? Are you planning to have one?  
8.2. Is there a formal group leader?  
8.3. How are roles divided?  
8.4. How are responsibilities divided?  
8.5. To what extent are you accountable / clash with / collaborate with other municipalities and other levels of govt, e.g. regional, national and international?  
8.6. How do you reach consensus/agree on goals/an agenda? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. How are you monitoring or planning to monitor the partnership?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1. Have you selected any specific measures? (Who will measure them? Will you do this collaboratively or is this the task of a particular person?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2. How are you dealing with conflict?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3. How does communication happen within the partnership?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.1. How often have you / do you meet? In person?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4. When you’re planning activities, who is the main initiator? Are you all working on this together? Do you sometimes work in a rather bilateral way (Malmö Stad and e.g. STAM) for specific occasions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Concerning the collaboration:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does something not work? Would you like to bring in specific ideas to improve the partnership?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1. Do you feel heard?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2 How do you make sure that partners are included in the process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3 Is there something you would like to improve?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Focus Group guide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Suppose that you were in charge of Malmö’s food partnership, what would be the priority things that you would Change first?? → Name up to 3!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Scenario: You’re part of the working group (10 people) on food waste issues in Malmö: How would you share responsibilities with the other group members? (Divide roles? Delegate?) Take notes!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up: How would you make sure that everyone is on the same page at every stage of the partnership?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Imagine you’re having a meeting with a wider group of 50 stakeholders from different organizations: How would you structure the meeting so that everybody contributes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Scenario: It would be beneficial if a large private company got involved in your working group. How would you get them involved without the motivation of money?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up: Picture that they are getting involved, how would you ensure that everybody has the same rights and influence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Taking into consideration everything we have discussed today: How do you think the partnership can be sustained in the long term and what could be possible threats?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix II: Excerpts of three interview transcripts

Personal communication, April 25, 2019

Interviewer: 2:39
So about the upcoming new food strategy partnership, can you first briefly describe your role in this initiative?

Interviewee 2: 2:52
We started last year 2018, with a pre-study, if we could create food, local food strategy for Malmö. So the aim for that study was to, to find the interest from local stakeholders, but also, if there are possibilities to actually achieve it. And from that, we applied for a new project that we recently got approval for, where the aim is to create this food partnership. So my, my role in this is the project manager, leading that work and process together with others. So me and the environment department are the owner of the project, but we're not necessarily the owner of what comes out of it. So and, and in that process, and work in the project, it is important to enhance that we also have to work together with other ones. So we are not like the ones that decide only in the process. So yeah. So it's, it's a co-ownership of what comes out of this.

Interviewer: 4:19
And how do you see that working, you said you'll be co-owning. So do you already have some idea in your mind of how that's going to work, who's going to be the coordinator or the leader?

Interviewee 2: 4:32
I have some some initial idea, but also, from what I have what I've seen from other parts in Europe and in the world, relating to this team also. But I will imagine that we could create an organization with different stakeholders, and having maybe a core group of the local stakeholders that are more engaged, and then maybe the rest of them. And those are the ones, you know, that burn for different questions and move it forward. So I think also, maybe, I will see a great benefit, if we could divide that kind of partnership into two perspectives, maybe three, mostly one for the municipality and one for the other part of the world. So it could be the private sector, but also the the NGO sector. And so ideally, I see I see an ownership with a former member structure, but also with two, maybe two persons that are engaged from different perspectives that then also work together. And so for seeing them, the best of the municipality’s way of thinking, but also the other ones who go to sites.

Interviewer: 6:01
Just to clarify this, do you mean one person who will be the representative of all the small initiatives? In that sense, like, my staff will be one, and then the NGO sector will be another and have many NGOs behind them? Or how would that be structured?

Interviewee 2: 6:22
I don't know. But I just don't see a limitation. So how many could be involved in this partnership, that I see that we need to have like, some kind of steering, so besides like a normal steering group, or whatever it could be, for example, a core membership, it could also be maybe one or two or two, maybe three persons maximum that are in some way in charge or drift into management of that organization, or partnerships and so on.

Personal communication, April 30, 2019

Interviewer: 0:50
Have you been involved in cross sector partnerships in the past?

Interviewee 5: 0:59
I think that's, that's all I do, to be honest, I can't really remember a job or situation or project that I've worked on, which hasn't been cross disciplinary. I do feel it's important to engage in these partnerships. Honestly, I don't, I don't really know any other way to do them really, like, if I would have to talk just
sort of to one, if I would only have to stay in the public sector, or only in the private sector, I feel like it gets really limiting. Because these sectors are there for categorization and due to like an old system, but nowadays, they get really blended, and they become another and they are constantly in dialogue with one another. So I don't really see how anything can be done, if not all parties are involved. Yeah.

Interviewer: 1:53
Can you give an example of a project you've worked with?

Interviewee 5: 1:59
Well, my, my current job, or my, the one that I work for, for half time, is a, it's a food waste initiative called [XXX], which means save the food. And it's a regional initiative that started by the county governor, a year ago, she sort of spoke out that Skane is going to be the best region in Sweden to, to work with food waste, then to prevent it. And, and it's, it's interesting, because the county council sort of is a public institution. And they usually just stay put in the public sector and they really stay locked in that. And once she sort of, she did this announcement, she didn't really think that hey, like, they will have to actually work with the private sector, they have to work with NGOs, which I work for now. So then they sort of panicked, and they're like, Well, how do we get all these actors with us from from different sector?, And so then they formed this project. And, and my job is to create a network or sort of a database where all different sectors can find each other. And that is still it sounds like a very simple job. But still, today, it's really complicated to even when we have meetings, you know, people sit in their own sort of here, you have all the, all the different cities in the corner, are sitting together, everyone who works in schools sits there, and then you have the ones who work in, in the private sector and in business. And they don't talk to one another. But they keep saying that, oh, we would love to, you know, meet someone from we want to collaborate with the private sector, we want to collaborate with academia or something, but it's still there's still this big need. And a lot of energy of my work goes into just trying to get people to talk to one another. Yeah, and meet on sort of fertile soil, if you understand what I've done to to make them sort of find ways to collaborate and an easy way.

**Personal communication, May 16, 2019**

Interviewer: 9:39
And how, in general, when you think of cross-sector collaboration, what do you think, are the main challenges? Or how do you think this should be ideally, structured? When working together with different sectors?

Interviewee 9: 10:13
I mean, I don't have that much experience in this one before this is I've only been working with public private sector as an entrepreneur and having a bit of project with public sector, but never worked in business, collaboration and that angle. Now, we've been doing it a lot for three years. And what I see for us, for us here is that it's very hard in our own city to get the support that we get in other cities, we get much more support, and much more enthusiasm in other cities. And there were quite a few that we were working with. I was just in Copenhagen, and in Zurich last week, when you wrote to me, and, and in Bergen a few months ago, and when we go and present what we do here, if you're like, wow, this is what like, they're like, yes, this is what we want to do. We need this, the public sector, we talked in Malmö, you know, we're the ones applying for projects to have them on board. And otherwise, they would not support this financially in any way. So we have to make it happen. So for us, even though that gives us a lot of freedom, because we're the one driving it. And it was a bit of a frustrating process. Because when I go to this workshop, they do talk about: Yeah, how can we support more local food production stuff like this, and we're like, we're, we're to the points and they've been involved in the whole project, right? They have been partners from day one, and they're still partners today. And you know, we have now got to the point we have secure land, we have a system that we're exporting to to Europe, we have 10 farmers every year coming in and getting the test bed that we have over there. I have zero budget for it, I can only finance my time, but we don't even have money to invest on the on the field. So I do feel that being able to use what is existing and accepting that's private sector. I don't like this. I'm not gonna say the private sector is not evil. But it's to to, to rely and have stronger partnerships with already existing
ones. I think we've just fastened, fasten which accelerates the process. And I do feel sometimes that it's always starting, like in the beginning. Okay, let's figure out. What is the problem? What is it like, within this five years ago, when it comes to this section of what we do have someone talking to the whole, I'm not competent on the most sustainable things in terms of if we see that we want more local food production. One aspect is obviously the urban farming. And this man has been involved with for five years, there is a method it's working. It needs to be improved by all means. And yet it's not. It's not like people are coming in. Okay, how do we expand this? How do we how do we have 100 farmers in five years, or in 10 years in Malmö, nobody's coming on our door to say this, we are bringing the politicians in and saying, Look what we're doing. So in that sense, this is what I feel like it's a bit: Why do we have to go through the whole thing? again, and again and again?