

„You‘ll never make it without actors“ – Food system transformation in smaller cities in southern Germany

Participatory Governance of Transformations at the City Level 23.03.2019

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg

Jana Baldy
University of Freiburg
Chair of Forest and Environmental Policy

KERNiG

Kommunale Ernährungssysteme als
Schlüssel zu einer umfassend-integrativen
Nachhaltigkeits-Governance



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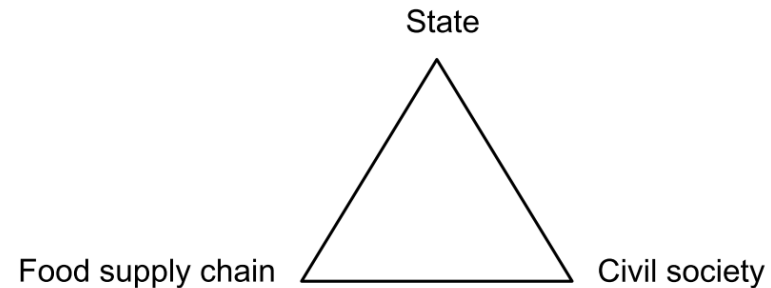
Sustainable food and Big Transformation



- „Sustainable food as part of the big transformation“ (Engler, Stengel, & Bommert, 2016)
- The greenhouse gas footprint of food is larger than that of mobility (WBGU 2011, p. 153)
- Solution: technical innovations & changing of eating habits (WBGU 2011, p. 154)



- “Nutrition as contested space between state, food supply chain and civil society” (Lang, 2005)
- Increasing importance of participation concerning local food system transformation
 - Food democracy
 - Food citizenship
 - Food policy councils
 - ...



Participatory governance



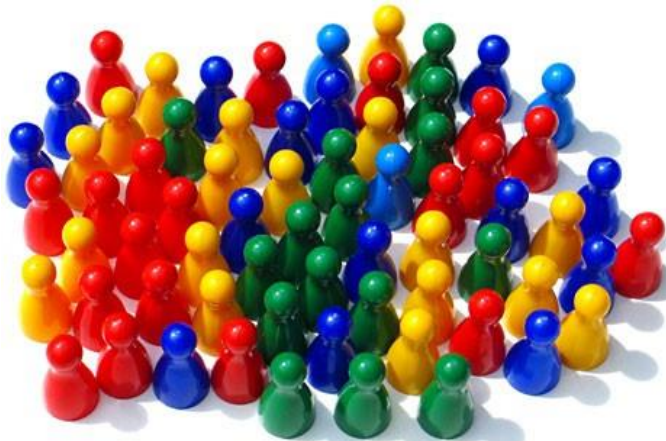
- Limited budgetary resources in municipalities
- ↓
- Restriction of local self-government
- ↓
- Increase in privatisations
- ↓
- Danger of gradual de-democratization
- ↓
- Extension of participatory elements
- ↓
- Idea: more participation leads to more democracy and legitimacy of political decisions

- Collaborative research project with seven project partners
- Two cities in southern Germany with approximately 20,000 inhabitants
 - A-town: rural area, dairy farming
 - B-town: near a larger city, special crops

Research aims



- Understand the role of different groups of local actors
- Understand their construction of relationship



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- Qualitative methods:
 - 51 semi-structured Interviews
 - 12 participant observations



Overview of the participation processes



- 2 Civil dialogues
- 2 Expert dialogues
- Combination of civil and expert dialogue
- 2 Meetings of the steering group
- Meeting of the city council



Results: Evaluation of participation processes



- Deliberative vs. structured participation processes

“We were quickly involved in such a process, you have to write something down, make proposals, vote [...] and so on. And that somehow pushed me open from the beginning” (Interviewee B5)

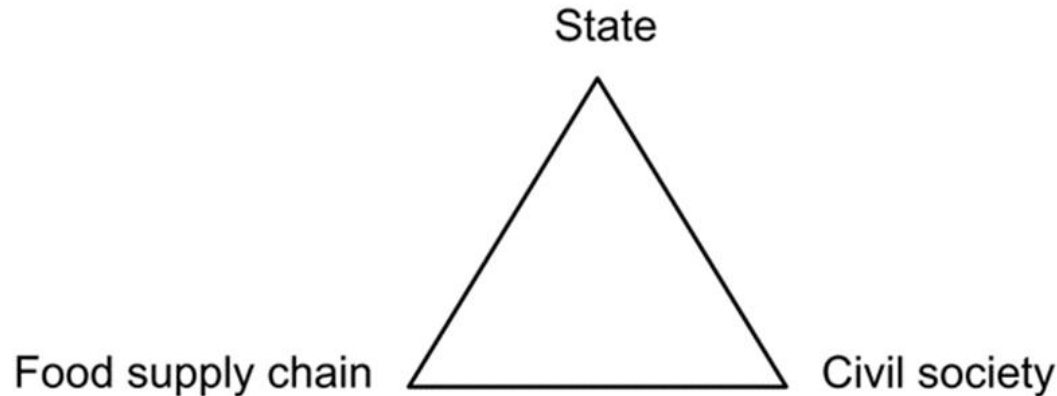
- Limited efficacy of the participation processes

“I have already accompanied many such projects. And apart from a lot of foam there is usually nothing left” (Interviewee B9)

Results: Different orientations



take on the argumentation of economic actors
focusing on the well-being at the city level



often focus on their existential
security

focus on environmental issues and
advocate growth-critical positions

Results: Role models and lighthouses



„You'll never make it without actors“ (Interviewee A24)

Municipalities as role models

„The city administration has an exemplary effect, I have to say“
(Interviewee A2)



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Lighthouse projects

„And I think that's important as a lighthouse. To see that a market leader goes a different way. Great“
(Interviewee B6)



Museum Wien

Conclusion



- Smaller cities in southern Germany are just starting to deal with local food policy
- Roles models and lighthouse projects are the first step to move beyond „the citizen’s role as voter or watchdog“ (Fischer, 2012)
- The participation processes, initiated by the administration and city council open a space for different groups of actors to get to know each other and to reorganise relationships



References



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