A Collective Effort to find Durable Solutions for Undocumented People

An ethnographic case-study of the way local stakeholders engage in collaborative governance for the public service delivery to undocumented people in Utrecht.

Master Thesis Organising Social Impact
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Abstract

As a response to exclusionary asylum policies and lack of support by the national government, local stakeholders started organising and collaborating for the provision of services to undocumented people locally. This thesis analyses the way local stakeholders engage in collaborative governance for the public service delivery to undocumented people in Utrecht. Through an in-depth study of the experiences of individuals actively involved in the municipality Utrecht and local civil society organisations, it provides insight into the dynamics of collaborative governance at the local level. The research uses the model of collaborative governance of Ansell and Gash (2008) to analyse the different factors that influence the degree of collaboration between the local stakeholders: starting conditions, facilitative leadership, institutional design and collaborative process. In doing so, it also uses the framework of multi-levelness to analyse the relations between the local collaborative network and the recently implemented national pilot concerning undocumented people: the LVV (*Landelijke Vreemdelingenvoorzieningen*, National Immigration Facilities).

Key words: collaborative governance, multi-levelness, undocumented people, civil society organisations, local authorities.

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List of Abbreviations

CSO	Civil society organisation
DT&V	*Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek* (Dutch Repatriation and Departure Service)
HASA	*Herhaalde asielaanvraag* (Repeated Asylum Application)
HvO	*Hulpverlenersoverleg* (Care worker consultation)
IND	*Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst* (Immigration and Naturalisation Service)
LSO	*Lokaal samenwerkingsoverleg* (Local partnership consultation)
LVV	*Landelijke Vreemdelingenvoorzieningen* (National Immigration Facilities)
VNG	*Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten* (Association of Dutch Municipalities)

1. Introduction

Every day, many undocumented[1] people in the Netherlands live under extremely precarious circumstances. Not only do they struggle to meet their basic needs, they also have to deal with the uncertainty of living without documents. The circumstances under which people may become undocumented may differ, such as their asylum application getting rejected, their residence permit expired or they never applied for a permit (Villa Vrede, 2023a). At this moment it is not a criminal offence to stay in the Netherlands without a valid permit. However, undocumented people risk being placed in alien detention by the police, which can occur when they commit minor offences like cycling without lights (Villa Verde, 2023a). Undocumented people, therefore, constantly live in uncertainty. There are some basic rights that undocumented migrants in the Netherlands have, regardless of their status, including: attending school until the age of 18, access to medically necessary care or legal assistance in a new immigration procedure (Basic Rights, n.d.). Nevertheless, out of fear of being arrested or due to the lack of knowledge of these rights, undocumented people do not always assert their rights.

According to WODC's (*Het Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum,* The Scientific Research and Documentation Center) most recent study in 2017-2018, there are between 30000 and 58000 undocumented people in the Netherlands (Van der Heijden et al., 2020). Of this group, approximately 5000 live in Utrecht (Villa Vrede, 2023a). Certain estimations could be much higher, because a large group is presumably unknown to institutions, since they remain within their own network or live on the streets (OMA, 2021).

Lots of undocumented people reside in the Netherlands, but they are excluded from Dutch society. Without valid documents, people are not allowed to work and they have limited rights to use government services. One significant national policy that isolated undocumented people was the Benefit Entitlement Act, commonly known as the 'Linking Act' (*Koppelingswet*), introduced in 1998 (Kos et al., 2015). The government's objective of this legislation was to deter illegal work and residence by linking a person's residence status to a social-fiscal number. As a result, undocumented people, not having a valid permit, are completely excluded from access to social services, legal housing and employment (Kos et al 2015). Additionally, in the late 1990s the national government decided that people who had exhausted all legal remedies were no longer entitled to shelter provided by the government (Damen, 2022). The underlying belief was that by completely excluding them from society, undocumented people would return to their country of origin. In practice this does not happen, since for many of these people that is not an option (Van Tongerloo, 2023). In many cases it is not possible due to, among other things, safety reasons, the lack of identification papers or the refusal of home countries to cooperate (Toevlucht, 2021).

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[1] Undocumented people are sometimes also labelled as illegal (migrants) or sans-papiers. However, this thesis refers to this group as 'undocumented', since it follows, among others, Villa Vrede's belief that no person is illegal and a lot of people have not actually exhausted all legal remedies.

1.1 Problem description

The Dutch national government's exclusionary approach left undocumented people in a vulnerable and marginalised position, with limited access to essential resources and support. A number of civil society organisations (CSOs) originated to address these urgent needs of undocumented people and fill the gaps in support to them (Larruina et al., 2019). This development also occurred in Utrecht where CSOs provide different services to undocumented people, including day shelter, night shelter, activation and socio-legal counselling. In line with Ambrosini (2020), the CSOs in Utrecht carry out overlapping modes of action and apart from the provision of services they also engage in the advocacy of the rights of the group. Over the course of 20 years, around 10 CSOs emerged which are committed to enhancing the position of undocumented people in Utrecht.

Civil society actors were not the only actors who stood up, but local authorities started organising activities outside the national government too. This is a notable trend in the immigration field highlighted by scholars such as Scholten and Penninx (2016). They observe that local authorities, particularly large municipalities, have taken on an entrepreneurial role in constructing their own ideology and policies concerning immigration and integration. While immigration policies are formulated at a national level, it is at the local level that the effects of these policies are experienced (Scholten and Pennix, 2016). Local stakeholders, including municipalities, find themselves at the forefront of addressing the demands and challenges faced within their communities that result from national exclusionary asylum policies. In this light, the exclusion of all services, such as shelter, by the national government led to an increase of nuisance in cities. As a response to the nuisance certain Dutch municipalities decided to organise '*Bed-Bad-Brood*' (Bed-Bath-Bread) locations. Undocumented people in these Dutch municipalities, including Utrecht, got access to 'Bed-Bad-Brood' services that include a meal and 'gloomy' shelter (Damen, 2022). Apart from protecting social order, the Utrecht municipality also aims to ensure the basic human rights of their citizens regardless of their residence status. It is not possible for the municipality to deal with this challenge alone, and therefore they operate in close collaboration with local CSOs that are working with undocumented people. A collaboration between state and non-state actors in collective decision-making on public policies and issues is referred to as collaborative governance, which will further be theorised in the upcoming chapters (Ansell and Gnash, 2008).

Local stakeholders collaborating for the provision of services to undocumented people in Utrecht is in line with Ansell and Gash (2008), who analyse that collaborative governance is often an attempt to address shortcomings or in this case the lack of top-down implementation in public governance. In response to the growing pressure on the work of local authorities, the Dutch government, in collaboration with the *Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten* (VNG, Association of Dutch Municipalities) initiated a pilot *Landelijke Vreemdelingen Voorzieningen* (LVV, National Immigration Facilities) in 2018. The objective of the LVV programme was formulated as (Mack et al., 2022):

Municipalities and central government closely cooperate to realise a national network of shelter and counselling facilities with the aim to find durable solutions for foreign nationals without a right of residence and without entitlement to the central reception facilities (Rijksopvang). By guiding them to assisted voluntary return, onward migration or, if appropriate, legalisation of residence, the corresponding care and safety problems are tackled.

The aim was thus to find '*durable solutions and perspectives*' for undocumented people, the majority of whom experience their lives to be stagnant and without hope for the future (Van Tongerloo, 2023). Within this program stakeholders work together towards a permanent solution for undocumented people: either return to their country of origin, get a residence permit or migrate to another country. This collaborative process was facilitated by a coordinator, which in most cases was the municipality (Mack et al., 2022). The pilot was effective until the end of 2022 and five municipalities participated: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Nijmegen and Groningen. The goal of the pilot was to work towards a national implementation of the LVV-program, which is currently being debated by national and local authorities.

1.2 Research question

In light of the LVV-pilot, active participation and collaboration between different local stakeholders is needed to find durable solutions for undocumented people in Utrecht. For this reason, it is interesting to analyse the way in which the local stakeholders navigate the complex process of finding common ground for action, considering that each stakeholder has different roles, visions and underlying interests. Moreover, it is important to analyse how the local stakeholders have implemented the national LVV policy in their local context and how this has influenced their already existing local collaboration. Through an in-depth study of the experiences and perspectives of individuals actively working for the local stakeholders active in the public service delivery to undocumented people, this thesis hopes to provide insight in the way these non-state and state actors collaborate, especially within the new context of the LVV-program in Utrecht. In doing so, this thesis uses the lens of collaborative governance and multi-levelness, which will be further explained in chapter 2, the theoretical framework. This thesis tries to answer the following research question:

How do local stakeholders engage in collaborative governance for the public service delivery to undocumented people in Utrecht?

To address this research question, three sub questions are formulated:
1. How is collaboration among local stakeholders facilitated?
2. How does the national LVV-pilot influence the existing collaborative network?
3. How do stakeholders manage to build good mutual relations?

To formulate an answer to my research question I have conducted ethnographic fieldwork by using the qualitative methods of participant observation, interviewing and document-analysis. My entry point to the collaborative network in Utrecht is the civil society organisation: Villa Vrede. Villa Vrede is a day shelter and activity centre for undocumented people in Utrecht. From February to June I have participated in their organisational practices. Not only has this participation offered me the experience of interacting with undocumented people and working for a bottom-up organisation active in the public service delivery to undocumented people, but through Villa Vrede's broad network I could also get in touch with other stakeholders of Utrecht.

1.3 Relevance
With this thesis I aim to accomplish different objectives regarding social/political, practical/organisational and academic nature.

1.3.1. Social/political nature
As briefly mentioned before, undocumented people in the Netherlands live in precarious situations with a daily struggle to survive (Van Tongerloo, 2023). However, this dire situation of many undocumented people is mostly invisible in Dutch society, in public as well as in political debate. Recent research conducted by the Ombudsman of Metropool Amsterdam highlighted that the lack of invisibility of the group leaves them particularly vulnerable for forms of exploitation, such as poor working conditions, and urges for a change towards more visibility on this (OMA, 2021). By actively participating in and researching organisations that are at the forefront of service delivery to undocumented people, I hope with this research to increase the visibility of undocumented people in the Netherlands, and show both their potential and daily struggles. Moreover, I hope this thesis contributes to raising awareness of the work of organisations actively trying to improve the precarious situation of the group, which the national government consciously looks away from. As a response at the local level, organisations and initiatives, often bottom-up, were set up and entered in close collaboration with the other actors, including local authorities. This development and the potential of certain multi-actor collaborative networks requires acknowledgment in public as well as in political debate, for which the current attention for the new LVV-program offers a good entry point. This links to my additional objective to enhance practices and collaboration of organisations working with undocumented people, which will be elaborated on next.

1.3.2 Scholarly nature
As explained above, state and non-state stakeholders collaborate in the public service delivery regarding undocumented people in Utrecht. According to Brandsen et al. (2017) there is a gap in literature on the complex relations between civil society organisations and governments. By conducting multi-method qualitative research, I aim to contribute to filling this gap by providing a case-study of the collaborative network in Utrecht. In doing so, I will use the lens of collaborative governance to gain insight in the complex dynamics between heterogeneous

stakeholders providing support to undocumented people. Moreover, Scholten & Penninx (2016), among others, criticise current literature on governance, although improving, because of the tendency to focus on one level of government instead of analysing the interplay between multiple levels. They therefore advocate a framework of 'multi-levelness' to analyse how policies develop at different levels and interact with one another, which will be further elaborated on in my chapter on the theoretical framework (Scholten & Penninx , 2016). An in-depth analysis of all levels is unfortunately out of the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, to involve the 'multi-levelness' lens, this thesis, in analysing the local level, also pays attention to the relation to the national government level. Decisions taken at the national level influence the room for manoeuvre of local governments and civil society organisations. The 'national level' therefore is inextricably linked to practices of local stakeholders and the way they collaborate. For this reason, this thesis takes the newly implemented LVV-pilot as a centre for analysis.

1.3.3. Organisational nature
First of all, this thesis aims to provide insight for the involved stakeholders in the way their collaboration is facilitated, the impact of the LVV-pilot and the way they manage to build good collaborative relationships among each other. By analysing the challenges faced by these local stakeholders in such activities of collaborative governance, this research may help to identify areas for improvement and potential strategies to overcome obstacles.

Following Scholten and Penninx (2016), collaborative governance applied to the immigration field is common, and understanding of the successes and challenges in Utrecht can benefit other local networks. This is especially relevant in light of the possibility that the LVV will be nationally implemented. The implementation of the LVV-program is context dependent, but this study strives to provide insight for local actors who are also navigating their collaboration within this new program. And in addition, insight for governmental parties who are adjusting the LVV-program according to the experiences of the LVV-pilot municipalities such as Utrecht. Scholars like Kos et al (2015) analyse that restrictive policies of the national government do not entirely correspond with what local stakeholders experience in practice. Therefore, I hope that this thesis can contribute to drawing attention to what is experienced 'on the ground' and thereby strengthen the voice and position of these organisations.

1.4 Reading guide
To be able to answer my research questions, in the second chapter of this thesis I will develop a theoretical framework. In doing so, I will focus on the theoretical debates regarding collaborative governance, multi-levelness and the role of local authorities and civil society organisations. Thereafter, in the third chapter I will provide an outline of the different qualitative research methods I used to collect data. In this chapter I will also reflect on the ethical considerations, my positionality and how my research aims to comply with the standards of quality. In the fourth chapter I will present the findings of my ethnographic fieldwork, whereby each subsection relates to one of the research sub-questions. In the following fifth chapter, I will

formulate an answer to my main research question by linking it to the literature. Lastly, in the concluding remarks I will discuss the relevance and limitations of the research and provide recommendations for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework that constitutes the basis for the analysis of my research findings. In the first section, I will take a closer look at the concept of collaborative governance. In doing so, I will analyse factors that contribute to the effectiveness of a multi-actor collaboration by following the model of collaborative governance of Ansell and Gnash (2008). Secondly, I will briefly delve into the framework of multi-levelness to be able to analyse the relations between different government levels. Lasty, this chapter conceptualises the main actors in this research: local authorities and civil society organisations (CSOs). In doing so, I frequently make reference to the Netherlands because research on immigration-related topics is often context-dependent.

2.1 Collaborative governance
2.1.1 Defining collaborative governance
In an attempt to address, among others, the shortcomings of top-down implementation in public governance, collaborative governance emerged (Ansell and Gnash, 2008). Collaborative governance brings various actors together in collective decision-making on public policies and issues (Ansell and Gnash, 2008; Larruina et al., 2019). Emerson, Nabatchi and Balogh (2012, p. 18), define collaborative governance as:

> *the processes and structures of public policy decisionmaking and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished.*

Scholars differ slightly on the way they conceptualise collaborative governance and refer, for instance, to governance network (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2015), meta-governance (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009) or collaborative management (O'Leary & Bingham, 2009). Following Klijn and Koppenjan (2015) and Ansell and Gnash (2008), most conceptualisations share the following characteristics.

First of all, collaborative governance is aimed at providing public goods (Ansell and Gash, 2008). Provision of public goods with regard to complex societal issues cannot be tackled within singular organisational boundaries, such as one public agency. Instead it calls for collaborative contributions from multiple actors (Larruina et al., 2019; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2015). Along this line, according to most scholars, collaborative governance requires the representation of all relevant interest groups. These scholars call upon the participation of non-state stakeholders alongside public agencies in the policy decision-making process (Connick & Innes, 2003; Ansell & Gash, 2008).

In addition, Ansell and Gash (2008) emphasise that there should be real collaboration established among stakeholders in collaborative governance. This entails moving beyond a mere consultative role for non-state actors and fostering a collaborative relationship between the state and non-state actors. Ansell and Gash (2008) therefore refer to a criterion in collaborative

governance of direct involvement, which means that all stakeholders are involved in the decision-making on policy as well as being accountable for its outcomes. In doing so, the decision-making process should be consensus oriented. The primary aim of the stakeholders involved should be to seek common ground on the decisions at hand. The term "oriented" is essential, since it acknowledges the inherent challenges associated with attaining complete consensus in multi-actor collaborative forums (Ansell and Gash, 2008).

This decision-making is a highly complex process due to the fact that collaborative governance is characterised by complex interactions between stakeholders, since they often have conflicting perspectives on the problem, solutions and strategies to achieve this solution (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2015). The conflicting perspectives among stakeholders can be attributed to their different roles, visions and underlying interests (Ansell and Gash, 2008). This also is challenging in the case of immigration in which actors have divergent interests and goals. For instance, on the one hand the national government and some local governments apply a strict immigration policy to ensure, among others, national security or social order in their city (Larruina et al., 2019). On the other hand, civil society actors advocate the reception and rights of (un)documented immigrants (Ambrosini, M., 2020). Various scholars highlight how stakeholders can navigate these differences through inclusive, participatory or deliberative methods that promote a collaborative culture with mutual understanding, knowledge sharing or joint-problem solving (Tuurnas et al., 2019). Moreover, within collaborative governance there is often a high interdependence between the stakeholders, since the resources needed to tackle the problem are diffused among them. As a result, stakeholders are influenced by each other's strategic choices, which makes the course of action unpredictable and complex (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2015).

2.1.2 Conditions for a successful collaborative network

As stated above, Ansell and Gnash (2008) identify different factors that have an impact on the degree of collaboration between actors, based on a systematic review of 137 studies of collaborative governance across a variety of policy fields. They managed to integrate their findings into a model of collaborative governance, which is demonstrated in figure 1. The model consists of four main conditions: starting conditions, facilitative leadership, institutional design and collaborative process. These should not be studied as separated conditions, instead focus should be on their dynamic nature and interconnectedness. This section gives a short overview of the main and sub-variables of the model of Ansell and Gash (2008), and in doing so, a representation of various literature on collaborative governance is given.
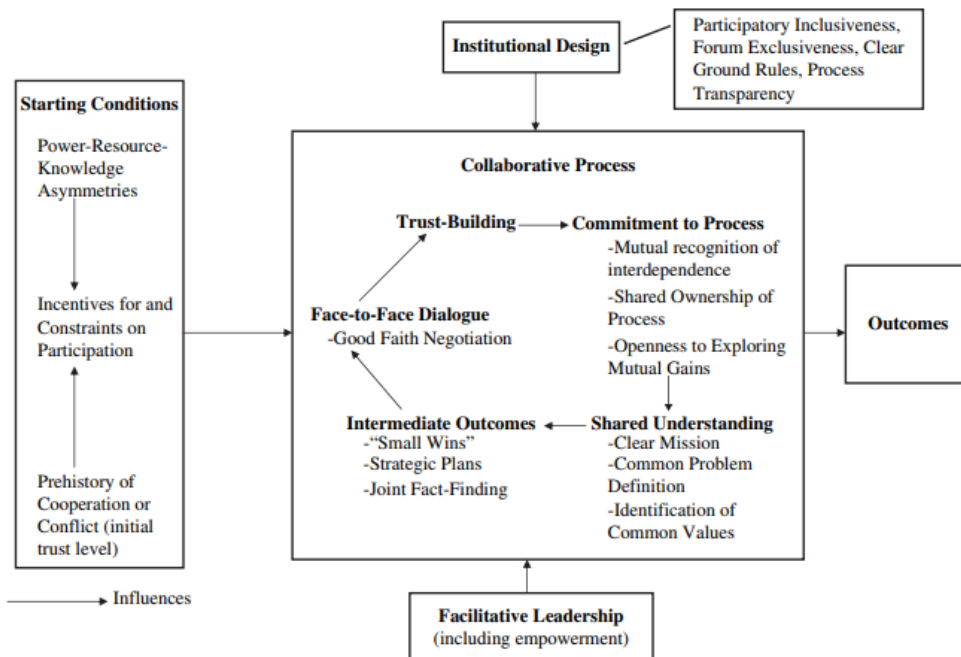
Figure 1. Model of collaborative governance Ansell and Gash (2008)

First of all, Ansell and Gash (2008) describe the way in which the initial context at the beginning of the collaboration shapes the following stages of their collaboration. The first starting condition relates to the power imbalances between actors. This includes, among others, the capacity, skills or time stakeholders have to engage in a meaningful way in the collaborative process. In case of significant differences in these aspects, the collaboration is sensitive to dominance by the more powerful actors. Consequently, attention should be paid to empower and ensure representation of the disadvantaged stakeholders (Ansell and Gash, 2008). In addition, the incentives of stakeholders to participate can also positively or negatively influence the collaborative process. These incentives are shaped by the actors' perception of the organisations' interdependence in achieving their goals, but also by the belief in effective outcomes of their collective actions. Incentives are highly influenced by the political context the stakeholders operate in. For instance, when stakeholders experience pressure from regulations it can foster a sense of urgency and recognition for the benefits of collaboration with others. As demonstrated in the model, previous successful or conflicting collaborative relationships also contribute to the degree of collaboration between actors, for which trust and social capital are valuable (Ansell and Gash, 2008).

Secondly, the meta-analysis of Ansell and Gash (2008) demonstrated that a form of facilitative leadership is a critical condition for a successful collaborative process. Facilitative leadership is especially important with regard to the empowerment of weaker stakeholders. To ensure this, facilitative leaders should promote an inclusive environment that allows all

stakeholders to participate in the decision-making process. In doing so, they try to manage conflicts when these arise and foster trust between the actors.

Thirdly, Ansell and Gash (2008) stress the importance of institutional design. There should be some structure, procedures and rules that set the base for the collaboration, i.e. create the procedural legitimacy of collaborative governance. This may include protocols on how decisions are being made or which deadlines apply for these decisions to be implemented. However, specific deadlines should be realistic otherwise they can harm future collaboration. Establishing clear ground rules and being transparent ensures legitimacy that the collaborative process is fair. It assures the participants that they have a real impact on the process and not merely serve in a performative or consultative function, as mentioned in the previous section. Moreover, Ansell and Gash (2008) highlight the concept that defining the role that each stakeholder has in the network can help to clarify expectations.

Ansell and Gash (2008) focus on the collaborative process in which the stakeholders come together to address the common issue. A collaborative process includes different actions, such as joint problem identification, information sharing, and designing and implementing the formulated solution. Some scholars argue that certain activities are carried out in phases of collaborative governance, which follow each other in a more or less linear manner. Sørensen and Torfing (2021), for instance, refer to 'upstream' phases of problem analysis and agenda setting that are followed by 'downstream' phases of implementation and outcome evaluation. However, Ansell and Gash (2008) suggest a non-linear approach to collaborative governance and therefore visualise the collaborative process as a circle (see figure 1.)

This thesis follows the cyclical approach of Ansell and Gash (2008), since this directs attention to the way internal or external changes in the collaborative process can impact the collaboration. Changes in the political context may for instance require stakeholders to recreate their shared understanding of the problem or solution. Ansell and Gash (2008), therefore, refer to different practices that stakeholders constantly need to navigate in the collaborative process, including face-to-face dialogue, trust building, commitment to process, shared understanding and intermediate outcomes.

Apart from the conditions that emerged from the meta-analysis of Ansell and Gash (2008), recent studies also stress the importance of evaluation in collaborative governance (Sørensen & Torfing, 2021). This thesis therefore uses 'evaluation' as an additional condition that determines the degree of effectiveness of a collaboration. According to Hertting and Vedung (2012, 36) a common definition of evaluation is:

> *Evaluation is the careful assessment of the merit, worth, and value of organisation, content, administration, output, and effects of ongoing or finished government interventions, which is intended to play a role in future, practical action situations.*

In this line, evaluation in collaborative governance is crucial to ascertain if the collaborative initiatives have the desired impact, i.e. if the network has achieved its objectives. It helps to identify the strengths and shortcomings of their collective action, and to adjust accordingly when necessary (Provan & Milward, 2001). In doing so, the stakeholders involved should evaluate the actions taken and their outcomes, as well as the collaborative process itself (Hertting & Vedung, 2012; Provan & Milward, 2001). However, this often remains a challenge in collaborative governance due to the complex, multi-actor and multi-level collaborative process (Sørensen & Torfing, 2021). Since the conditions of the above model are highly dynamic and interdependent, the collaborative governance can not be assessed along predefined measures (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Sørensen & Torfing, 2021). Instead stakeholders should take an adaptive approach to evaluation by critically examining their incentives, problem analysis, objectives, and challenges (Sørensen & Torfing, 2021). In this regard, Hertting and Vedung (2012) argue that the evaluation should integrate the individualistic perspectives and attitudes of an actor towards each network partner, as well as the holistic perspective, i.e. attitudes to the network as a whole. This resonates with 'stakeholder' evaluation that takes the beliefs and concerns of the stakeholders as a starting point. In this way, evaluation is proposed in this thesis as an extra condition that is crucial for the degree of successfulness of a collaboration.

With reference to the above characteristics, collaborative governance aspires to offer a holistic approach to complex issues in public policy and public management (Ansell and Gnash, 2008; Larruina et al., 2019). Ansell and Gnash (2008), among others, argue that this is especially important with regard to 'wicked' issues, such as immigration. Wicked issues are grand societal challenges that are difficult to solve. These 'wicked issues', due to their social pluralism, institutional complexity and scientific uncertainty, call for collective action of all actors involved (Noordegraaf et al., 2019). The stakeholders active in collaborative governance concerning undocumented people in the Netherlands, will be discussed in the following two sections.

2.2 Local authorities

Political scholar Barber 92013) in his book 'If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities', stresses the importance of local governments in tackling societal challenges, such as the so-called refugee crisis. He argues that local authorities tend to operate more pragmatically than national governments. The latter, states Barber, act foremost in line with their own ideology and national political interests. Moreover, he argues that local authorities are more likely to collaborate with other municipalities or non-state stakeholders (Barber, 2013; Geuijen et al., 2020). Similarly, Scholten (2013) analyses that the local policy process often builds on a horizontal policy learning structure among local authorities. Due to these aspects, local authorities are able to respond more adequately to societal challenges than national governments (Geuijen et al., 2020).

Local authorities are active stakeholders in the policy domain concerning undocumented people, since the effects of national immigration policies are experienced more on the local level

(Scholten and Penninx, 2016). With regard to immigration policies some scholars analyse a 'scale mismatch' between the national level, where the issues are debated and managed, and the local level, where the problems are experienced (Geuijen et al., 2020). Or the Dutch national and local policies are referred to as "two worlds apart" (Scholten and Penninx, 2013). Scholars Scholten and Penninx (2016) point out a trend that local authorities, especially large municipalities, have become 'entrepreneurial' in constructing their own ideology and policies concerning immigration and integration. In doing so, municipalities often operate in close collaboration with other municipalities, in vertical networks and local organisations. Municipalities therefore do not always act in accordance with the immigration policies of the national government.

Kos et al. (2015) analyse that municipal actors think that they should act differently in situations concerning undocumented people in their municipality when the local community is affected, fundamental human rights are being neglected or problems concerning public health and order emerge. Their research has demonstrated that municipalities impede the immigration control policies of the national government in different ways. In some cases municipal actors organise complementary activities or they 'cushion' the outcomes of policy guidelines. Others go even further and also publicly or secretly counteract the national policy (Kos et al., 2015). These strategies are examples of decoupling, which will be explained in the next section. On the opposite, there are also local governments that deviate from the national immigration policies by not offering enough assistance, for example in the form of shelter, to refugees. As a result, the Dutch parliament is currently debating a new law that can enforce municipalities to accommodate more refugees (Binnenlands Bestuur, 2022).

This 'decoupling' also occurred in Utrecht, e.g. when the municipality opposed the 'VreemdelingenWet' ('Aliens Act') in 2000 that excluded people whose asylum was denied, from shelter by the government (Baumgärtel & Oomen, 2019). First, public order and health were central to their opposition, but soon the municipality of Utrecht also desired to ensure more basic human rights for undocumented people than those provided by national measures. In this process, they collaborated with, among others, international human rights organisations to strengthen their position. In 2015 the Mayor and Aldermen, for instance, expressed their concerns about the government '*Bed Bad en Brood*' (Bed, bath and bread) agreement to the Utrecht Municipal Council: 'the government agreement does not provide a consistent approach, which is why we cannot implement it' and indicated that they would attempt to reach an intergovernmental agreement that was 'humane and based on practical experience, and effective for that reason' (Baumgärtel & Oomen, 2019).

2.3 Civil society organisations (CSOs)
Scholar Scholte (2002, 149) conceptualises 'civil society' as:

a political space where voluntary associations, intentional or unintentional, shape the rules that govern one or more aspects of social life.

Civil society organisation (CSO) is an umbrella term for a diversity of organisations, including non-governmental (NGOs), community-based organisations, social movements, labour unions and interest groups. For this reason, there is no clear consensus on the definition of CSOs among academics, who wish to avoid constructing a category that is too broad or exclusive (Rainey et al., 2017). CSOs therefore should not be interpreted as 'one' actor, but acknowledged for their varying characteristics, such as their roles, outcome emphasis or organisational type (Brandsen et al., 2017; Rainey et al., 2017).

On the one hand, scholars observe the development of non-profit organisations taking on public service delivery in close collaboration with governmental bodies, thereby becoming a so-called 'third-party government'. In doing so, they are often dependent on government funding and need to engage in account-giving to these public institutions (Brandsen et al., 2017). On the other hand, scholars analyse the emergence of organisations or initiatives that operate more informal, small-scale and community-based. Certain more 'bottom-up' CSOs often address a single societal issue, which is not yet on the agenda of established public actors (Brandsen et al., 2017).

This development and the increasing role of civil society actors is also apparent in the field of immigration. Larruina et al., (2019) analyse how the Dutch government's inability to manage the increased inflow of refugees around 2015 has led to the introduction of new stakeholders in the immigration field. Governmental organisations entered into collaboration with civil society organisations, which could be newly formed or already active in the field, to provide where the government fell short. According to Larruina et al. (2019) this development especially included the establishment of 'emergent civil society organisations' (ECSOs). During the enormous increase of refugees in 2015, ECSOs emerged in response to the shortcoming of established civil society organisations to provide certain services, because those organisations' way of working were too formalised. The emergent civil society organisations are characterised by their varying groups of volunteers and their improvised way of organising (non)regular activities (Larruina et al., 2019).

Ambrosini (Ambrosini, 2020) analyses four main types of action that CSOs perform in challenging the exclusionary asylum policies at the local level. First of all, some CSOs try to influence the political or public debate through protesting. Secondly, CSOs put their effort into establishing networks on different levels. Ambrosini (2020) argues that CSOs build networks on the operational level, for instance collaboration with external organisations, but also try to create an 'advocacy coalition' to place political pressure. In doing so, they also seek and invest in interpersonal connections. Good personal relationships with, for instance, local authorities, appear to be crucial in overcoming obstacles and finding solutions in specific cases (Ambrosini, 2020). The third type is the provision of advocacy. This mostly refers to legal action aimed at

holding local authorities accountable for respecting the human rights of immigrants. Finally, there are other CSOs that focus on the provision of services to (un)documented migrants, such as education programs or leisure activities (Ambrosini., 2020). These four different types of action are not performed exclusively by CSOs, but they often have overlapping modes of action. For example, many CSOs whose main task is to provide services also adopt stances in the political debate concerning (un)documented migrants (Ambrosini., 2020).

2.4 The lens of multi-levelness

As stated before, Scholten & Penninx (2016) advocate a framework of 'multi-levelness' to analyse how policies develop at different levels of government and interact with one another (Scholten & Penninx, 2016). In his framework Scholten (2013) identifies four types of interaction between the different levels of government. The first type is the 'centralist' approach, which refers to the top-down relation in which the policy on the local level is carried out in strong coherence with the central policy strategy. Secondly, multi-level governance relations indicate a collaboration between different government levels that contains some form of coordination. This relates to networks, in which one level does not dominate the other(s). Thirdly, the localist perspective embodies the idea that '*what can be done locally should be done locally*' (Scholten & Penninx, 2016, p.93). In this bottom-up approach, local governments are not only involved in the implementation, but take a prominent role in the policy-making process as well. The last type of approach concerns decoupling, which means there is no significant interaction between different government levels within the policy domain. Instead of convergence of policy frameworks, which occurs to a greater or lesser extent in the previous relations, with 'decoupling' the policy at different levels often deviates or even contradicts each other (Scholten, 2013; Scholten & Penninx, 2016).

Nevertheless, Branson et al. (2017) argue that these types of interaction are not exclusionary. They analyse that there often is an emergence of top-down initiatives, driven by a national government, and bottom-up initiatives, driven by civil society. According to Branson et al. (2017), the dynamics between top-down and bottom-up approaches are complex. Some sources demonstrate a successful dynamic of both initiatives to be complementary, while other sources reveal it leads to friction and competition over resources. Therefore, Branson et al (2021) stress the importance of research on the interaction between top-down and bottom-up initiatives in practice, which among others brought me to my research question:

> *How do local stakeholders engage in collaborative governance for the public service delivery to undocumented people in Utrecht?*

To answer this research question, I formulated sub-questions:
1. *How is collaboration among local stakeholders facilitated?*
2. *How does the national LVV-pilot influence the existing collaborative network?*
3. *How do stakeholders manage to build good mutual relations?*

3. Research design

As explained in the previous chapter, state and non-state stakeholders often collaborate in the public policy decision-making and management, regarding societal issues that are complex to solve. According to Brandsen et al. (2017) there is a gap in literature on the complex relations between civil society organisations and governments working together. By conducting multi-method qualitative research on the way local stakeholders engage in collaborative governance for the public service delivery to undocumented people in Utrecht, I aim to contribute to filling this gap. This chapter will delve further into the objectives of my research and the research question that resulted from them. In the following sections, I will outline my research approach in terms of the setting in which I conducted my research, the methodologies I used to collect data and the way I analysed these. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the criteria for the quality of the research and my positionality as a researcher in the field.

3.1 Case setting

This section provides a short overview of the case-setting in which I conducted my research by first explaining the decision to focus on Utrecht. The second section will give a short overview of the local stakeholders working with undocumented people. Lastly, one organisation in particular will be highlighted, i.e. Villa Vrede, where I conducted intensive ethnographic fieldwork.

My theoretical framework highlighted how different stakeholders collaborate locally or a national policy is implemented differs hughley per region. Therefore, I consider it to be important to acknowledge context-dependent factors in analysing my research topic. To grasp these factors in depth, I conducted a case-study of the city of Utrecht. First of all, because Utrecht is one of the five municipalities that participated in the LVV pilot, and therefore has valuable experience with it soon being implemented in other regions. Secondly, there were more practical reasons as through my network of the Utrecht University I could get connected to Villa Vrede. Villa Vrede, being an important stakeholder with many connections in Utrecht, offered an accessible starting point to conduct ethnographic fieldwork and get in contact with the other stakeholders. Thirdly, for personal reasons, since I have been living in Utrecht for years, and in this way I was able to come into contact with undocumented people with whom I share the same city, but of whose lived-experience in Utrecht I was mostly ignorant of.

3.1.1 Collaborative network in Utrecht

The social map of stakeholders in Utrecht that work with undocumented people is highly diverse. The exact number is difficult to determine, as the social map changes depending on which organisations one assumes as a starting point. In my research, I took Villa Vrede as a starting point to get in contact with the main stakeholders of their network. Unfortunately it was out of the scope of this study to conduct research on all actors working with undocumented people in

Utrecht. Therefore, I focussed on the actors that generally emerged from my document analysis and interviews as the network's core: the municipality Utrecht and 9 CSOs[2]. Each CSOs has its own expertise.

First of all, there are two 'assistance' organisations responsible for social-legal counselling for undocumented people. One of them also helps undocumented people in getting access to medical care, for instance through organising weekly walk-in consultations. Apart from this, there are two organisations providing activities and facilities during the day, also known as 'day shelters'. These centres function as walk-ins and therefore have irregular visitors. Furthermore, there are five organisations that provide night shelter for different target groups of undocumented people, such as men, women and children or particularly vulnerable people. Within these night shelters, the stakeholders distinguish between 'first line' and 'second line' actors. Undocumented people who live on the streets are first admitted to a first-line shelter. Here they stay around three months in which together with their counsellors, they determine a plan for their future. In case it fits the plan, these people can subsequently transfer to a 'second-line' shelter where employees and clients together put effort into trying to realise that plan, for instance a repeated asylum application.

3.1.2 Villa Vrede

Villa Vrede is a day shelter and activity centre specifically for undocumented people in Utrecht. The organisation was founded in 2015 to meet the needs of undocumented people in Utrecht for a safe place where they could remain during the daytime. The aim of the organisation is to '*provide a safe daycare for undocumented fellow human beings in Utrecht society and everything that is related to, belongs to and/or can be conducive to this.*' (Villa Vrede, 2021). At Villa Vrede undocumented people can get a meal, relax, meet each other or wash their clothes. The organisation's motto is '*Every person is worthy of being seen and being able to develop themselves*' (Villa Vrede, 2022). This motto is at the core of the organisation's activities. With a variety of courses, visitors can develop their skills and interests, for instance through Dutch language lessons or creative workshops. From February till June, I set up and taught a weekly computer course for the visitors. This was a collective and dynamic process, in which together with the visitors, I shaped the content and tried to adjust the lessons to their needs and skill levels. In addition, I taught literacy lessons to a small group of people who were not yet skilled enough for the regular Dutch lessons. Next to certain courses, there is also a lot of attention for the individual at Villa Vrede, whereby the coordinators try to connect a visitor to external locations to practise their talents. Moreover, Villa Vrede actively engages in the advocacy for the rights of undocumented people in the Netherlands and provides advice based on their experiences to, for instance, the municipality. The organisation is run by two permanent workers, 'coordinators', and a large group of regular and irregular volunteers, who, for instance, help as cook, teacher, or host.

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[2] I deliberately choose not to mention the organisations by name to ensure anonymity in the findings (further explained in section 3.3.1.)

3.2 Methodology

To gain a deeper understanding of the way local stakeholders engage in collaborative governance for the public service delivery to undocumented people, I conducted qualitative research to get in close contact with the people I was analysing. According to Asper's study, qualitative research can best be understood as an *'iterative process in which improved understanding to the scientific community is achieved by making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon studied'* (Asper, 2019, p. 155). During my research, I collected data using multiple qualitative research methods to get 'close', such as participant observation, qualitative interviews and document analysis, i.e. methodological triangulation (Clark et al., 2019). In doing so, I tried to always keep an open and flexible attitude towards the situations I encountered in the field, and adjust my research strategy accordingly. Ethnographic research for me is a cyclic rather than a linear process in which as a researcher I constantly move between phases of data collection and analyses. The next sections provide an overview of the methods I applied, followed by a brief outline of the way in which I analysed the collected data.

3.2.1 Participant observation

Participant observation is an important aspect of ethnographic fieldwork. To gain insight in the way civil society organisations deliver services to undocumented people, I conducted long-term participation observation at Villa Vrede. Through participant observation, as researcher, I took part in the daily activities and interactions of the Villa Vrede to gain understanding of the organisation from their point-of-view (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). By becoming an active participant in the research field, I gained insight in the 'explicit' information, i.e. what employees, volunteers or visitors articulate about Villa Vrede or themselves, but also in the 'tacit' aspects of their experiences. This 'tacit' aspect is information experienced subconsciously, which therefore might not come up in interviews, but could be observed and provide valuable research data for my research (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).

From February till June, I conducted participant observation in various ways. First of all, through setting up and teaching courses for the visitors. By working in the 'office', I gained insight into what was going on in the organisation itself, as well as in the developments of the collaborative network and in the social and political debate concerning undocumented people. During the days I worked at Villa Vrede I discovered that the coordinators are very active in these areas, for which they attend various national and local consultations. As a result, my involvement at Villa Vrede offered me access to observe and participate in its network of organisations, for instance through attending meetings for advocacy or joint projects. In the following meetings I was able to occasionally conduct participant observation:

- PAS (local) - meeting with employees of CSOs that are responsible for the activation within their organisations
- HvO (local) - meeting with coordinators of the CSOs working with undocumented people in Utrecht

- Meeting of the national coalition of the CSOs working with undocumented people in the Netherlands
- Brainstorm sessions about a new location Villa Vrede, both internally (with the coordinators and the board of Villa Vrede) and externally (with actors from network)

Often I joined my coordinators at these meetings, but in the event of their absence I went alone. Certain meetings did not only deliver valuable data because of the content, but did offer me the opportunity to observe the way they interact. Occasions such as coffee-breaks in between meetings were fruitful moments for data collection (Clark et al., 2019). In addition, I joined a public-event organised with the focus on 'return' in the current Dutch policy for undocumented people, where many CSOs of the Netherlands were present. Lastly, during my days at Villa Vrede I also spent a lot of time making contact with visitors, for example by 'hanging out' in the living room.

During my days at Villa Vrede, I engaged in everyday interactions and conversations with visitors, volunteers, coordinators and employees or coordinators of other organisations to collect data and build rapport. Building rapport means establishing close and trusting relationships with people in another cultural setting (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). In doing so, I made a topic list as a starting point for my participant observation, but kept an open and flexible attitude to what occurred in the field. To be able to analyse the data I collected during my fieldwork, I wrote down quick notes, which some researchers refer to as 'jot notes'. Following Spradley (2016), I tried to formulate these jot notes pursuing the verbatim principle (content of what is said), language identification principle (person who said it) and concrete principle (concrete description of basic practices). In addition, these notes also include my own experiences, sentiments and thoughts in the field. Later, outside the field, I extended these jot notes to field notes and together with my reflections on them, they constitute the data for the answers to my research question.

3.2.2 Semi-structured and informal interviews

I conducted qualitative interviews with different people actively working with undocumented people in Utrecht to gain insight in their organisation's role and collaboration with other stakeholders. A qualitative interview is defined by Boeie (2010, p. 61) as:

> *a form of conversation in which one person - the interviewer - restricts oneself to posing questions concerning behaviours, ideas, attitudes, and experiences with regard to social phenomena, to one or more others - the participant or interviewees - who mainly limit themselves to providing answers to these questions.*

As each context requires a different approach, I conducted qualitative interviews with varying levels of pre-structuring. First of all, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 informants.

Semi-structured interviewing was a way to give space for my informants' input in the interview, but also to ensure that I discussed certain themes in more or less the same way with each participant (making it easier to compare their data afterwards). The interview guide is added as Appendix 1. During my fieldwork, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 11 representatives of the 9 core stakeholders of the Utrecht network. This includes 10 coordinators of different CSOs and 1 policy advisor working for the municipality Utrecht. In addition, I interviewed a coordinator who facilitates cooperation among the CSOs of the Netherlands, for instance through organising national consultations. This is an overview of my informants, which were 12 in total:

Number of informants	Type of organisation	Function of informant
1	Municipality	Policy advisor
5	CSO - night shelter	Coordinator
3	CSO - day shelter	Coordinator
2	CSO - socio-legal counselling	Coordinator
1	National coalition CSOs	Coordinator

Most interviews, apart from two[3], took place offline at the facilities of the organisations. Besides this being convenient for the informants, it was for me a way to gain a better understanding of the organisations and the work they are doing. For instance, the informants gave a tour of their organisation and the interviews were frequently interrupted by clients or colleagues with questions, which provided a glimpse of the day-to-day issues of the organisations. Furthermore, during my participant observation, like during meetings, I conducted informal interviews. These less structured, more everyday, conversations provide valuable data as described in the previous section. All interviews were conducted in Dutch. To ensure the preservation of the original meaning and maintain proper sentence structure, the translation of quotes to English was done in a manner that as accurately as possible conveyed the intended meaning.

3.2.3 Document analysis
The third data collection method I used was document analysis. Analysing organisations' websites, including annual reports or statements, helped me to acquire more information about the different stakeholders. Moreover, my participation at Villa Vrede offered me, when asked, access to minutes of meetings or projects of the collaborative network, current as well as from the past. Different documentation can also be found online about the governmental policy regarding undocumented people, in this case specifically the LVV, including the policy plan and

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[3] Two of my informants preferred to hold the interview online due to practical or personal reasons.

the evaluation of the pilot, which proved to be useful in linking the local collaborative network in Utrecht to the national policy.

However, I remain cautious not to use this information as my main research data, since on paper often only more factual matters are presented and not the underlying issues or thoughts, for example what has led to a certain decision or what were the perspectives of different attendees. These documents thus served more as a starting point for me to require a broad understanding of what was going on, which I then further analysed through other research methods.

3.2.4 Data analysis

To analyse my transcripts of the interviews and field notes of participant observation, I used the computer program NVivo. In doing so, I followed the iterative process of analysis in which I segmented and reassembled my data using different coding techniques (Boeije, 2010). The first step was open coding, through which I broke down the data in codes. I consider it to be important to first work without perceived categories, to make sure I allow myself to be guided by the data. This resulted in a long list of open codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Next, I used the technique of axial coding to create a list of main and subcategories based on my literature and main question. By reassembling the fractured data, axial coding brings coherence to the emerging patterns and helps to identify relations in the data (Charmaz, 2006). Lastly, to be able to answer my research question, I used selective coding to create a list of the core concepts of my data and its coherence (Boeije, 2010). This code boom formed the basis of my analysis of the findings. A compact version can be found in Appendix 2.

3.3 Quality of research

3.3.1. Ethical considerations

As a researcher I have the responsibility to acknowledge and ensure the rights and safety of my informants, which I tried to ensure through various manners. In doing so, I followed the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, promoted by the Utrecht University (Algra et al., 2018). First of all, the privacy, trust and anonymity of the informants are highly important (Algra et al., 2018). Therefore, I made sure to anonymise and securely store all data. Anonymisation was a challenge in the writing phase, since the collaborative network is relatively small. At first, I intended to use the names of the organisations and only anonymise the informants personally. The implications of participating were discussed with each informant, who all agreed I could use the name of the organisation. Later I discovered that in many cases only a few permanent staff employees are working at each organisation. Therefore, I decided in the end to completely anonymise the organisations too and categorise them by letter, such as 'organisation A'. In addition, I refrain from using pronouns, since these could potentially reveal details about an informant's identity. Due to similar reasons, I decided not to refer to specific dates when referencing observations in my field notes. Moreover, I asked for oral or written informed consent from all my informants, thereby offering a conscious choice whether they

wanted to participate or not (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011). While asking consent, I made sure to address and give transparency to all matters, such as the purpose of the research and potential risks in participating. Additionally, I tried to ensure that the informants did not suffer any harm as a result of their involvement in my research. This does not only relate to personal harm, but also to harm to their organisation or their collaboration. During my fieldwork, I came across things that informants did share with me, but not openly given the political sensitivity of the issue. Reflections on what informants shared with me taught me that the undocumented group may not necessarily benefit from visibility on all matters, since they may survive precisely because of things arranged in the 'shadows' of our bureaucracy. For this reason, I took the potential negative impact on the informants, their collaborative network, and on undocumented people into account when compiling my findings. Lastly, to ensure the independence principle, I was constantly reflecting on my positionality, such as my own biases, and the way this could influence my research, which will be explained in section 3.4.3.

3.3.2. Quality research criteria

To ensure the standard of my qualitative research, I pay attention to three different standards: transferability, credibility and confirmability (Flick, 2017). First of all, transferability refers to the applicability of my research findings to other contexts or settings (Flick, 2017). This transferability of the research is limited, since I conducted a case-study on the way in which stakeholders collaborate in the city of Utrecht. Nevertheless, to ensure a degree of applicability to other research settings, I provide a detailed description of the research context, such as the research population and methods. My own assumptions and beliefs brought into the field by being an active participant, influence the research findings and therefore need to be elaborated on as well. To further ensure transparency, I analysed the data in a structured manner by using the Nvivo programme for coding all my data. In doing so, I followed different techniques of coding: open, axial and selective (Boeije, 2010).

The credibility of my research entails that my research data and analyses are rigorous and valid. According to different scholars, applying methodological triangulation is a way to strengthen the credibility of a research (Clark et al, 2019; Flick, 2017). Therefore, I used a variety of research methods throughout my fieldwork, including participant observation, qualitative interviews and document analysis. In this way, I could monitor whether I interpreted the data correctly to reflect the perspectives or lived-experiences of my informants. By analysing and presenting the data I make use of thick description, which means I will not only analyse those actions on 'the surface', but include description of the underlying beliefs, emotions and contexts as well (Geertz, 2008).

This also relates to the third standard of quality: confirmability. This standard ensures that "*data accurately represents the information that the participants provided and the interpretations of that data are not invented by the inquirer*" (Elo et al., 2014). Therefore, I constantly reflected on my own biases, beliefs and assumptions regarding the phenomena I was studying (Bryman,

2012). Through discussing these experiences, observations and reflections with my peers and supervisor during all research phases I further tried to ensure confirmability.

3.3.3. Positionality and reflexivity as a researcher

Following Schensul et al. (1999), I consider it to be of great importance to continually engage in introspective reflection and self-interrogation on my positionality as an ethnographer. In order to hold my own thoughts, feelings and judgments about my interactions during my fieldwork 'up for inspection to ensure they are valid', I kept a field diary during my fieldwork (Schensul 1999, 66). To reflect on my positionality, I use the lens of 'intersectionality', which means that different aspects construct a person's identity, such as ethnicity, religion, social class, age, skin colour and ableness (Lutz, 2015). These aspects influence the degree to which an individual experiences privilege or discrimination in society. Social inequality thus occurs along different 'axes' of a person's identity that intersect (Lutz, 2015). The first part will analyse my positionality by reflecting on different identities in the context of Villa Vrede, where I conducted most of my fieldwork. Unfortunately, the limited word count of this thesis does not allow for reflection on all of the aspects of my identity that appeared to be relevant. Therefore, I choose to make an in-depth reflection on those identities that appeared to be most meaningful for my research as well for me personally to reflect on. In the second section, I will briefly reflect on the way I try to navigate different roles within Villa Vrede, such as intern, teacher and researcher.

Before entering the field, I reflected regularly on my privileges in my day-to-day life as, among others, a white able-bodied woman with a high social-economic status. These aspects of my identity have often given me privileges in today's society. With this, I absolutely do not claim to be aware of all, since privilege is often experienced subconsciously and asks for a continuous practice of reflection. My experience in the field revealed this to me again, since before I did not thoroughly reflect on matters that link to the privilege of having a valid permit. Being at Villa Vrede and hearing visitors share their experiences of being undocumented in the Netherlands exposed again the opportunities I myself have in society. Not only do they constantly live in uncertainty about whether or not they can meet their basic needs, but many share that they lack prospects of a future or feel 'stuck'. This difference is something one is constantly confronted with when interacting with visitors, for instance when discussing my studying at University or living place. Following an education or having a permanent living place are examples of things most undocumented people cannot have access to. In a similar way, being white and having a high socioeconomic status gives me privileges. On the other hand, precisely by not having these identities, they experience discrimination in many forms. These differences often left me feeling uncomfortable. This relates to feeling a sense of injustice that, for instance, being born as a white woman in the Netherlands and thus having a valid permit here, something that is not my own achievement, gives me a lot of privileges. Therefore, I consider it to be important to remain aware of the fact that even though I can offer a listening ear to undocumented people, I will never fully grasp their experiences.

In another way, being a (young) woman also influences my interaction with some visitors. There have been some encounters that confronted me with the fact that being a woman gives me a different position than male colleagues, since some visitors are used to different male-female relations in their culture. After certain (rare) unpleasant encounters in Villa Vrede, I noticed I was hesitant to share these occurrences with my environment, as I was afraid it would reinforce stereotypes that other people could have about undocumented people. These negative stereotypes do not in any way match my overall experience of Villa Vrede. The core of the philosophy of Villa Vrede is that everyone deserves a space to feel welcome and safe, in which we all respect each other. I therefore reflected on these gender dynamics often in my fieldwork diary. I reflected that being a woman, through actively seeking and building solidarity with other women, for instance through activism, has given me a lot of strength in the past few years. However, at the same time being a woman also made me feel unsafe, uncomfortable or taken less seriously when interacting with others, mostly men. This demonstrates that how my identities are shaped or matter, as well as how I experience them, is an ongoing and relational process that differs per context.

In line with the book of Davis and Craven (2022), an interrogation on my positionality also relates to balancing my insider and outsider positions in the field. As stated above, for the last few months I mostly participated in Villa Vrede by teaching the courses or interacting with visitors at the centre. In these situations, people approached me as an intern. This put me in a difficult position as I was also participating in the role of an ethnographic researcher. This is something I already reflected on in the beginning of my 'internship', because I sensed that the first introduction is a crucial point. I therefore always tried to introduce myself as an intern, who will also be conducting research in the upcoming period. This led to interesting conversations with some visitors and other volunteers about my research topic. During the months that followed, from time to time I reminded them of my additional role as a researcher. For instance, the coordinators of Villa Vrede, after I had been there for a longer period of time, started to share their personal opinions and emotions towards the other organisations more. Probably due to the trusting relationship and rapport I built with them as an intern. Even though I always mentioned that I conducted my research there, they might have forgotten that in such moments. Therefore I decided that when making use of some of the conversations with coordinators, volunteers or visitors specifically as (anonymous) data in my thesis, to double-check if they are okay with this.

In a different way, I also reflected on my multiple roles during my fieldwork outside Villa Vrede. During the interviews with other stakeholders, it was important to be transparent about my work at Villa Vrede, but to remind them that this is also part of my individual independent research (not commissioned by Villa Vrede). The latter appeared to be especially important to discuss with my participants, since some participants experienced some tensions with Villa Vrede. However, I am aware that I, especially given the short amount of time of the research, can never completely eliminate the risk of them leaving things unmentioned or nuancing things in the interview because of my involvement with Villa Vrede. On the other hand, my being part of Villa

Vrede, an organisation with a specific perspective on matters, like the LVV-program, might of course influence my own beliefs and perspectives, thereby making it important to constantly reflect on my own assumptions in the field. This hopefully also offers me to take a critical view on the work Villa Vrede is doing. By engaging with other organisations, constantly reflecting and talking to external people about my reflections, I tried to balance these insider and outsider positions, which are not dichotomous, but can co-exist (Davis & Craven, 2022).

4. Findings

This qualitative research aims to gain a better understanding of the way local stakeholders engage in collaborative governance for the public service delivery to undocumented people in

Utrecht. In this chapter I will analyse the findings of my ethnographic fieldwork. Each section focuses on answering one of the sub-questions (presented in the introduction). The first section analyses how collaboration among local stakeholders is facilitated by looking at both the grounds on which stakeholders seek collaboration and the different forms they use to communicate. In section 4.2, I will analyse how the national LVV-pilot influences the existing collaborative network in Utrecht. After discussing how local stakeholders negotiated terms for the implementation of the LVV-pilot, I will argue that their collaboration improved on the one hand, but deteriorated on the other. Finally in section 4.3, I will examine the way stakeholders manage to build good mutual relations in their network and deal with frictions. In doing so, I will also focus on the effect of financial dependency of the CSOs on governmental funding.

4.1 Situating the collaborative network in Utrecht

This section will provide an overview of how the collaborative network in Utrecht concerning undocumented people is structured. After discussing the way the collaboration began, I will discuss the themes around which local stakeholders seek collaboration. Secondly, I will give an analysis of the way stakeholders decide and act on these matters through different regular meetings as well as individual consultations.

4.1.1 Seeking collaboration

The social map of state and non-state actors involved in the public service delivery to undocumented people in Utrecht is highly diverse. As argued in chapter 3, I conducted research on the 9 stakeholders (the municipality and 8 CSOs) who emerged as the network's core in the interviews. The informants themselves refer to 'network' or 'chain', when speaking about their mutual collaboration, among them the informant of organisation B:

> *"This actually means that in that sense we are working in different functions for the same target group based on the need in society, so we are a strong network aimed at a specific target group."*

As suggested in this quote, each of the CSOs specialises in a specific area of counselling, including socio-legal counselling and day or night shelter. A detailed description of these functions is provided in the case setting (see section 3.1.3.). The services available to undocumented people in Utrecht have not always been organised in this way. Informants of organisations A, C and D told me that a few years ago, there were far fewer places where particularly men could turn to for night shelter. More and more undocumented people ended up living on the streets, which led to great protests among some Utrecht residents. As they felt that the municipality was doing too little, these people, mainly churches, aligned and started setting up shelters. One of these protests, around 2014, was exemplified in my interview with an informant of a night shelter:

"The statutes of the municipality state that no one should sleep on the street and everyone should receive shelter. They made a promise to themselves and did not keep it. People were just fed up with that. There was a kind of movement from the church. They organised beds etc in the church and eventually demonstrations in front of the city hall. Like the old-fashioned way with megaphones and yelling."

Their demands were being heard, and after a few months the municipality started financing the night shelter. From their different origin stories, it became clear that nearly all organisations originated more or less in the same way out of necessity, put forward by undocumented people themselves, by the society and/or by CSOs. From these conversations, I understood that the founding of newer CSOs generally included some level of participation by the pre-existing organisations, already working with undocumented people in Utrecht. The informants all expressed that the organisations started collaborating with one another quite organically because of this intertwinement.

There are various grounds on which the local stakeholders seek mutual collaboration. One of them is the dependency on the services the other CSOs provide. This was also mentioned by the informant of organisation D in our interview on why they consider collaboration with others important for their organisation:

"We all do something slightly different and need each other in that. If someone comes here with medical questions, yes I need [organisation H], because if I have to do it all by myself.. Otherwise things really are at cross-purposes [...]. In that way, I think we can provide much better care for the people when we work together."

Similarly, courses organised at, for instance, a day shelter are open to clients/visitors/residents of all CSOs. Next to complementing each other in the services they provide, the CSOs also actively work together to organise certain projects. One of their main focuses is activating the undocumented people. In the workgroup 'PAS' (Project aan de Slag, *Project get to work)* they organise different activities for undocumented people to develop themselves. This may be by taking part in sports, attending courses or learning a profession (fieldnote A, April 2023). Informants of organisations D and H stressed that by working together in this way, their organisations avoid doing double work in counselling people. By remaining in good contact, it is less likely that they organise the same activities or that a client is in counselling with multiple organisations.

In addition, the stakeholders also seek each other for cooperation around specific cases of undocumented people. By joining forces, they try to achieve the best result in counselling a person. The informant of organisation B illustrated this with a recent case:

"The other day there was a man, who also comes here, who has severe mental health issues. He was slipping away tremendously. We worked together to get that boy into care. Then you notice the purely personal involvement of everybody. People know who he is, it hasn't worked out for a while, so now we have to do it for him. Otherwise he will end up in the gutter and die."

Together with 5 CSOs of the network and health-care professionals, the stakeholders managed to arrange medical guidance and shelter for this man. This is something that the organisations individually failed to achieve. When collaborating, the organisations have more options, and can also put more pressure on external parties such as local authorities in order to for instance make an exception for a person or stress the urgency of a case. Moreover, many informants indicated that it was also very valuable to be able to get advice on complex cases from the other stakeholders. In the HvO (*hulpverlenersoverleg*, care worker consultation) the CSOs, come together to address among other things, complex casuistry. Due to their different organisational roles and often years of experience in the field, they can provide each other with useful insights.

In this line, the municipality also asks the CSOs for advice on certain plans or to gain better visibility on undocumented people in Utrecht. The day shelters seem to play an important role in this, as they have a better perception of the undocumented people that are not in shelters. The night shelters are primarily in contact with their own residents. The day shelters have a 'signalling' role for both the municipality and other CSOs in the network. In addition, the informant of the municipality shares that they seek collaboration with the CSOs to provide basic services to all citizens of Utrecht, but also to guarantee safety on the streets in Utrecht. Fewer individuals are forced to live on the streets as a result of CSOs' efforts, which is also good for the city's social order.

Lastly, the informants of the CSOs argue that in order to have a stronger lobbying position towards governmental bodies, they need each other. In their experience, when acting as a collective rather than as a singular organisation, their perspective or concerns are more likely to be heard or taken seriously. This relates first of all to the relation between the local CSOs and the municipality Utrecht. The informants of CSOs indicate that they put a lot of effort in speaking with one voice towards the municipality. This was also mentioned by the informant of organisation H:

"We really try to speak with one voice to the municipality and to the outside world to avoid having all kinds of organisations saying different things. Because that also reduces the trust from the municipality, if everyone shouts something different."

Speaking with one voice does not only increase the level of trust between the municipality and CSOs, but, according to other informants, it also drives the municipality to take more targeted action. A striking example of this is the negotiation of the collaborative network about the pre-conditions for the implementation of the LVV-pilot in Utrecht, which will be further

discussed in section 4.2.1. To join forces in the challenging issues debated on the national level is equally important. As described vividly by the informant of organisation E, because CSOs have to compete against 'considerable forces' in the national debate, small organisations need to align. This was mentioned by the coordinator of the national coalition of CSOs too:

> *"Everyone is aware that together we are stronger, so let's lobby together. You can't lobby only from Nijmegen or from Utrecht or from Limburg, so let's do it together. From what I see, everyone really sees the importance of this"*

In doing so, the Utrecht CSOs thus seek vertical collaboration with CSOs from other parts of the country. In a similar way, the municipality Utrecht seeks vertical collaboration with other municipalities if they want to address issues to the national government.

Speaking with one voice with a broad group of stakeholders is a complex process, since each organisation has its own vision and interests. In section 4.3, I will delve deeper into the way they manage to navigate their differences and deal with upcoming tensions in, among others, creating this collective standpoint. The space in which they negotiate their collective standpoints is mostly in regular meetings with the coordinators of each CSO, which will be discussed in the next section.

4.1.2 Finding each other in (un)scheduled collective and personal consultations
Even though the local stakeholder viewed mutual collaboration 'organically' on different grounds, they managed to establish (semi-structured) manners of keeping in contact. Various informants express that they can easily find one another if they need to discuss something. Employees of two CSOs, for instance, reach out by phone or email if things need to be arranged for the counselling of a client. The CSOs with a high dependence on the service they offer, therefore speak to each other almost daily. For instance, there is a high dependency between some night shelters and assistance organisations, since these perform the socio-legal counselling for their residents. Apart from this, meeting regularly in different types of consultations is an important way of communicating for Utrecht stakeholders. All the CSOs working with undocumented people in Utrecht, take part in the following three consultations.

First of all, the coordinators of the CSOs come together once every six weeks in the 'HvO'. During such a consultation, participants focus mainly on issues at the operational level. The agenda is prepared by the same organisation, with input from the rest, and shared beforehand in the network (fieldnote B, May 2023; fieldnote C, April 2023). The agenda is more or less structured the same way in each consultation. After each coordinator has given an update of the developments in their organisation, casuistry and practical issues concerning, among others, shelter or activation are discussed (fieldnote D, 2023). By coordinating these practical issues in the HvO, the CSOs avoid doing double work, as mentioned in the previous section. In addition, the consultative body's primary purpose is to share information with each other, which I

experienced while attending the HvO too (D, May 2023). Some informants explained to me that without the 'HvO', they would not be so well informed about new developments in the network or on the target group in general. As explained before, the signalling role of the day shelters provides valuable information for the others. Since the role of 'HvO' is chiefly to keep the CSOs informed about each other's practices, the informants perceive that not many decisions are made.

According to them, this occurs more in the 'board consultation[4]' where the boards of the CSOs discuss matters on what they call the policy-making level, such as lobby strategies. Their main focus is the lobby towards the municipality, with whom they have a regular 'management consultation'[5]. As stated before, for the CSOs it is highly important to speak with one voice towards the municipality, especially on issues discussed with the municipality in the 'management consultation'. The agenda of this meeting therefore is thoroughly addressed in advance of the 'board consultation', in which the CSOs try to build consensus on the topics. When urgent matters that demand immediate action occur, the boards often organise 'board consultations' impromptu to discuss the next steps to take collectively, for instance concerning the LVV (fieldnote E, May 2023). The decision-making process in creating collective standpoints and actions will be further analysed in section 4.3.

For similar reasons, some coordinators of CSOs also take part in the national coalition of all CSOs working with undocumented people in the Netherlands, a coalition that has existed for more than 30 years. The national consultation takes place around four times a year and is organised by a coordinator, whom I interviewed as well. When starting to organise this consultation the coordinator selects topics on the agenda that are relevant for those providing services to undocumented people, such as new services available to undocumented people. Most informants have joined because of the valuable information that is being shared. For instance, in one of the consultations I participated in, an attendee shared her analysis of the way that intellectual disability and other forms of low literacy can negatively influence the process of asylum application (fieldnote F, May 2023). The attendees then discussed in detail how they, as care providers, could better identify this group and meet their needs (fieldnote F, 2023). I later discussed this with informant of organisation E in our interview:

> *"Do you remember the project about intellectual disabilities of clients? That happens to be something we are working on in [organisation E]. We are planning to organise some training for that, so that [agenda point] actually suits us very well."*

As most CSOs are relatively small organisations, many of them with few paid employees, they do not have the capability to sort everything out individually. By joining forces, the CSOs have more knowledge and skills, and by learning from each other, they can provide better care for their target groups. Unfortunately, the coordinator of the national coalition informed me that the

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[4] More detailed data about the structure of the consultation I could not collect, since most informants, being coordinators, do not personally participate in these (so neither could I).
[5] Ibidem.

commitment to consultations from organisations is slightly decreasing due to hybrid working. Since COVID-19, participants have the option to also attend online instead of only physically. As a result, there is often less participation by online attendees, and they also miss the social interactions happening around the meeting. Not only are these moments to get to know each other more personally, they also offer opportunities to speak less formally about certain issues. Something I also learned during the coffee break, when the challenges regarding the intellectual disabled group, discussed in the meeting, were reflected upon collectively again, which led to sharing more tips (fieldnote F, 2023).

4.1.3 Lack of evaluation
Even though the stakeholders regularly meet, they never evaluate the outcomes of their collective decision or their collaborative process as a whole, including these consultations. When asking whether or not the CSOs evaluated the collaboration with the other CSO's involved, most of them immediately confirmed that this was not the case. When some informants took time to think about finding an example from recent years, they had trouble finding one. Moreover, I noticed when discussing the topic of evaluation, several informants took more pauses in their answers to contemplate on the questions asked and their answers. To me this suggested that it was not something they regularly reflect upon. This interpretation was confirmed by, for instance, informants of organisations H and F who responded in lines of "good question" or "I have to think about that one".

In contrast, CSOs do evaluate with the municipality in so-called 'account meetings', which are organised twice a year. Informant of organisation B explained to me that they fill in a report in advance, based on what they discuss about the developments within their organisation and the situation of undocumented people in Utrecht, but also their collaboration with the municipality. While discussing the reason why the CSOs have not been evaluating their mutual collaboration, most informants could not come up with a clear reason. Informant of organisation F speculated it could be because they were too caught up in their daily activities. Given that the meetings I attended were quickly filled with daily (urgent) matters, this could be a factor contributing to the lack of evaluation. This was suggested by the informant of the municipality as a possible reason too:

> "Because their ultimate day job is simply really focused on the person, well, the guidance of undocumented people. And that is their right in that area. But we do look at it from a kind of account holder position, how can you actually improve the guidance in Utrecht on all kinds of facets for the longer term? [...] with account conversations we try to challenge the organisations of "hey what else could you do about it and how can we [the municipality] help to achieve that?"

In line with this, I analyse that the evaluation is not really part of the CSOs way of working in comparison to the way it is deeply embedded in the municipality's organisational practices. As a

governmental institution, the municipality tends to work more formally than the CSOs, resulting in more structured evaluation internally and externally. The quote also hints that given their (financial) account position, the municipality needs to get insight in the practices of the CSOs and hold them accountable for meeting their collaborative agreements, for which an evaluation is an important method. The financial relation between municipality and most CSOs will be further analysed in section 4.3.3

When discussing my fieldwork with my informants, most of them express their genuine interest in the research and its results. Many of them share that they are curious about the perspectives of the other partners in their network, but that they also want to see if there might be matters on which they can improve their collaboration. When I reflect on my data concerning evaluation, I interpret that the lack of evaluation probably contributes a lot to this interest. The collaborative process is something that is not often actively reflected on individually, let alone that it is made explicit or discussed collectively.

4.2 Shaping the LVV in Utrecht

As stated before, the LVV-pilot has been implemented differently in the participating municipalities. This section will examine the way in which the local stakeholders in Utrecht created their own interpretation of the LVV-pilot. The municipality and CSOs have added their own arrangements to, for example, the terms, criteria and focus on return of the LVV. In the first section, I will outline how these conditions were negotiated at the start and laid down in 'collaboration agreements' by the CSOs and the municipality. Secondly, I will analyse the influence of this national LVV pilot on their already existing local network in terms of collaboration.

4.2.1 Negotiating local agreements on the LVV

> *"The LVV is for people who are often here for a very long time, who have completely exhausted all legal remedies and within such an LVV, at least the results in Utrecht show that an example residence permit can also come out of it and a perspective of a migration-induced or familial. Or that you induce people to go back to the country of origin. Because of mutual cooperation, you can sometimes take certain steps much faster."*

The above quote was a remark of the informant of the municipality in our conversation about the added value of the LVV-pilot for undocumented people in Utrecht. As briefly explained in the previous chapters, in 2018 the national government started with a LVV-pilot in five municipalities. To manage this process, the national government together with the municipalities drew up a covenant. This covenant contained the preconditions and agreements on how the LVV program was going to be implemented in practice. When the municipality of Utrecht sat down

with the local CSOs to discuss how they envisioned to set up the pilot in Utrecht, it turned out that the covenant did not meet the CSOs standards. The national terms were too far removed from the vision of the CSOs and their way of working at that time, as will be discussed below. Subsequently, the Utrecht municipality and other local stakeholders in Utrecht entered into consultations to seek common ground in the joint implementation of the LVV-pilot in Utrecht. Together they managed to create their own conditions in 'collaboration agreements' that complement the national covenant. These agreements were laid down in writing and define the framework in which the LVV Utrecht operates. It is made clear what is expected of the state and non-state actors in terms of their tasks as well as their mutual cooperation.

Important matters contested in these 'collaboration agreements' meant first of all that in finding solutions for undocumented people the focus should not dominantly be on return. Moreover, the CSOs and the municipality discussed that 'criteria' that determine eligibility for the LVV should leave room for exceptions. To demonstrate how the stakeholders negotiated certain matters, the following brief analysis of the way the stakeholders contested the strict 'terms' for counselling is given.

The 'terms' refer to the period a person is allowed to participate in the program, in other words receive guidance from the LVV organisations. In some cities where the LVV-pilot was conducted, the local stakeholders apply predetermined terms for someone's participation in the LVV (Mack et al., 2022). Municipality Rotterdam, for instance, decided to implement a period of three-months, and in Amsterdam counselling generally attached a deadline of 18 months. When this deadline has passed, the undocumented person is requested to leave the LVV program. However, both the municipality Utrecht and the CSOs do not agree with this approach. They argue that the complex situations of undocumented people differ too much per individual to work with predetermined deadlines. First of all, it is important to take into account that getting guidance, or participating in the LVV in general, is a highly personal and vulnerable process for undocumented people. Informants of organisation F and H therefore stressed that it requires trust to be able to determine together with a client what is the best solution for them. In their experience, such a trusting relationship can only be built over a longer period of time. To illustrate this, the informant of organisation H explained:

> "Conversations about sexual orientation or about your past don't occur very quickly. You need time for that."

As such, the local stakeholders in Utrecht advocate giving professionals the time to build this trust. In addition, thorough legal research is time-demanding. In a similar manner, informants of various CSOs stated that terms of counselling are also influenced by, for instance, the motivation and capabilities of clients or the willingness to cooperate by third parties. Regarding the latter, I heard multiple stories of undocumented people in need of documents from their birth country

before they could continue their process (fieldnote H, February 2023; fieldnote I, March 2023). This was also highlighted by the informant of organisation C:

> *"Most boys move on [to second line shelter] after three months. For some boys, especially West Africans, it takes longer. Well try to manage to get documents from Guinea, you can't really speak of an organised country. So retrieving them sometimes takes a long time. If we know someone will eventually get the documents, we are not going to put someone on the street after three months."*

Due to these reasons, municipality Utrecht and CSOs believe that applying strict deadlines will only lead to putting people on the street who will then continue to live under extreme precarious conditions. As the local stakeholders wanted to avoid this, they decided to make person-specific guidance plans for LVV-participants. Many of the informants share proudly that because of this they managed to find a lot of solutions for clients, including HASAs.

Over time the first-line shelter noticed the waiting lists kept growing. To overcome this challenge, they reached out to the second-line shelters to together create a flow between the first- and second-line that is a little more structured. Informants of organisations A and C described that they ended up imposing a three-month term for first-line counselling, but they still make exceptions when necessary. The importance of setting 'partial terms' to enhance the collaboration between involved actors was also suggested by the LVV-evaluation of Regioplan (Mack et al., 2022).

According to all informants, these 'collaboration agreements' form the fundamental basis of their close collaboration. For the CSOs, the additional agreements with the municipality provide a sense of certainty. This was, among others, discussed with the informant of organisation H:

> *"It helps to safeguard the things we consider important. We have managed to do so in those cooperation agreements. There are certain frameworks on paper that govern the way in which we provide undocumented reception in Utrecht and ensure that it continues to exist, whatever the LVV brings."*

With these agreements, most CSOs feel reassured that they can continue organising their work in line with their vision, even though it deviates from the national policy. The informants of the CSOs spoke quite positively of the way they assist the undocumented people in Utrecht and did not want the LVV to hinder this process. Regardless of "*whatever the LVV brings*", in the context of Utrecht the 'collaboration agreements' are leading. Moreover, the 'collaboration agreements' also positively influences the relation between the CSOs and the local authorities. It was seen as confirmation that the municipality shared similar views with the CSOs on which way the public service delivery to undocumented people is most fruitful. Next to finding a way for the CSOs to participate in the LVV-pilot, strengthening the relation between the municipality and CSOs was

indeed one of the reasons for the 'collaboration agreements'. According to the informant of the municipality it was a way to acknowledge the CSOs for their collective effort:

> *"Otherwise the NGOs would not agree and we actually wished to show that we [the municipality] want to do this together with you [the CSOs]. That we are actually not against them, but recognise them. We see you and you are extremely important in this as well [...]. The LVV was not only a unilateral agreement between the municipality and the government, but also with the NGOs."*

The last sentence hints at another purpose of the Utrecht-specific agreements. The municipality has the difficult position to navigate between two parties that contradict each other in many ways. On the one hand, the national governmental bodies aim for the implementation of a national policy for undocumented people. In doing so, they tend to follow the relatively strict immigration policies. On the other hand, there are the local stakeholders who are already working for years on supporting the undocumented people in Utrecht. Their effort, among others, leads to repeated asylum applications. On paper as well as in practice the interests of these two parties often do not align. The municipality acts as a mediator between the national level and the local level. The informant of the municipality illustrated their role as that of a 'boat' that occasionally veers slightly in the direction of the national government, before again veering in the direction of the CSOs. In this way, they attempt to reach a middle ground between both parties. The challenging position of the municipality of being 'in the middle' is also acknowledged explicitly by some informants of the CSOs. With sympathy and satisfaction they discuss with me how their municipality manages this responsibility, which sometimes involves challenging the national government. Creating these 'collaborative agreements' with NGOs was a strategy for the municipality to accommodate both the national government and the CSOs. However, the implementation of these agreements in practice remains an ongoing and complex process of mediating between both parties, for instance when deciding upon individual cases. The tensions that may arise while doing so, will be analysed in section 4.3.2.

These collaborative agreements mark the beginning of Utrecht's take on the LVV-pilot. Where many informants remain hesitant in forming a positive opinion about the LVV in general, they fully approve of the way in which the LVV is applied in their city. This is because they claimed, and were given, the opportunity by the municipality to carry out the LVV in accordance with their own visions, which is explained above. Not only do the local stakeholders in Utrecht speak highly of their approach, but this strategy is praised by other municipalities and CSOs too. A large part of the national coalition of CSOs, mentioned in §4.1.2,, wrote a letter to the Second Chamber advocating that the Utrecht approach should be considered an effective example in the national outroll of the LVV. This was also communicated to me by the coordinator of this coalition at the end of our interview:

"I think Utrecht is really.. You have a nice example there. There are several organisations, which is special. [...] Utrecht to me is kind of a good practice in this regard. [...] The organisations in Utrecht reinforce each other and trust each other. At least how I see it from a distance."

In similar lines, the 'Utrecht approach' or 'the way we do it in Utrecht' were mentioned in multiple interviews with sentiments of pride by my informants. This positive attitude towards the 'Utrecht approach' seems to be strengthened when discussing the implementation of the LVV elsewhere and their results, especially in Rotterdam.

In almost all of the interviews, the stricter procedure in Rotterdam is being brought up as confirmation for the necessity of their 'Utrecht approach'. They argued that in Rotterdam the focus on 'return' and limited terms are not leading to as many solutions, instead many people are back on the streets. The differences in outflow between cities participating in the LVV-pilot can be found in the evaluation of Regioplan:
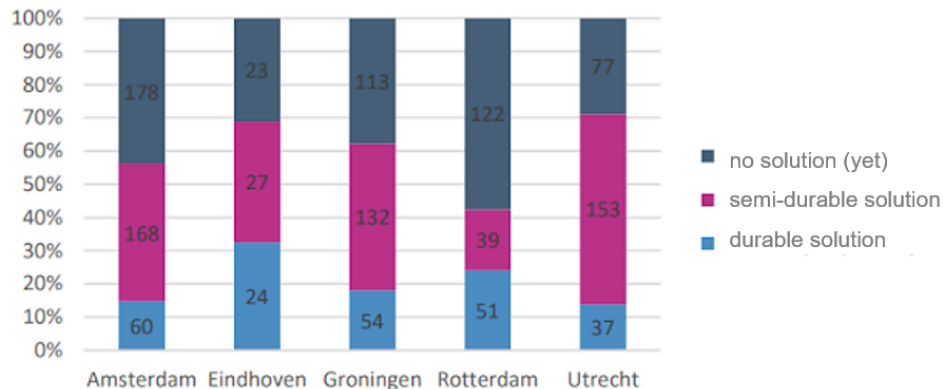

Figure 2. Semi-durable and durable solutions upon outflow from the LVV on the basis of municipal registrations per pilot municipality (N=1258) (Mack et al., 2022).

When looking at the outflow numbers on the basis of municipal LVV- registrations, it indeed becomes clear that in Rotterdam there are relatively more people who leave the LVV without a (semi-) durable solution than in Utrecht. At the same time, these numbers also demonstrate that Rotterdam has relatively more durable solutions, mostly concerning a voluntary return. Given the high return figures, the Secretary of State recently used the success of the Rotterdam figures' as an illustration of how the LVV should be implemented nationally. The CSOs and other municipalities, like Utrecht, on the other hand disapprove of Rotterdam's numbers and refer to Utrecht's high numbers of semi- and durable solutions, such as HASAs, as success-indicator of the LVV-pilot. This reveals to me how highly subjective the interpretation of numbers is as a measure of success. Each party interprets the data in light of its own interests and perspective.

4.2.2 The LVV-pilot's impact on the local network

In line with the results of the evaluation of Regioplan (Mack et al., 2022), several informants share that with the implementation of the LVV-pilot their collaboration intensified. This relates to the collaboration among CSOs. In order to better coordinate access to the shelter, two night shelters and two socio-legal assistance organisations created the *'Aanmeldloket'* (Registration desk). In this facility employees of these organisations collectively determine who is eligible for the LVV Utrecht. The other CSOs, such as the day shelters, send new visitors to register at the *'Aanmeldloket'*, so they can start their process from here. Instead of everything being arranged and communicated separately, CSOs have now created a platform for collective decision-making and coordination.

In addition, in trying to find durable solutions for undocumented people, the LVV promotes collaboration between CSOs, the municipality and other governmental organisations, like the DT&V and IND. As suggested by the informant of the municipality (quote p.37), this collaboration is necessary to enable quicker action or breakthrough in complex cases. To coordinate this the actors created and joined in a 'LSO' (*lokaal samenwerkingsoverleg,* local partnership consultation). The divergent interests of the actors make the collaborative process highly complex. The informant of the municipality asserted that in navigating these differences the municipality again has a mediating role:

> "*That's where the NGOs that guide people sit at the table, as well as representatives of the government parties. And we as a municipality chair are a kind of Switzerland.*"

When I inquired about the position of 'Switzerland', the informant indicated that they try to adopt an attitude as neutral as possible to mediate in these consultations. However, the informant acknowledged that it is also important as a municipality to speak out. An in-depth study on how they manage tensions and work together is unfortunately out of the scope of this thesis, which only focuses on the collaborative network of the CSOs and municipalities, explained in the case setting (see section 3.1).

Nonetheless, it became clear to me that next to advancing the collaboration between the local stakeholders, the implementation of the LVV-pilot also caused some issues. Different informants expressed their worries that a split between the undocumented people is developing as a consequence of the LVV. Before, the 'bed-bath-bread' (*bed-bad-brood*) services in Utrecht were mostly accessible for the group as a whole. With the arrival of the LVV, however, undocumented people are being divided into two groups, i.e. those who participate in the LVV and those who are not eligible to do so. General criteria to be eligible is that a person has no Dublin-claim, does not originate from a safe country and does not have a heavy entry ban. These divided groups are in the network often referred to as 'inside LVV' and 'outside LVV'. The 'inside LVV' group has, if capacity allows it, access to LVV-counselling, such as shelter or legal guidance. However, as many CSOs are now connected to the LVV, there are not many locations undocumented people

'outside LVV' can turn to for assistance. Despite both groups being in dire straits, the LVV categorises them in this way, with the result that some have access to support and the others do not. A number of informants did not only express their concern for the lack of support for this group, but also for their visibility of their struggles. One of them, the informant of organisation B pointed out that actually this 'outside LVV' group makes up the vast majority of undocumented people in the Netherlands, and is gradually fading into obscurity. Similarly, the coordinator of the national coalition predicts that these excluded groups are more and more left out of the picture by not only governmental institutions, but also by the CSOs itself:

> *"Because one can immediately say 'we have no money for you, so we are not going to help you.' The group will also be forgotten. What happens with those LVV organisations is that they forget about the non-LVV organisations, but also that they almost forget the non-LVV target group, because they offer little or no help for that."*

According to informants of organisations B, D, and H, this problem is occurring in Utrecht too. These three organisations are also actively helping the 'outside LVV' group, for instance providing day shelters and legal assistance. Apart from them, the Utrecht network primarily consists of actors providing services to the 'inside LVV' group, since these organisations operate within the LVV. In practice, this implies that a large group of undocumented people are excluded from most CSOs in Utrecht, thereby placing pressure on the few organisations that are still open for 'all'. For the challenges that come with this responsibility, informants of organisations B, D and H occasionally experience a lack of understanding by the rest of the network. For instance, they frequently have to deal with psychiatric patients causing trouble. These individuals are often not eligible for most of the night shelters due to their mental state. According to informants of organisation B and D, these night shelters therefore also are less concerned with the challenges concerning this group, because they are too focused on their own tasks. Their tendency to focus more on their own target group, the 'inside LVV', was also admitted by some informants of the CSOs entirely linked to the LVV, such as the informant of organisation C:

> *"That is what happens with the undocumented men, who do not fall within the LVV. They fall by the wayside. We were not allowed to place them, because they are not eligible for shelter according to the municipality. This often concerns men with problematic behaviour, entry bans, their antecedents, huge zippers of criminal records. Rabble [....] Look, I think everyone needs shelter, but the municipality didn't think so. So yes, you then focus on your own target group. But [names of coordinators] still had their hands full, because those guests came to [organisation B] during the day anyway."*

Even though the informants of organisation B, D and H experience that the awareness about this challenge is growing, they still feel a lack of understanding and support by the other CSOs. The way this brings tensions in the network, will be further analysed in the next section. As organisations B, D and H share the same target group and struggles, their collaboration has

intensified. The informants of B and D suggested that a sort of network between these three organisations 'within' the Utrecht network is forming, because they share more of the same vision and relate more in the work they are doing. This is experienced to a lesser extent by informants of organisation H, probably due to the fact that they also collaborate with the other CSOs for counselling of the 'inside LVV' group.

In this way, the LVV-pilot appears to have caused a problematic split between the undocumented people in those who are eligible to the LVV (inside LVV) and those who are not (outside LVV), as well as a growing distance among the CSOs working with the different groups.

4.3 Relations in network

In this section I will argue that the informants overall speak quite positively about the underlying relations. In doing so, I will analyse how they manage to build and sustain mutual trust. In the second section I will demonstrate what kind of tensions arise and how they deal with those. Lastly, I will focus on the financial dependency relations between the CSOs and the government.

4.3.1 Building mutual trust
Overall, the informants speak quite positively about the relationships between the stakeholders in the Utrecht network. When interviewing the informants, I analysed different factors contributing to their feelings of trust between the actors. First of all, the informants of the CSOs all acknowledge a personal commitment to the cause of the other CSOs. They experience that, like themselves, the others also 'work from the heart' and want the best for undocumented people. This was also mentioned by the informant of organisation H:

> *"We [CSOs] don't always agree, but yes, speaking for myself: ultimately, I have faith in everyone's involvement and in everyone's best intentions."*

Not only the shared personal drive of the people involved foster a sense of trust, but this commitment is embedded in each organisation too, such as their origin stories (explained in section 4.1.1). A number of informants also recognise this commitment among the representatives of the municipality they work with. They explicitly mention it in our interviews, such as the informant of organisation E:

> *"You see that everyone is just very involved in the future of the people they work with. Everyone works very hard to provide the best care or to perform their work in the best possible way. [Interviewer: Who do you mean by everyone?] The organisations involved, but also the municipality, definitely."*

As hinted in the previous section on the 'collaborative agreements', all the informants of CSOs, one perhaps more than the other, feel supported by the municipality in the work they do. Even

though they might occasionally disagree with one another, in the interviews it became clear that the informants of CSOs believe that the municipality Utrecht is sincere in its desire to support the undocumented people in Utrecht. Informants of organisations B and D, for instance, expressed that the municipality shares the same ideals they themselves strive for, such as taking care of Utrecht citizens regardless of status.

Another important factor emphasised by all informants was that for building mutual trust in the network, personal contact is important. By meeting each other regularly and getting to know each other personally, the informants argue that they feel they can contact each other more easily and faster in collaboration. Moreover, informants of organisation A and H also stressed that certain personal bonds also create a safer environment for more difficult conversations to be held between the CSOs, such as clashing opinions on individual cases. These kinds of conversations have to be held in order to determine a common course, wherefore trusting relationships are crucial. As such, many informants indicated that investing in more personal contact between stakeholders could further improve their collaboration. However, the level of trust experienced differs among stakeholders. Because of the growing distance between some CSOs due to the LVV-pilot, as argued in the previous section, organisations notice stronger trust relationships with those they are more in contact with or with whom they share the same target groups.

Moreover, the informants also build trust by working closely together on individual cases, as illustrated before. When the actors succeed in obtaining 'small victories' for a client through their collective action, such as medical support, it positively affects their relationship. In similar lines, when lobbying with (local) authorities the informants of CSOs experience a sense of solidarity and 'togetherness' between them. Informant of organisation C jokinkly said in our interview that "*a good crisis*" would really help to strengthen their collaboration:

> "*Then you immediately find each other and there is a sort of togetherness, Everyone goes a step further. Of course you don't hope for a crisis, but this is what puts the chain to the test. Then you will see that we actually work well together. That our network is really strong and has cohesion.*"

This is exactly what I analysed when in that same week the State Secretary declared that the LVV will no longer be subsidised in 2024 (NOS, 2023). At this time the local authorities and national governments already had held lots of negotiations on the national outroll of the LVV, so this change came completely out of the blue for municipalities as well as CSOs. In the meetings and interviews where I conducted research during that week I sensed that the CSOs mostly felt outraged by the statement, but their fear for the outcome was limited (Observation D, 2023; Observation G, 2023). A lot of them expressed their confidence in the lobbying of the municipality and themselves to counter the decision. When the CSOs received the shocking

message a few days before it was made public, they immediately got together, both locally and nationally, to write a collective letter to the State Secretary and made public statements (Observation D, 2023). In a similar way, the informant of the municipality shared how they lobbied with everyone involved in the process to challenge the withdrawal of the subsidies for the LVV. It seems that they succeeded, since the same day it was made public that the State Secretary retracted his decision (NOS, 2023b). Nevertheless, for many informants this was once again an indication that the national pressure will intensify and challenge the work they are doing in Utrecht, and that they therefore need to align.

4.3.2 Agility in dealing with frictions

As explained in the previous sections, the process of many different stakeholders working together, with their own way of working and their own visions, also brings frictions between them. All informants were very open about the fact that sometimes tensions arise, since in working together they sometimes have to decide on things collectively. This first of all includes friction on the 'client' level. The CSOs often have disagreements on individual cases, for instance who is eligible for shelter or not. The informant of organisation E elucidated that the organisations approach this question from their own perspectives, which do not always align. A legal counsellor, for instance, argues that someone meets the LVV-criteria for shelter, but the shelter itself may not find the person in question a good fit with the other residents in the house. After extensive deliberations with all involved, the decision ultimately rests with the shelter to decide who they take in. Several informants indicated that certain discussions can get quite heated, but they remain professional and respectful. I analysed these strong emotions to be linked to the passion with which people do their work, i.e. they want the best for their clients.

This is also the case regarding tensions the CSOs experience on the policymaking level, such as in a 'board consultation'. Even though they share the humanitarian ideal in general they have slightly different visions. One clear example was the 'speaking with one voice' towards the municipality about the collaboration agreements. The informant of organisation H explained that the CSOs have different views on what they consider should be included minimally in the LVV-pilot for it to be acceptable. By talking a lot with each other, hearing each other's perspectives and due to their trusting relationships, they managed to find common ground. My data demonstrate that they indeed often succeed in finding common ground on paper, such as in lobbying letters to the national government. However, they are still struggling to manage the different organisational visions and interests in practice, such as on individual cases. As discussed above, some organisations follow the LVV criteria more strictly than others. Several CSOs problematise for instance the exclusion of people with a Dublin-claim. At the same time, the informants are also appreciative of their differing perspectives, among them the informant of organisation A:

"I am also very happy that these differences exist. We keep each other sharp this way. Neither of the two [CSOs] is right or wrong. Neither of the two [CSOs] is correct or incorrect. The best care will be somewhere in the middle. Because you approach a problem in such a different way and can come to a solution together in a professionally healthy way, I think you also achieve the maximum achievable."

Where disagreements between the CSOs may sometimes occur, all informants proudly share that they always act as 'one front' to the outside world. This was also confirmed by the informant of the municipality. Even though the municipality sometimes senses there to be deviating, sometimes clashing, visions in the network, they consider the CSOs to be very discreet. Therefore, the informant (and colleagues) of the municipality admitted to be interested in my research to see whether they sensed this correctly and how the CSOs navigates these tensions.

The informants who take part in the national coalition explained that the above is less of a challenge in the national coalition of CSOs. This coalition functions as a platform where CSOs meet more freely to share information or act together (Observation F, 2023). Instead of presenting itself as 'one' consultative body that speaks on behalf of everyone, their actions are supported by the separate organisations. This was explained to me by the coordinator of the coalition:

"It was once agreed that the [name coalition] as such would never be publicised, so we do not write letters on behalf of [name coalition]. [...] When it comes to a letter that we write together, everyone can put their own name under it. Some people do and others don't.

In this way, the coordinator argues, organisations can remain independent and have 'their own voice'. In the national coalition they struggle less to find middle ground with all the attendees, since those who do not agree can also refrain from, for instance, signing a letter.

4.3.3 Financial relations
In general, all CSOs are to differing degrees subsidised by the municipality of Utrecht. With the implementation of the LVV-pilot, these subsidies mostly entail money from the national government budget, i.e. are obtained through the Ministry of Justice and Security. In addition, the Utrecht city council also makes its own contributions available from its municipal budget. For most CSOs the subsidies they receive through the municipality make up three-quarters or more of their total income. Additionally, the remaining part of CSOs' income is obtained from private fundraising. The organisations apply for funds for activities or projects, but also receive generous donations from other sources, mainly churches. Organisation E and H, for instance, use funds to cover the medical expenses of their clients.

Exceptions are Organization B and D, whose income is only by one-quarter or half from funds of the municipality. The informant of organisation B explained that for them this is a conscious choice, for it allows them to operate more autonomously and to be less influenced by the current political climate. This also relates to their relation to the municipality. Informants of organisations B and C experience that they might have more freedom to act in their own manner or to be critical towards the municipality, because they rely less on its funding. Informant of organisation B shared on this:

> *"It is a banal principle, but I'm afraid it applies. Whose bread one eats, whose word one speaks. If you are 100 percent subsidised by the municipality, then you have a completely different situation. In that case strictly speaking that the municipality has become your client. That is less with us, but with [organisation D] and [organisation H] too. We have a slightly more independent view of the world."*

When discussing this, the informant of organisation B emphasises multiple times that this is 'nothing personal', indicating that it is not because of individuals being less critical, but due to organisations' client relationship with the municipality. This relation with the municipality as being the 'client' has also been acknowledged by various informants themselves. Several of them argue that if you look at it strictly, the municipality is indeed their client on paper. However, they explained to me that this is not how they experience it to be in practice. Among them, the informant of organisation C:

> *"No, it [financing via municipality] does not affect our work. No. I don't think we're trying very hard to keep the subsidy. We mostly just sail our own course, which is a humanitarian course."*

None of the other informants, whose organisation is largely funded by municipality, either view that their dependency on municipal fundings hinders them in performing their organisational practices or in speaking out against matters they might not agree with. After analysing my research data, I conclude that this is probably partly due to the collaboration agreements they created, as discussed in section 4.2. In these agreements the stakeholder negotiated clear terms and expectations of their collaboration, which also guide their financial relationships. According to an informant of organisations F and H, this is also due to the good collaborative relationship they managed to build with people from the municipality over the years, as explained in the previous section. As a result, these informants indicate that the municipality trusts the way the CSOs carry out their work and therefore are not controlling their work.

In addition, several informants claim that there actually is interdependence between the municipality and the CSOs. They state that CSOs may depend on the municipality for financing, but the municipality is dependent on CSOs in achieving their objectives. The municipality needs

the CSOs to fulfil their humanitarian goals of assisting Utrecht citizens in need, but also to maintain social order in the city. This was illustrated by the informant of organisation A in our interview:

> *"Both the municipality and the shelters have a long stick to beat with. The municipality can say if you don't do what we say, the money will stop. And we can say in turn that we will close our doors, then there will be nothing, then everyone will be out on the street, then we can see how you will solve all those social problems, such as survival criminality [undocumented people doing criminal offences in order to survive]"*

As mentioned in section 4.1.1, the informant of the municipality also acknowledges they need the CSOs to achieve their objectives of taking care of Utrecht citizens and ensuring social order.

Nevertheless, to be able to keep providing public services to undocumented people in Utrecht, the local network remains largely dependent on the national government, who is fundings the LVV-program. As stated before, the national government follows strict immigration policies that do not align with most of the work the CSOs are doing in Utrecht. It therefore remains an uncertain factor whether and how much the government will continue to subsidise their work. This vulnerability comes forward in the example of the statements of the Secretary of State discussed in section 4.3.1.. As the local actors have limited influence on the national political climate, this does occasionally offer some financial concerns for the future. Not only about the size of the budget made available for their work, but also about possible hasher restrictions that the national government could impose. Nevertheless, these concerns are more something in the background, since most informants do not worry deeply on a daily basis, including the informant or organisation E:

> *"Well in this sector, I think you always have concerns about the future. Because it is of course a sector that is, well, at risk of having its subsidies cut off or closed down completely. No, in general I just really do have a lot of confidence in how we do it in Utrecht that we can just keep doing that. And probably not forever and probably not always this way for everyone, but in general I'm not very worried about that."*

In line with this, other informants also acknowledge that some uncertainty is inherent to their sector, since this is a politically highly sensitive subject. When working in this sector, they argue, you are resilient and do not get carried away by these worries. Moreover, as also stressed in the above quote, many informants feel that they have established a strong collaborative network to fall back on when times get more difficult.

5. Discussion

This chapter will provide a more in-depth understanding of the previously discussed findings by analysing their relation to the theoretical framework (see chapter 2). In doing so, I will formulate an answer to my research question:

> *How do local stakeholders engage in collaborative governance for the public service delivery to undocumented people in Utrecht?*

The findings have revealed that overall all informants consider their network or chain to be well-functioning and effective in collaborating for the provision of services to undocumented people in Utrecht. In this light, most of them referred with pride to their 'Utrecht collaboration' and local interpretation of the LVV. Following the model of Ansell and Gash (2008), based on 137 studies, different factors can be indicated to contribute to the degree of collaboration between actors, i.e. starting conditions, facilitative leadership, institutional design, and collaborative process (see figure 1, p.15). In answer to my research question, I have analysed these four factors in the context of the collaborative network in Utrecht. In addition to the model of Ansell and Gash (2008), this thesis analyses evaluation as an extra condition, since scholars like Provan and Milward (2001) stress the importance of evaluation in collaborative governance. Therefore, I will provide a theoretical explanation for the absence of evaluation on the collaboration among the CSOs. Lastly, the findings demonstrate that collective action performed by local stakeholders is often a response to what is determined nationally, in this case policy decisions concerning the LVV. Therefore, I advocate the importance of a multilevel framework in research on collaborative governance at the local level.

Starting conditions
First of all, the starting conditions of the local stakeholders positively influenced their collaboration. In line with Larruina et al. (2019), I analysed that all CSOs originated as a response to the lack of support to undocumented people by the authorities, both locally and nationally. The CSOs started organising services themselves, each specialising in a different type of counselling. Next to providing these services, most CSOs are also involved in advocacy for the rights of the undocumented people or influencing the political and public debate. This is in line with Ambrosini (2020) who argues that CSOs often have overlapping modes of action in challenging the exclusionary asylum policies on the local level.

In the origin of new CSOs there often was some degree of involvement of one or more existing CSOs, thereby their collaboration gradually intensified. This prehistory of effective collaboration between some CSOs initiated their trust in the effectiveness of a broader network of all the stakeholders in Utrecht working together. Additionally, the local stakeholders had multiple incentives to join the collaboration because of their interdependence. The findings indicate that the CSOs need each other's expertise to provide the best support to their target group, but also to have a stronger lobbying position towards the government. For them, the latter is especially important to be able to challenge the strict immigration policy of the national

government. This supports the Ansell and Gash (2008) argument that incentives to participate are highly influenced by the political climate the stakeholders operate in. The data also suggests there is a mutual dependency between the municipality, which subsidises most of CSOs activities, and the CSOs, which provide services that indirectly stimulate social order in Utrecht. This is in line with Klijn & Koppenjan (2015), who argue that there often is a high interdependence between the actors in collaborative governance, because the resources and expertise to address the societal issues are diffused among them. Related to this, the informants did not experience clear power imbalances between them. The informants overall indicated having the capacity, skills and time to engage in a meaningful way in the collaborative process, which is considered important by Ansell and Gash (2008). These relatively absent power imbalances, incentives and prehistory of positive collaborative relationships provide a good foundation for collaboration between all stakeholders.

Facilitative leadership
The second condition focuses on facilitative leadership, which brings various stakeholders together and enables them all to actively participate in the decision-making process (Ansell and Gash, 2008). Even though this factor is not mentioned by all the informants explicitly, I consider it is still present in their collaborative network. With regard to the collaboration between CSOs, some CSOs take on a facilitative leadership role in preparing and chairing the care worker consultation (HvO). It seems that these CSOs succeed in taking on this facilitative leadership role. Informants of CSOs feel they are making the decisions together, rather than specific actors dominating the decision-making procedure. In the same way, the coordinator of the national coalition of CSOs ensures all actors can participate in equal manner in their consultations, regardless of the size of the organisation. Given the growing split between the organisations due to the LVV, it is important that facilitative leadership ensures the empowerment of the non-LVV stakeholders. The coordinator tries to achieve this by giving consideration that the LVV related topics or organisations do not dominate their consultations.

Moreover, my data shows that the municipality takes an active role in creating an environment in which all stakeholders can participate. They facilitate and lead the 'management consultation' of the municipality and CSOs. Besides, the municipality checks in with all CSOs on an individual basis to make sure each actor is heard. Furthermore, the municipality uses their 'middle position' to build bridges and manage conflicts between the national government and local stakeholders. This position is also important in their local partnership (LSO), in which some CSOs and governmental organisations need to navigate for their different interests. Similarly, as analysed by Laurrinea et al. (2019) stakeholders active in the immigration field have conflicting goals. Unfortunately, analysis on consultations like the LSO was out of the scope of this study, but is strongly recommended for future research (see section 6.2). With the LVV policy, the cooperation between state actors like IND or DT&V and CSOs will intensify, which makes analysis on the way they manage to find common ground really relevant.

Institutional design

The third condition of the model is the institutional design that ensures the procedural legitimacy of the network (Ansell and Gash, 2008). Following the findings, I argue that the local stakeholders managed to achieve this to some extent. The actors have different consultations in which they regularly meet to inform each other and make decisions (see section 4.1.2.). In addition, most informants have a clear view of the function each actor services in their collaboration. They invested time in realising a good workflow between the night shelters, i.e. between the first and second line shelter. Part of this was the insertion of a three-month deadline for participation in the first line shelter, which includes room for exceptions. Establishing certain ground rules and deadlines, when realistic, form a good base for collaboration, according to Ansell and Gash (2008). It seems the local network organised their roles in a relatively structured manner. Nevertheless, a lot of the contacts between the CSOs still depends on knowing the colleagues of other organisations personally. There is only limited structure on the individual contact between stakeholders, for example on individual cases. The lack of transparency in this makes it difficult for an employee who is new to the network to actively participate. In a similar way, there seems to be a lack of protocol on how decisions are being made. The informants of the CSOs could not provide an explanation on this more than 'in mutual agreement'. In case the local stakeholders intend to improve their collaboration, there are some elements of institutional design of the current network they can focus on: establishing ground rules and transparency in their communication on individual cases.

Collaborative process

The last factor of the Ansell and Gash (2008) model is the collaborative process in which the stakeholders address the public service delivery to undocumented people in Utrecht. As stated in the theoretical framework, stakeholders engage in different activities that alternate in a cyclical manner. These are presented as sub-factors in this model (see figure 1, p.15). Ansell and Gash (2008) state that face-to-face dialogue is a crucial condition for collaboration, since it fosters consensus-oriented decision-making. Besides, it resolves issues that hinder positive attitudes towards the collaboration, such as stereotypes about stakeholders. The positive impact of face-to-face dialogue also came up explicitly in the findings. Through intensive personal contact between the stakeholders involved in a specific case, they are able to find common grounds on the best counselling for their client. The informants' experiences are in alignment with Ambrosini's (2020) argument that good personal relationships appear to be crucial in overcoming obstacles in complex cases. When as a result the stakeholders are able to achieve 'small wins' (as illustrated in quote p.33), it encourages a virtuous cycle of trust building and commitment (Ansell and Gash, 2008). Therefore, informants try to put a lot of effort in establishing these interpersonal connections. Similarly, as suggested by Ansell and Gash (2008), these relations are also crucial in building trust between the actors. This trust is reinforced by the huge commitment that each stakeholder has to the collaborative process as well as to the situation of undocumented people in general. Moreover, the stakeholders acknowledge their interdependence in achieving

their goals. In general, when interviewing the informants it was clear that they have a shared understanding of the problem definitions and values important to their work. However, the CSOs have slightly divergent missions or visions for resolving this problem. This occasionally leads to tensions among them (see section 4.3.2). Nonetheless, these tensions are currently left unaddressed and unresolved most of the time, which negatively influences their trust, commitment to the collaboration. The sub-factor of shared understanding thus deserves more attention if stakeholders wish to improve their collaboration. A first step in reaching consensus on the shared mission, would be to make their different perspectives on the mission explicit.

Added condition of evaluation
Navigating different activities in the collaborative process eventually leads to collective action in the public service delivery to undocumented people in Utrecht. Interestingly, the findings revealed that the CSOs never evaluate the outcomes of their collaborative process with other CSOs, only those with the municipality. Reasons for this could be that the CSOs are too busy with their daily tasks and that evaluation is more embedded in the formal organisational practices of the municipality. These findings are in line with the Sørensen & Torfing (2021) analysis that collaborative governance often lacks evaluation due to the complex, multi-actor and multi-level collaborative process (Sørensen & Torfing, 2021). The CSOs can not determine if their collective action is achieving their objectives, if they do not structurally evaluate this (Provan & Milward, 2001). Next to evaluating the results, the stakeholders should also assess their collaborative process itself (Hertting & Vedung, 2012; Provan & Milward, 2001). In Chapter 4 it is demonstrated that often frictions arise because of the CSOs' different visions on case level as well as policymaking level. Some of these frictions currently remain unsolved. This hinders the trust building between the stakeholder, which is essential for collaborative governance to have an impact (Ansell and Gash, 2008). The findings of this study have revealed that many informants themselves also see importance in discussing their divergent perspectives to be able to find common ground on for instance the joint solution. At the same time, many of them were unsure about the most appropriate form of evaluation to implement in their network. If it appears that the parties lack the time or knowledge to structure this, it may also be an option to involve an external party (Sørensen & Torfing, 2021). In line with Hertting and Vedung (2012), I argue that a focus in their evaluation should be on the attitudes the stakeholders have towards each stakeholder separately, as well as their attitude towards the network as a whole.

In answering my research question, the findings have revealed the interconnectedness of the way local stakeholders collaborate and the policy that is being made at the national level. The nationally debated LVV-program has a huge effect on the local network. In its simplest form, financing made available by the national government for the LVV-pilot supports the CSOs in carrying out their counselling work. Scholars like Brandsen et al. (2017) argue that these CSOs have become a 'third-party-government' which provides public service delivery while being funded by the (local) authorities. As a result, the CSOs in their work and existence are dependent

on the political climate. For instance, national conditions for the LVV are imposed to guide the use of those resources by the CSOs locally.

In line with Geuijen et al. (2020) and Scholten and Pennix (2013), these conditions managed at the national level do not match the perspectives of the local actors. The findings demonstrate a scale mismatch between the national policy, the LVV-pilot, and what is experienced by those working on the ground with undocumented people. A good example of this is the proposed three-month term to determine the plan for a participant in the LVV. In section 4.2.1 it is argued how in practice this deadline is unrealistic or leads to undesirable outcomes, such as putting people back on the streets. Due to this 'scale mismatch', local stakeholders negotiated their own interpretation of the LVV, i.e. the collaborative agreements. This fits the trend analysed by Scholten and Pennix (2013) that municipalities are 'entrepreneurial' in constructing their own ideology and policies concerning immigration and integration. For the Utrecht municipality its ideology concerning undocumented people focuses on providing care for those in need and maintaining social order in the city. To be able to achieve these objectives, the municipality seeks active horizontal collaboration with non-state stakeholders, the CSOs, with whom it creates its own strategy (Geuijen et al., 2020).

The data showed that many of the CSOs of the Utrecht network are completely linked to the LVV, i.e. their target group are the undocumented people taking part in the LVV-program. At the same time, there are also some organisations assisting people 'outside the LVV'. This outside group is the majority of the undocumented people in the Netherlands. The CSOs assisting the 'outside LVV-group' sometimes lack understanding of their work and struggles by the other CSOs, thereby causing friction and damaging the trust among them. As argued in section 4.2.2., the implementation of the LVV appears to cause a growing split between the CSOs that are completely linked to the LVV and those that are not.

Additionally, I consider it to be even more problematic that my findings have disclosed that the LVV is producing a split between undocumented people too. The LVV has been set up to find durable solutions for undocumented people in the Netherlands. These people live in precarious situations as a result of the strict and exclusionary asylum policies. The LVV-program categories the group of undocumented people along certain criteria, such as not having a Dublin-claim or originating from a safe country. From the way the LVV is structured now, even though all of these undocumented people live under the same precious situations, all attention and help is focused on the small group that meets the LVV criteria. In this way, as put vividly by the informant of organisation B, a group that is already '*pushed into the margins of society*' is being further excluded. In practice, it means that in Utrecht those who are not eligible for the LVV have fewer to none places they can turn to for support.

To conclude, my research indicates that the local stakeholders experience their collaborative governance to be effective in the public service delivery to undocumented people in Utrecht. Their collaboration is driven by factors such as starting conditions, facilitative leadership,

institutional design, and the collaborative process. The CSOs originated in response to the lack of support from authorities and have formed an interdependent network that offers various types of counselling and advocate for the rights of undocumented people. Given that the municipality had shared objectives, their collaboration has strengthened over time. Decision-making on collective action of the local stakeholders occurs through individual and collective consultations. To avoid power imbalances and to manage tensions in this process, the municipality and some CSOs take on facilitative leadership roles. The research showed an absence of evaluation among CSOs, highlighting the need for assessing the outcomes and the collaborative process itself. Moreover, this case-study on collaborative governance underscores the interconnectedness between local stakeholders in Utrecht and national policy, with the LVV program influencing their collaborative efforts. It has revealed how local actors constantly need to reshape their local collaboration in response to national developments. The collaborative governance of the stakeholders for the public service delivery to undocumented people in Utrecht thus develops in a cyclic manner, constantly adapting to the new political context.

6. Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I will briefly discuss the findings of this research in light of the social, practical and scholarly relevance discussed in the introduction. In addition, I will reflect on the limitations of this research as well as provide recommendations for future research.

6.1 Reflection on relevance of the research

As argued before, this thesis aims to contribute to making the group of undocumented migrants and their struggle more visible. Even though undocumented people themselves were not the research group, I noticed that my research and engagement at Villa Vrede opened up a lot of conversations about them in my personal as well as academic environment. It may be on a small scale, but I do think that these encounters are also important in setting a wider social awareness in motion. Moreover, as explained in the discussion, this thesis brings attention to the possible dangerous consequences of the LVV-pilot, namely a growing split between local stakeholders and further exclusion of a group already struggling in the margins of society.

With regard to the scholarly relevance, it provides a case-study of the dynamics of state, the municipality, and non-state, CSOs, actors working together in the provision of public services. In doing so, this thesis has aspired to form a beginning of an in-depth analysis on the dynamic nature of the collaboration of local actors who continuously adapt their approaches in response to national developments. This highlights the cyclical nature of collaborative governance, where local actors constantly reshape their collaborative efforts to align with changing national contexts. In this way, this thesis demonstrates the need for a multi-level approach in analysing collaborative governance between local stakeholders.

This relates to the organisational relevance, my research hopefully provides the local stakeholders of Utrecht with a new insight in the way they currently collaborate in the public service delivery to undocumented people. In doing so, it tries to open up conversations about tensions that currently remain unaddressed and thereby hinder their collaboration, for instance in building deeper trust relationships. Following Scholten and Penninx (2016), collaborative governance applied to the immigration field is common, and understanding of the successes and challenges in Utrecht can benefit other local networks. This is particularly relevant for those regions where the implementation of the national LVV-program still needs to be done.

6.2 Limitations of research

The first limitation of the research is that due to limited time of my research, I was not able to conduct research on all the CSOs working with undocumented people in Utrecht. Interviewing all stakeholders would probably provide a more complete picture of their collaborative network.

With regards to similar reasons, I was unfortunately not able to analyse the way in which some of the CSOS work together with other state actors, such as IND and DT&V, in the context of the LVV, which will be further discussed in the next section.

In addition, during the course of my research I was an active part of Villa Vrede. Besides, despite the fact that I conducted my research separately from Villa Vrede, they were my access to the network. For instance, in most cases I accompanied the coordinators to the consultations.

Through the connections of the coordinators of Villa Vrede I could easily get in touch with my informants. It probably also made them willing to make time for an interview as well as share personal matters with me. At the same time, this connection to Villa Vrede could potentially have influenced the way the other stakeholders behaved towards mee, as reflected upon in my positionality (see 3.4.3). They might have not been open about negative aspects concerning their collaboration with Villa Vrede, because they knew of my close relation to the coordinators.

Lastly, due to time constraints I was only able to conduct long-term ethnographic fieldwork at Villa Vrede. Conducting more participant observation at the other local stakeholders too, could have deepened my understanding of their organisational practices, vision and interests. It also could have facilitated the establishment of stronger rapport between the informants and me, enabling more profound insights during the interviews I conducted.

6.3 Recommendations for future research

As mentioned in the previous section, research on the way in which the CSOs, municipality and other state actors, such as IND and DT&V, collaborate in the context of the LVV can be highly interesting. The starting conditions of this collaboration are completely different from those in my case-study, since the parties often do not have a successful pre-history of collaboration. Besides, their roles, visions and interests conflict more than is the case with the local stakeholders central in my analysis. An analysis of the LSO (local partnership consultation) in which the IND and DT&V, municipality and CSOs try to find common ground on individual cases, could provide valuable data for understanding the decision-making process of local stakeholders.

In addition, in line with the final evaluation of the LVV (Mackens et al., 2022), the findings have revealed how the local stakeholders made their own interpretation of the implementation of the LVV-pilot in Utrecht. It could be valuable to conduct other case-studies to analyse how these stakeholders implemented the national conditions into their local context. In doing so, extra attention should be paid to evaluation in collaborative governance, since it proves to be a challenge for multi-actor collaboration.

Generally, as argued in chapter 5 and in the scholarly relevance of this thesis, I recommend a multi-level approach in analysing collaborative governance between local stakeholders. This case-study demonstrates the interconnectedness of collaboration between local stakeholders and other levels of governance, i.e. the national asylum policies. The LVV-program has just started, so it is interesting to see how the tensions between the different government levels will develop and which role local state and non-state actors play in this.

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Appendix 1 – Interview guide

General information

- What organisation do you work for?
- What is the work your organisation does?
- What are you responsible for/what are your (daily) tasks?
- What was your motivation for working for this organisation?

Problem definition
- What do you think is the biggest challenge concerning the situation of undocumented people (in Utrecht)?
- What do you think is the biggest challenge of working with the situation of undocumented people (in Utrecht)?
- According to your organisation, what is the biggest challenge? How does your organisation contribute to its solution?

Starting conditions
- How did the collaboration with other stakeholders start? How do you maintain it?
- Before/during the collaboration, was there any disparity in resources/power/knowledge among the different parties?
  - Did this affect the willingness of these parties to participate in the collaboration process?
- What were the expectations of the collaboration?
- What are the main goals of this collaboration for your organisation?
- Are the parties dependent on each other to achieve the goals of the collaboration?

Collaborative process
- How often are you in contact with the other actors? How is this communication perceived?
- Are there agreements made about collaboration between the organisations? Are these recorded?
- Is there a common understanding of the goals to be met and the problems to be solved? If so, are these recorded?
- Is there an actor central to the collaboration, for example, who takes the lead in the collaboration/facilitates it?
- Do you think collaboration between the stakeholders is important?
- Who is ultimately responsible/to whom do you report?
- Are the roles of the organisations clear?
- Do the parties involved show enough commitment to the collaboration?

Trust + conflict
- How are decisions made?
- Would you say there is trust between the stakeholders?

- ○ What is the cause of the improvement/lack of trust?
- Is there ever friction between the stakeholders? How do you manage this?

Evaluation
- Do you evaluate the collaboration? If so, how do you evaluate? About specific projects or the collaboration in general?
- Who is present at the evaluation (more internal or multi-actor)?

Resources
- Who provides the resources?
- Does this affect collaboration between stakeholders?

(For CSO)
- What do you see as the role of the municipality?
- How do you work with the municipality

(For municipality)
- What do you see as your role as municipality?
- To what extent do you experience space to make your own interpretation or of the national policies or to possibly disregard them?

LVV
- How does your organisation relate to the LVV/ What does the LVV program mean for your organisation?
- Does the LVV affect collaboration between the stakeholders? If yes, can you paint a picture of before/after LVV implementation.
- Does the national LVV policy match what you experience in the Utrecht context/practice?
- LVV also has critiques, discuss:
  - ○ One of the noises/criticisms emerging now focuses on the criteria used within the LVV. What is your view on this?
  - ○ Similarly, there is criticism of the focus on 'return' within the LVV, what is your view?

Closing
- What factors do you think play an important role in improving the overall quality of collaboration?
- Are there parties/knowledge/skills that are missing to reach your "full potential" as a network?
- Is there a question you expected, but I didn't discuss in this interview?

- Is there anything you consider important to address or something you would like to take back?

Appendix 2 - Compact version of code boom

Theme	Subcodes	Exemplary quotes
Starting conditions	- Origination of organisation - Origination of collaboration - Problem definition - Incentives to collaborate with other stakeholders - Interdependence of CSOs and municipality	*"Many organisations that were formed later have a link with [name organisation] in one way or another, so a lot stems from or was started by people who worked here"* *"We were originated to meet the demand of undocumented people for a safe place during the day"* *"As organisations we regularly have to deal with complex issues, so being able to discuss this with each other is very valuable."*
Communication	- HvO - National coalition - Board consultation - Management consultation - LSO - Individual contact - Guidelines for communication	*"Well I'm taking part in it because there's a lot of information being shared that can be interesting."* *"The board consultations originated (...) To take a joint position towards the municipality."* *"Yes, via email and phone. We know where to find each other."*
Collaborative process	- Themes around which collaboration - Commitment to collaboration - Lack of evaluation between CSOs - Evaluation with the municipality - Decision-making process - Resources	*"Yes, I'm wondering if we've ever done that at all. More with the municipality about the process, so to speak. But really together [with CSOs] on 'hey how do we think it's going and everyone's role in it', I wouldn't actually know when we did that."* *"Then someone says yes, then I won't put my name on it. Then we just have to accept that that's the case."*
Collaborative relationships	Good trust between stakeholders	*"Yes, that does mean that there are sometimes different ideas about how*

	● Importance of face-to-face contact ● Frictions on policy level ● Frictions on case level	*far guidance should go and that we may be a bit more lenient about this than, for example, what is going on at NGOs. And sometimes you have very heated conversations about that."* *"Each organisation has its own vision (...) about what is minimally acceptable about what should be included in the LVV."* *"Relationships are built by experiencing things with each other, not by emailing each other."*
LVV	● Meaning of LVV for organisation ● Collaborative agreements ● Influence of LVV on network ● LVV Terms ● Focus on return ● LVV criteria ● Influence of national government ● Municipality mediating position	*"I think we have quite broad criteria, because there are also quite a few exceptions."* *"There just isn't that much attention for things outside the LVV, because the other organisations don't get money for that. So they only focus on the LVV"* *"Ultimately, there is very little support from the government to help people. You certainly don't have to expect anything to change in the long term, either."*