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Paper title: Food as a catalyst: how framing of food affects integrated food policies for sustainability transformation in small and medium sized cities

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Abstract:

Disintegration and fragmentation of policies across sectors, actors and levels is not new to environmental and sustainability efforts. Concepts like policy integration, coordination or coherence attempt to overcome this challenge and yet, only few fields and cases can be identified where integrated policies could be implemented successfully.

For food policy, this challenge appears even bigger as food – though affecting almost all fields of daily life and at the same time making up a major part of the ecological footprint – is rarely explicitly on the agenda of policy making. The transdisciplinary research project KERNiG takes up this challenge and applies it to urban sustainability transformation of small and medium sized cities in Germany. Together with two pilot communities in Southern Germany we investigate how food can catalyze urban sustainability transformation. Among others, one focus lies on drivers and barriers for policy integration in urban food policy. The paper presents first results from a frame analysis and a qualitative network analysis of urban food policy actors in the two pilot communities. Based on a set of qualitative interviews with community administration, civil society and policy and decision makers we investigate different frames connected to urban food activities. The paper presents analytical and methodological approaches which are useful to deconstruct food as a politicized issue. We shed light on shared and controversial issues in the discussion about local food systems and based on this analysis identify supporting and hindering factors for realizing integrated food policies. Based on the results we also reflect on the two methods and analytical perspectives applied and tie the results back to the debate on policy integration in the context of sustainability transformation.