

**Food Policy Councils:
Levers for Sustainability Transformation?**

Dissertation

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Short summary

This cumulative dissertation investigates food policy councils (FPCs) as potential levers for sustainability transformation. The four research papers included here on this recent phenomenon in Germany present new insights regarding the process of FPCs' emergence (*Emergence paper*), the legal conditions which affect their establishment (*Legal paper*), the different roles of FPCs in policy-making processes (*Roles paper*) and FPCs' potential to democratise the food system (*Food democracy paper*).

Drawing on and contextualizing the results of the four individual studies, the framework paper uses the leverage points concept originally developed by Meadows (1999) and adopted by Abson et al. (2016) as a lens to discuss FPCs' potential as levers for sustainability transformation. This conceptual background includes three so-called realms of leverage, which are considered to be of particular importance in transformational, solution-oriented sustainability science: first, the change, stability and learning in institutions (re-structure), second, the interactions between people and nature (re-connect) and third, the ways in which knowledge is produced and used (re-think). Framing the findings of the four research papers in terms of these three realms, the framework paper shows that FPCs could serve as cross realm levers, i.e. as interventions that simultaneously address knowledge production, institutional reform and human-nature interactions.

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I. Framework paper

1. Introduction

1.1 The concept of leverage points for sustainability transformation

This cumulative dissertation is embedded in the research project “Leverage Points for Sustainability Transformation: Institutions, People and Knowledge”, hosted by Leuphana University of Lüneburg between 2015 and 2019. This project draws on Donella Meadows’ conceptualisation of leverage points as places to intervene in a system (1999). Leverage points are regarded as places within a complex system where a small shift in one thing can lead to big changes in the system as a whole (Meadows, 1999, p. 1). Meadows suggests a list of twelve leverage points in increasing order of effectiveness from constants, parameters, numbers (subsidies, taxes, standards) to the power to transcend paradigms – not as a simple recipe for finding leverage points but “[...] as an invitation to think more broadly about the many ways there might be to get systems to change” (1999, p. 3). This concept can therefore inspire research that seeks to investigate avenues for changes in complex systems.

In light of the largely unsustainable trajectories humanity continues to pursue, there is an urgent need to identify leverage points for sustainability transformation. Despite increasing efforts to focus on sustainability issues in both science and politics, we can still observe an ongoing failure to move towards sustainability (Fischer et al., 2007). As many sustainability interventions to date have addressed highly tangible but essentially weak leverage points, there is a need to focus on perhaps less obvious but potentially more powerful areas of intervention (Abson et al., 2016, p. 30). This requires an orientation of sustainability science on the systems thinking notion of deep leverage points that might induce transformational change. For this purpose, Abson et al. aggregated Meadows’ list of twelve leverage points into four types of system characteristics, within which specific interventions (levers) in a given system – from shallow to deep – may be made: parameters, feedbacks, design and intent (Figure 1). Interventions targeting shallower leverage points, e.g. policy measures focused on adjusting parameters, can generate beneficial outcomes in terms of sustainability, but they are unlikely to lead to more fundamental system transformations when neglecting the intent and design components (Abson et al., 2016, pp. 31–33).

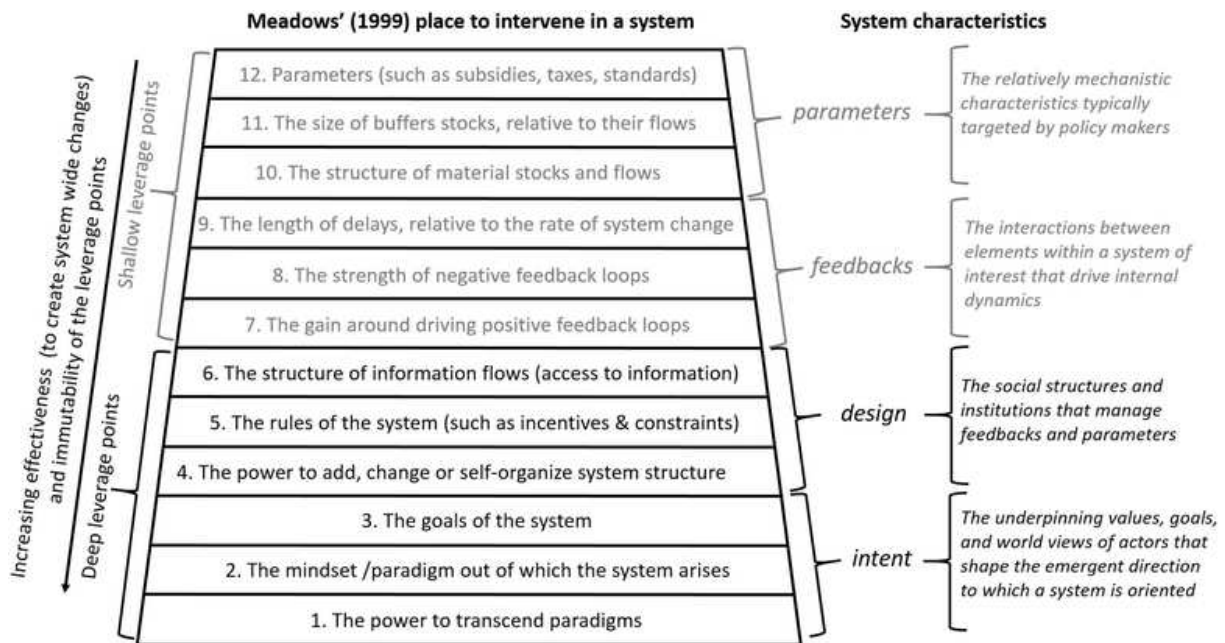


Figure 1. From twelve leverage points to four system characteristics

Source: Abson et al. 2016, p. 32.

When applying a leverage points perspective in transformational, solution-oriented sustainability science, three realms of leverage might be of particular importance: First, the change, stability and learning in institutions (re-structure), second, the interactions between people and nature (re-connect) and third, the ways in which knowledge is produced and used (re-think) (Abson et al., 2016, pp. 34–36). In this context, it is important to study particular levers, i.e. specific measures by which influence can be applied to a given leverage point. To understand a lever’s potential for inducing systemic change, it is also necessary to investigate the interactions between leverage points (Abson et al., 2016, p. 36). For this dissertation, the three realms of leverage (re-think, re-structure and re-connect), elaborated in more detail in the following, provide the basic framework for studying a specific lever, in this case the phenomenon of food policy councils (FPCs).

First, re-thinking how knowledge is produced and used is considered to be one realm of deep leverage because it is broadly acknowledged that the perception and the production of knowledge strongly influence human action, and policy development in particular (Abson et al., 2016, p. 35). Considering the strong influence of path dependency on human action, a re-thinking of how knowledge is perceived and produced might elucidate new insights relevant for sustainability transformations. Such a re-thinking requires an understanding of knowledge

flows and the identification of gaps in and strengths of the available knowledge used to inform decision-making (Abson et al., 2016, p. 35).

Considering the complexity of the sustainability challenges humanity is currently facing, different types of knowledge (practical, experiential and scientific) have to be considered and integrated. In this context, the involvement of practitioners and civil society stakeholders plays a crucial role (Abson et al., 2016, pp. 35–36). This is based on the assumption that understanding complex systems and finding solutions to complex problems requires collaboration between research disciplines and stakeholders at all levels and, more generally, an acknowledgment of the intersection and complementarity of lay and expert knowledge (Prell et al., 2007).

Second, institutional change is assumed as one realm of deep leverage because institutions, including formal (laws, regulations, plans and contracts) and informal ones (customs, taboos and codes of conduct) guide and constrain human action (Abson et al., 2016, p. 34). In light of the tendency of institutions to be self-reinforcing and resistant to change, it is necessary to understand the institutional dynamics when addressing institutional change for sustainability transformations (Abson et al., 2016, p. 34). Different types of institutional change have been identified in the literature. In order to account for the complexity of institutional change, Streeck and Thelen suggest distinguishing between processes of change (abrupt or incremental) and results of change (continuity or discontinuity). Abrupt processes of change might result in survival and return (continuity) or breakdown and replacement (discontinuity) of institutions. By contrast, incremental processes of change might lead to reproduction by adaptation (continuity) or gradual transformation (discontinuity) (Streeck & Thelen, 2005, pp. 8–9).

In terms of sustainability transformations induced by re-structuring the institutional landscape, two approaches seem promising when investigating specific levers: the change or removal of existing institutions (Newig et al., 2019) or the evolution or strengthening of institutions, which seem better suited for fostering sustainability (e.g. Beddoe et al., 2009; Dovers, 2001). This dissertation focuses on the latter approach by investigating the evolution of a recently emerging phenomenon, i.e. FPCs. The results of this study might also reveal, however, some insights on how this new institutional phenomenon might induce institutional change in the broader institutional landscape of food-related policymaking.

Third, re-connecting people with nature is considered one realm of deep leverage, because human action is strongly influenced by how people perceive, interact and value the natural

world. Considering that the functioning of a system is influenced by the degree to which people acknowledge their reliance on natural resources, a disconnection from nature both at an individual and societal level is problematic (Abson et al., 2016, p. 34). As scholars have identified this disconnection as one contributing factor to the destruction of the planet (Nisbet et al., 2009), there is a need to re-connect human development and progress to the capacity of the biosphere (Folke et al., 2011, p. 719). Thus, re-connecting people with nature might be crucial in terms of societal transformations towards sustainability.

To identify possible ways to re-connect people with nature, Ives et al. suggest to distinguish between five different types of connectedness along a spectrum from people's inner to outer worlds: philosophical, emotional, cognitive, experiential and material connection (2018, p. 1390). For example, materially re-connecting with nature, e.g. with local ecosystems, is assumed to decouple human economic activity from degradation elsewhere because impacts on the local environment will be recognised more easily than global teleconnections. Looking at the five types of nature connection from a social-ecological systems perspective, one can see that they are likely to interact with each other in reality, and that interventions in relation to the different types may be more or less effective in fostering sustainability. In terms of leverage points, Ives et al. assume that addressing inner connections that relate to the design or the goal of a system (e.g. emotional connections) has a stronger leverage potential than only addressing outer connections related to parameters and feedbacks (e.g. material connections). Addressing the latter might play a supporting role but these connections are unlikely to bring about systemic change only by themselves (Ives et al., 2018, pp. 1393–1394).

1.2 The phenomenon of food policy councils

In this chapter, the phenomenon of FPCs, which was studied in the research papers and which will be subsequently analysed in terms of its potential to serve as a lever for sustainability transformation, will be introduced.

FPCs are councils which include different food system stakeholders and which aim to influence food-related policies. In contrast to ad hoc advisory boards or coalitions, these institutions work on food issues on an ongoing basis. In their activities, they address weaknesses resulting from the globalised conventional food system (J. Clark et al., 2017, p. 135). Therefore, they are considered “as innovative and much-needed mechanisms to identify and advocate for food system change” (Broad Leib, 2012, p. 1).

The first FPCs were established in the early 1980s in the United States, followed by similar initiatives in Canada in the early 1990s (Mooney et al., 2014, pp. 236–237). Since then, their number has continued to rise: The latest FPC Report published by the John Hopkins Center for a Livable Future showed that the number especially increased over the last decade (up to 341 active councils) (Bassarab, Santo, et al., 2019, p. 3). FPCs exist at different governance levels and vary in terms of their relation to government. Based on an extensive literature review and interviews with people involved in FPCs in North America, Harper et al. identified four general functions of these institutions: to serve as a forum for discussing food issues, to foster coordination between sectors in the food system, to evaluate and influence food policy, and to launch or support programmes and services that address local needs (Harper et al., 2009, p. 19). For a comprehensive review of the functions associated with FPCs and the different organizational types see Sieveking et al. (n.d., pp. 3–6).

Before the formation of the first FPCs in the 1980s, organizations called “nutrition councils” were already being formed in the 1960s at state level in order to initiate programmes focusing on citizens’ supply with nutritious food. Subsequently, numerous local food organizations and projects emerged throughout the United States. These mostly non-profit organizations worked independently on issues such as community gardening or emergency food. The desire to coordinate existing activities, to identify common challenges and to have a means for engaging with governments catalysed the formation of the first food policy councils in the 1980s (Chen et al., 2015, p. 32). The first and most prominent example is the formation of the FPC Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1982, which was established in response to an anti-hunger initiative. At that time, two studies revealed that there was limited access to nutritionally adequate food in the city. Both the concern for food access and hunger and the discerned lack of coordination of food system planning lead to the formation of the council. The council’s activities over the last decades included e.g. advocacy for school nutrition supervision and engagement for better access to food via public transit (Harper et al., 2009, pp. 16–17). The Knoxville FPC strongly influenced the formation of other early FPCs, such as the Toronto FPC (Welsh & MacRae, 1998, p. 238).

Most of the early FPCs emerged from informal coalitions of activists in hunger prevention, sustainable agriculture, and community development (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999, p. 219). After in their beginning during the 1990s initially focusing on social aspects such as access to food, FPCs nowadays usually have a broader approach from the very beginning. They comprise of various representatives from the different segments of the food-system community (e.g.

members of community organizations, civil society organizations, the retail sector and nutritional education), who come together in order to discuss, coordinate and influence local food policy (Stierand, 2014, p. 169).

While since the 1980s, more and more FPCs in North America and Canada were being established at different governance levels, the first FPCs in Europe only emerged in the last decade; primarily in Great Britain (e.g. Bristol and Cork). More recently, there have been attempts to establish FPCs in other European countries, for example in the Netherlands, in Austria, or in Italy (Forno & Maurano, 2016). In Germany, the first two FPCs were only formed in 2016 in the cities of Cologne and Berlin. Since then, about a dozen more FPCs have been created in Germany and about 30 initiatives are planning to form FPCs in the near future.

1.3 Research aim and questions

This cumulative dissertation investigates if and to what extent FPCs can potentially serve as levers for sustainability transformation. Building on Abson et al.'s (2016) understanding of levers as specific measures by which influence can be applied to specific leverage points (see Chapter 1.1), the overall research aim is to investigate the leverage potential of FPCs. For this purpose, the emerging institutional phenomenon of FPCs was studied from different disciplinary angles with a mixed-methods approach to allow for different perspectives on the phenomenon (for an overview see Table 1). It is hoped that studying different facets of FPCs will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the leverage potential of FPCs.

To provide an initial answer to the overarching research question of *how FPCs can serve as levers for sustainability transformation*, this dissertation encompasses three research questions (see below) that were answered independently in the research papers (see overview in Annex 1) before synthesizing the results in this framework paper. Investigating the leverage potential of FPCs firstly requires basic research to understand this recent phenomenon.

1. How do FPCs emerge?

Given the novelty of the FPC-phenomenon in Europe, and in Germany in particular, this dissertation aims to provide insights into the emergence of FPCs, e.g. as regards factors influencing the emergence of FPCs and the motivations of people involved in their establishing. Answering the above-mentioned research question requires empirical research, because no research has yet been done on the emergence of FPCs in Germany. As particularly suited for new research fields, a case study approach was chosen, including participant observation,

interviews and document analysis (see Chapter 2.1 for more details). Answering the first research question builds on the disciplinary perspective of sociology.

2. *What role can FPCs play in policy-making processes?*

In light of the goal of FPC initiatives to influence food policy (see Chapter 1.2), it is important to investigate how this can take place in food-related decision-making processes. In answer to the second research question, the existing if scant literature on FPCs was reviewed. This literature is for the most part on the North American and Canadian context, in which FPCs have already been in existence for several decades (see Chapter 1.2). Although influencing policymaking is at the core of FPCs’ mission, the different functions FPCs might have in policy-making processes have so far not been elaborated. Answering this research question draws on the disciplinary perspective of political science.

3. *What are the current legal framework conditions for FPCs in Germany and how do they influence their establishment?*

For the emergence of a new institutional phenomenon, the political and legal context in a given country plays a crucial role. It is therefore essential to understand the framework conditions in Germany that shape the establishment of FPCs. To this end, the current legal framework conditions were analysed with regard to how they support or hamper the emergence of FPCs at different governance levels. Answering research question number three draws on the disciplinary perspective of law.

Table 1. Overview of research questions, disciplinary perspectives and methods applied

| Research question | Disciplinary perspective | Methods applied |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| <i>1. How do FPCs emerge?</i> | Sociology | Participant observation, interviews, document analysis |
| <i>2. What role can FPCs play in policy-making processes?</i> | Political science | Literature review, typology development |
| <i>3. What are the current legal framework conditions for FPCs in Germany and how do they influence their establishment?</i> | Law | Legal analysis |

Through such an interdisciplinary approach, this dissertation aims to provide a holistic understanding of a recent phenomenon and contributes both empirically and conceptually to the scientific debate. Interdisciplinary approaches are particularly suited for research in the context of sustainability, as it is broadly recognised that research in this field requires collaboration between disciplines and across scholarship, policy and practise (Haider et al., 2018, p. 2). Although it still remains unclear how far the field has advanced as a scientific discipline, since the late 1980s its growth has been significant (Bettencourt & Kaur, 2011). Focussing on the dynamic interactions between nature and society, the research is problem-driven, aiming at “creating and applying knowledge in support of decision making for sustainable development” (W. Clark & Dickson, 2003, p. 8059). Having contributed to a better understanding of problems related to sustainability, the impact of the generated knowledge on transitions towards sustainability in real-world context remains a critical question (Miller et al., 2014). To fulfil the promise that science has an impact on real-world challenges, sustainability scientists need to engage with the world around them and to reflect on their scientific process (Haider et al., 2018, p. 2).

Against this background, this dissertation project first aims to take part in academic debates on the topic by publishing papers in a broad spectrum of scientific journals, reflecting the multiple disciplinary perspectives applied. Second, as a sustainability scientist, I also try to engage with my field of study and allow for contact points between scholarship, policy and practise. In this particular case, engaging beyond academia included a number of outreach activities outlined in 2.3.

2. Investigating the emergence of food policy councils in Germany

2.1 A qualitative case study on the food policy council in the city of Oldenburg

Given the recent emergence of FPCs in Germany, empirical research on them in their early stages constitutes basic research on a new institutional phenomenon. In this chapter, the empirical research on their emergence in Germany, which was conducted as part of this dissertation, will be presented in detail. The following subchapters on the qualitative case study on the FPC in the city of Oldenburg cover the research approach and case selection, data collection and analysis, as well as a brief summary on my role in the field. Afterwards, a short description of the developments during the study period will follow to contextualise the case. In the last subchapter, there will be given an overview of the outreach activities featuring or related to my work.

2.1.1 Research approach and case selection

In order to study the new and under researched phenomenon of FPCs in the German context, a case study approach was chosen. A case study is “a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534). This definition captures several aspects important to my research. First, it is a research strategy, implying that conducting a case study was a general decision on the direction of my research. At the same time, however, this approach both allowed and forced me to develop a coherent research design. Second, case study research rather concerns understanding than explaining. As a social scientist, this corresponds to the epistemic stance of my research. Third, it mainly constitutes studying the present, and not the past or the future. This was in line with my interest in studying a new institutional phenomenon and in close proximity to what is currently emerging in the field. Fourth, case study research is about studying dynamics and fifth single and not multiple settings. The latter aspect implies the possibility of gaining an in-depth understanding of one specific case in contrast to studying multiple settings simultaneously. According to Eisenhardt, theories developed from case study research are likely to have important strengths such as novelty, testability and empirical validity, since the theories are grounded in the empirical data. Case study research is therefore particularly well-suited to new research areas (Eisenhardt, 1989, pp. 548–549).

The selection of the case is of specific importance in case study research. In contrast to other forms of research, cases are chosen for theoretical, and not for statistical reasons (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 537). The Oldenburg FPC serves as an exemplary case of the emerging phenomenon

of FPCs in Germany. The main selection criterion for this case was timing. When the study was designed, the first two FPCs in Germany were just about to be established in Cologne and Berlin (March/April 2016). Scoping activities revealed that groups in several German cities were planning to form councils in the near future. The activities in Oldenburg, with an initial workshop organised at that time (April 2016), promised the opportunity to pursue my particular interest in studying the emergence of an FPC from its beginning. Another initial criterion for selecting the Oldenburg case was the geographical proximity of the City of Oldenburg to the County of Oldenburg, where the Leverage Points project was preparing a large transdisciplinary case study while data for this study was already being collected.

The guiding question for the case study corresponds with the first research question of this cumulative dissertation (see Chapter 1.3): *How do FPCs emerge?* As the research focus was on the process of emergence, the aim was to identify factors, which influence the emergence of FPCs (drivers, barriers, opportunities) and to generate a process theory grounded in my empirical data. I was furthermore interested in investigating what motivates the people involved in the establishment of an FPC and which organizational structure will be preferred by the initiators and for which reason. The latter research interest is closely linked to research questions two and three of this dissertation (Chapter 1.3) on FPCs' potential role in policy-making processes and on legal framework conditions shaping the institutionalisation process.

2.1.2 Data collection and analysis

During a study period of two years (April 2016 until April 2018), several methods were combined to collect data for an in-depth understanding of the emergence of the Oldenburg FPC: participant observation, stakeholder interviews and document analysis.¹

The purpose of observational data is to develop an in-depth and detailed description of the setting, the activities taking place, the people participating in the activities, and the meanings attributed to what is being observed (Patton, 2015, p. 332). Participant observation not only allows for direct and personal contact with the field, it also enables the researcher to understand and capture the context within which people interact. Moreover, the researcher has the opportunity to see things that may routinely escape the awareness of people in the setting and are therefore difficult to find out in interviews (Patton, 2015, pp. 332–333). As a participant

¹ The following detailed descriptions of the methods applied are in a similar form presented in the second peer-reviewed article of this dissertation, which focuses on the findings of the case study (*Emergence paper*).

observer, I accompanied the process of the formation of the council during the whole study period, including participation in public events but also in regular internal meetings (see overview in Annex 2). The documents collected include handwritten notes, transcripts and reflection protocols.

Qualitative interviewing is a means for researchers to examine things they cannot observe directly, for example thoughts or feelings (Patton, 2015, p. 426). Semi-structured interviews more specifically, enable researchers to learn more about stakeholder perceptions and to gain relevant background information. In addition, this method allows the researcher to follow up on patterns that come up during the observations. During the study period, nine interviews with members of the initiative were conducted (see overview in Annex 3), with one taking place shortly after the initial workshop and eight between the pre-formation and the official formation of the council. All interviews were conducted in German² and were recorded and transcribed following the guidelines proposed by Kuckartz (2014, p. 136).

In addition to the primary data (observations and interviews), secondary data on the case was collected for document analysis. The data set consists of documents produced during the study period. It includes a wide range of text documents (for example meeting protocols, press releases, homepage articles) complemented by a documentary film and sketch notes resulting from the documentation of the initial public workshop.

Data analysis followed the grounded theory approach initially developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The key idea of staying open to what emerges in the field was reflected in decisions about when to collect additional data. In addition to the field stays, during the entire study period, data on the case was also collected via phone calls and receiving updates from various internal mailing lists. The interpretation process began with data transcription and, from the very beginning, was conducted in part with a group of peers in order to be aware of different readings. Later on, with the data set becoming more complex, data analysis was also facilitated by the use of the software programme Atlas.ti. The analysis was guided by the basic assumption of the grounded theory methodology of persistent interaction between the researcher and the data: “The iterative process of moving back and forth between empirical data and emerging

² All data presented in this framework paper and in the research papers was translated from German into English by myself.

analysis makes the collected data progressively more focused and the analysis successively more theoretical” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 1).

Some of the initial findings were presented during a half-day workshop in April 2018 with the people I had interviewed beforehand. The purpose of this workshop was twofold: For me, it allowed direct feedback on my preliminary findings from the people involved. For them, it provided transparency and an opportunity to reflect on the process of forming the council two years after they had started their activities and half a year after they had established the council.

In addition to the comprehensive study of the case of the Oldenburg FPC, I participated in the first and the second networking congress of recently created FPCs and initiatives in German-speaking countries in 2017 and 2018. This enabled me to get in touch with people involved in comparable activities elsewhere and to collect additional data for triangulation in addition to documents related to other German FPC initiatives available online.

To improve the quality of data collection and analysis, I adopted several of the strategies proposed by Maxwell for increasing the credibility of a qualitative study (1998, pp. 243–245). First, this case study was in line with Maxwell’s strategy of intensive, long-term involvement due to the long period of time spent in the field as a participant observer. Second, rich data was generated by long-term involvement and by using different methods, which help to elucidate different aspects. Third, the strategy of triangulation, which requires collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings using a variety of methods, was addressed by the mixed-method approach of the study. The combination of observations, interviewing and document analysis allows for validating and cross-checking the findings via different sources of data (Patton, 2015, p. 390). Fourth, respondent validation was integral part of the study design (workshop with interviewees towards the end of the study period) and fifth, comparison with other cases was enabled through the participation in the networking congresses of recently created FPCs and initiatives in German-speaking countries.

2.1.3 My role in the field

As my methods applied in the qualitative case study required personal involvement on the one hand and many different skills and training on the other hand, I continuously reflected on my role as a participant observer, my role in conducting interviews and my relationship with the people involved in my study. These reflections were carefully documented in reflection protocols after the fieldtrips. Patton (2015, p. 394) identifies three distinct stages of fieldwork

related with different challenges: the entry stage, the routinisation of data-gathering period and the closing stage.

My entry to the field was a very exciting stage, as I did not apply participant observation beforehand. From the very beginning and before every participant observation, the people involved were informed about my research (overt observation). My degree of participation slightly varied over time, but in regard to Spradley's types of participation based on the degree of involvement (Spradley, 1980, p. 58) my overall participation was moderate. A gatekeeper facilitated my entry into the field. By coincidence, I knew the organiser of the first workshop in the context of the emergence of the Oldenburg FPC in April 2016, so it was very easy for me to receive relevant background information and to enter the field as a participant observer. One interesting experience in this stage was the irritation of several people regarding my role of only observing and not actively contributing to the emergence of the Oldenburg FPC.

The second stage, the routinisation of data-gathering period, lasted over a long period with different intensities of involvement in the field. I did most of my participant observations in 2017 (see overview in Annex 2) and most of my interviews between the pre-formation event in June 2017 and the official formation of the council in October 2017 (see overview in Annex 3). In this phase, I experienced the continuous challenge of finding a balance between being close to the field and keeping the distance. In the weeks before the official formation, I felt very familiar with the people involved and with the ongoing activities, so I was sometimes struggling taking a step back from what I experienced in the field. By contrast, in periods of longer absence from the field before or after this intensive data gathering around the formation of the council, I sometimes needed to put some effort in connecting with the people and in understanding their perceptions of the ongoing developments. I tried to be updated through internal mailing lists and occasional reports via phone to compensate for not being always able to be there in person.

During the half-day workshop in April 2018, which marked the end of the study period and during which I discussed my preliminary findings on the emergence of the Oldenburg FPC with the people I had interviewed beforehand, I also made my role as a participant observer a subject of discussion. One interesting aspect was that one member perceived me as being part of the emergence process because I was always there, from the very beginning of their activities. Another member stressed the positive impact of an external person continuously interested in the process despite perceived periods of frustration and failure. For me, exchanging with the people I had observed and interviewed beforehand about our relationship was a very exciting and fruitful exercise, which helped my reflecting my role and which seemed to strengthen trust

and transparency between me and the people involved in the emergence of the Oldenburg FPC. Although I have been in contact with some of the members and the initiative's organiser afterwards, I consider this exchange as a suitable way to end my period of intensive involvement in the field.

2.2 Contextualising the case: Developments during the study period

In March 2016, when I selected the case study on the emerging FPC in Oldenburg, no German FPC had been in existence but the first were about to be formed in the cities of Cologne (March 2016) and Berlin (April 2016). During the period of my case study on the emerging Oldenburg FPC between April 2016 and April 2018, next to the one in Oldenburg four more FPCs were established in German cities (Frankfurt, Dresden, Oldenburg and Kiel). Since then, even more FPCs were created, including also a first one at county level (Fürstfeldbruck), a first one at state level (Brandenburg), and some more at city level. Apart from the established FPCs, there is a huge number of initiatives planning to form in the near future. These dynamic developments regarding the emergence of FPCs in Germany became particularly apparent during the first and second networking congresses between FPC initiatives in German-speaking countries and regions. In 2017, over 100 people from more than 40 cities participated in the first congress in Essen. In 2018, even more participants (about 150) joined the second congress in Frankfurt in order to exchange experiences they gathered in the early stages of formation of FPCs, to learn from more experienced experts and to strengthen the networking activities.

2.3 Outreach activities

As outlined in Chapter 1.3, this sustainability science-oriented dissertation project aimed to involve individuals, groups and organizations beyond academia because it is widely acknowledged that the field does not only require collaboration between different scientific disciplines but also needs to close the gap between theory, practise and policy (Bettencourt & Kaur, 2011, p. 19540). To make sure that science has an impact and affects real-world challenges, sustainability scientists need to engage with the world around them (Haider et al., 2018, p. 2). In this context, transdisciplinary approaches are often suggested as appropriate means to simultaneously meet the requirements posed by real-world problems and sustainability science as a transformational scientific field (D. J. Lang et al., 2012, p. 25). Prior to this dissertation, I was involved in a research project (Sieveking et al., 2017) which followed

the ideal-typical transdisciplinary research process suggested by Lang et al. (2012). This ideal-typical process consists of three phases. During the first phase, a problem is framed collaboratively and a research team is formed. In the second phase, solution-oriented and transferable knowledge is created through collaborative research. In the third phase, this co-created knowledge is (re-) integrated and applied (D. J. Lang et al., 2012, p. 28).

The research conducted in the context of this dissertation is not transdisciplinary in the sense that actors from outside academia were continuously integrated into the research process. Although therefore not transdisciplinary in terms of the general approach, I sought to acknowledge this important dimension and to link between scholarship, policy and practise over the course of the dissertation project whenever possible. This kind of commitment led to a wide range of outreach activities, for example my involvement in the transdisciplinary case studies of the Leverage Points project and interactions with practitioners involved in the establishment of FPCs, with policymakers, public officials and other stakeholders and with the media (for an overview of all activities see Annex 4). To increase the visibility of these activities featuring or related to my work, an area “Outreach” was created on the Leverage Points project’s homepage (<https://leveragepoints.org/materials/outreach/oldenburg-city-germany/>) and regularly updated, and some documents were also linked to the homepage of the Oldenburg FPC.

One initial criterion for selecting the FPC initiative in the City of Oldenburg as a case was its geographical proximity to the County of Oldenburg, where the Leverage Points project prepared to conduct the German transdisciplinary case study of the research project (see 2.1). Data collection for my case study on the Oldenburg initiative, however, had begun before the project’s activities in the District of Oldenburg started. I still participated in the project’s scoping trip in the district, where some actors became interested in my research on the emergence of the Oldenburg FPC. Later on, I participated in the workshop during which the guiding question for the transdisciplinary case study was jointly developed with stakeholders from the case study region. I also contributed a chapter on the emergence of the Oldenburg FPC to the edited collection on the transdisciplinary case study of the District of Oldenburg, which was published towards the end of the Leverage Points project. As to the project’s Romanian transdisciplinary case study, I joined the final workshop, where project results were shared with stakeholders in Transylvania.

During this dissertation project, there were also several attempts to establish an FPC in the city of Lüneburg. I did not play an active role in this process, but I have participated in different

activities in the last three years and shared my knowledge on the topic and the experiences from the case of the Oldenburg FPC. The activities in Lüneburg ranged from an initial round table in the context of a master's seminar, where the establishment of an FPC in the city was discussed with stakeholders for the first time in November 2016, to the kick-off event for an FPC as a part of the city's future council in May 2019, an event organised by the local adult education centre. Apart from the involvement in the activities in Lüneburg, I gave an introductory presentation on the emerging phenomenon of FPCs at the kick-off event of the Hannover FPC in March 2019. Beyond Lower Saxony, I documented the congresses of FPC initiatives in German-speaking countries in English blogs posted on the Leverage Points project's homepage. Several FPC activists used these articles to share the recent developments in Germany in their home countries (e.g. the US).

At different occasions, I met policymakers, public officials and other stakeholders working on food-related issues (e.g. at the first Round Table "Appreciation of Food" in Lower Saxony). Several times, I shared insights concerning the recent phenomenon of FPCs in Germany and thereby helped to spread the idea of local FPCs.

Moreover, given the novelty of the topic, I was contacted by media representatives several times. They were either specifically interested in FPCs as a new phenomenon in Germany (e.g. an interview for an article in the magazine *Perspective Daily*) or in the broader context of transforming the food system towards sustainability (e.g. an interview on the connection between food production and consumption and climate protection for *Hallo Niedersachsen*, a local news programme).

These outreach activities, which involved a diversity of individuals, groups and organizations contributed to raise awareness of the emerging phenomenon of FPCs in Germany beyond academia.

3. Food policy councils in terms of re-think, re-structure and re-connect

3.1 Re-thinking knowledge use and production in food-related policymaking

In this chapter, the results of the dissertation will be reviewed in terms of how FPCs might contribute to re-thinking knowledge use and production in food-related decision-making and beyond.

In the largely centralised, industrialised and globalised 21st century food system, knowledge about food production and consumption patterns is unequally distributed among stakeholders. This is per se not necessarily a problem but if it comes to understanding a complex system and to informing policy decisions for pushing the system towards more sustainable trajectories, it is crucial to build on the existing knowledge about these patterns. For consumers, for example, a lack of information about food (e.g. products and their origin) or even misinformation is a side effect of the capitalist food economy (Welsh & MacRae, 1998, p. 243). Despite evidence that consumers have concerns beyond price, quality and convenience, information on the social, environmental and health impacts of food production, processing and distribution is rarely provided (Welsh & MacRae, 1998, p. 245). Since the 20th century, the food sector has been concentrating rapidly, as shown by the high market power of a small number of food manufacturers, food retailers, agrochemical companies and in some sectors even food processors (T. Lang, 2003, pp. 558–561).

Against this background, food citizenship, i.e. the involvement of citizens in food-related decision-making processes (Sieveking, 2019, p. 48), can be seen as an attempt to make a move towards more active participation in shaping the current system from the bottom-up. In recent years, different types of food initiatives have emerged from civil society and gained significance next to market and state actors (Renting et al., 2012, p. 289). These initiatives reflect new relationships between, on the one hand, civil society and markets (active involvement in reconstructing alternative systems of food provisioning) and, on the other hand, between civil society and public institutions (civic engagement in shaping public opinion, culture, institutions and policies by communication, lobbying and political activism) (Renting et al., 2012, p. 300). These developments have also been discussed in the context of food democracy, a concept introduced by Tim Lang in the 1990s (T. Lang, 1998). Neva Hassanein further developed this concept in the 2000s, arguing for enhancing the role of citizens in the management and control of the food system. From a food democracy perspective, every member of an agro-food system should have equal and effective opportunities for participation in shaping that system (see Chapter 3.2) and also the *knowledge* about alternative ways of designing and operating that

system (Hassanein, 2003, p. 83). In a first attempt to operationalise the concept, she suggested becoming knowledgeable about food and the food system as one of five key dimensions of food democracy.

Analysing the emergence of one of the first FPCs in Germany from a food democracy perspective, an approach taken in the third peer-reviewed study in this dissertation (*Food democracy paper*), demonstrated that the initiative offered manifold opportunities for learning about the food system in its early stages. The FPC enabled knowledge exchange between different stakeholders and provided a number of learning opportunities as regards practising alternatives to the predominant way of food production and consumption in daily life (for more details see Sieveking, 2019, pp. 52–53). The second peer-reviewed study of this dissertation on the emergence of one of the first German FPCs (*Emergence paper*) revealed that one motivation for moving the process of establishing an FPC forward was the observation that many people in Oldenburg were uninformed about food issues (Sieveking, n.d., p. 4). The issues raised by the people did not only affect a lack of scientific knowledge (e.g. on environmental impacts of food production and consumption) but also an absence of experiential and practical knowledge (e.g. on how to prepare food). In the context of meals in schools and kindergardens, one member of the coordinating group emphasized for example that there might be a willingness to offer high quality food but not the relevant knowledge on how to do so (Interview 3, p. 4).

On a conceptual level, the comprehensive literature review of the functions attributed to FPCs which is part of the first peer-reviewed paper of this dissertation (*Roles paper*), also elucidated a number of linkages to knowledge use and production (see Table 2 for an overview of the identified functions and their means of influencing food policy). Framing the results on diverse functions and their related means of influencing food-related policy making in terms of re-think, four ways through which FPCs in their various functions can potentially shape knowledge production and use in food-related policymaking can be distinguished: First, providing information, either to inform policymakers (Advice) or to promote specific suggestions (Advocacy) is one way how FPCs shape knowledge production and use. Second, enabling information flows refers to different ways of exchanging knowledge through FPCs (Coordination, Deliberation). Third, involving stakeholders (Deliberation, Participation) from different segments of the food system and from diverse societal realms (e.g. from civil society, business, policymakers and public administration as in the Oldenburg case) implies the consideration of different types of knowledge. Fourth, raising awareness for the current system while implementing concrete alternatives (Action, Education) reflects calls for the role of

knowledge in terms of discovering how the system might be pushed towards more sustainable trajectories.

Table 2. Functions of food policy councils (literature review)

| Function | Authors | Means of influencing food policy (ranging from directly to indirectly) |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Advocacy</i> : to evaluate and influence food policy | Harper et al. 2009 | Providing suggestions |
| <i>Advice</i> : to inform policymakers | Burgan & Winne 2012 | Providing information and advice |
| <i>Coordination</i> : to foster coordination between sectors in the food system | Schiff 2008; Harper et al. 2009; Broad Leib 2012; Burgan & Winne 2012, | Enabling information flows |
| <i>Deliberation</i> : to serve as a forum for discussing food issues | Harper et al. 2009; Broad Leib 2012; Scherb et al. 2012 | Involving stakeholders and enabling information flows |
| <i>Participation</i> : to enable food democracy | Hassanein 2003; Burgan & Winne 2012 | Empowering and involving stakeholders |
| <i>Action</i> : to launch or support programmes and services that address local needs | Harper et al. 2009 | Promoting alternatives and demonstrating best practice examples |
| <i>Education</i> : to educate (internally and externally) | Schiff 2008; Burgan & Winne 2012; Scherb et al. 2012 | Raising awareness |

Source: Sieveking et al., p. 20 (under review).

In sum, in terms of re-structuring knowledge use and production in food-related policymaking, FPCs may potentially provide knowledge that otherwise would not be taken into consideration, enable information flows between stakeholders that otherwise would not take place, help integrating different types of knowledge by involving stakeholders whose expertise otherwise would not be considered and raise awareness for alternatives to the current system which otherwise would not be considered by people willing to shape the system towards more sustainable trajectories. At a more individual level, FPCs might furthermore shape knowledge production and use by providing diverse opportunities to learn about food and the food system as demonstrated in the *Emergence paper* and *Food democracy paper* on the case of the Oldenburg FPC.

3.2 Re-structuring institutions in the context of food policy

In this chapter, the results of the dissertation will be reviewed in terms of how FPCs might contribute to re-structuring the institutional landscape in the context of food policy.

Traditionally, food-related societal problems have been predominantly interpreted and dealt with through an agricultural perspective. The ongoing challenges related to food production and consumption (e.g. food price volatility, persisting food insecurity, repeated food safety crises, spreading obesity and negative impacts on climate change) demonstrate, however, the limitations of this approach by revealing the systemic complexity related to value chains, consumption, public health and environmental issues. The numerous challenges related to food have resulted in an increased recognition of the boundary-spanning nature of governing food systems and have led to a call for more sustainable food systems and for more holistic food governance (Candel & Pereira, 2017, p. 89). Despite an increasing interest in integrated food policy, there is no consensus on how this could be realized. Suggestions on how to achieve a more holistic food governance include the establishment of units specialized on food (e.g. ministries of food) or of subunits which are particularly dedicated to aligning policy efforts across existing bodies (e.g. ministries of agriculture and public health). A current example is the debate about whether the European Union's (EU) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) should be changed into a Common Food Policy or whether an integrated food policy at the EU level should be developed in addition to reforming the CAP. Because of the cross-scale nature of food, governance scholars argue in favour of more polycentric instead of more hierarchical approaches (Candel & Pereira, 2017, p. 91).

Advancing a more holistic food governance has been a challenge because it requires a shift within the dominant paradigm of trade liberalization and national economic competitiveness that informs national and international food policy and grants the large corporate players in the food system a favoured place at the policy-making tables (Barling et al., 2002). To move towards a more integrative food policy, Candel and Pereira recommend taking into account four more aspects in addition to choosing appropriate structures of integration: the construction of a resonating policy frame, the formulation of specific policy goals, the involvement of relevant sectors and levels and the design of a consistent set of soft and hard policy instruments (Candel & Pereira, 2017, pp. 90–91). They also emphasize (2017, p. 91) that sustained political leadership is needed to benefit from the recent politicisation of food in terms of pursuing integrated food policy.

The broader institutional landscape of food-related policymaking may, as discussed below, change due to the emergence of new institutional actors such as FPCs. The various findings of this dissertation on how FPCs come into being and which factors are crucial in the early stages of their development might provide a few clues why this might be the case.

From the in-depth case study of the emergence of one of the first German FPCs in Oldenburg, Germany (see Chapter 2), several elements were shown to play an important role during the emergence process: the motivations of the people involved, several public events that led to further institutionalisation, a core group of people pushing the process forward, the development of the institution's vision and self-understanding, several challenges and opportunities, different networks and a broad range of activities undertaken by the initiative. These elements are described in detail in the second peer-reviewed study of this dissertation (Sieveking, n.d., pp. 3–10).

A strong motivation for people involved in the formation process in Oldenburg appeared to be a general dissatisfaction with the status quo of food production and consumption. The topics that drove the individuals varied and covered the various aspects food relates to, e.g. health issues or environmental impact (Sieveking, n.d., p. 3). Because some felt that food was not regarded as a relevant topic on the local policy agenda, other individuals were also eager to establish an FPC. Already during the first workshop, in a so-called Political Soup Pot, during which the idea of creating an FPC was discussed in public for the first time, the participants envisioned ideas how the city could take action if food was recognised as a relevant policy field by local politicians (Sieveking, n.d., p. 4).

All the identified elements playing an important role during the emergence of the council were condensed in a process model on FPC emergence. This model is characterised by three temporal phases, each associated with specific main contributing factors and foci of activities (Table 3). From the initial idea to create a council to the establishment, three major factors turned out to be crucial for initiating, bringing forward and realizing council establishment: people (initiator(s) as well as a supporting group), infrastructure (as regards working processes and places) and external support (especially in terms of networks and funding). These factors are described and discussed in more detail in Sieveking (n.d., pp. 10–13).

Table 3. From initiative to institution: Process model on FPC emergence

| <i>Temporal dimension</i> | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <i>Main contributing factor</i> | People: Initiator(s) and a supporting group | Infrastructure: Working processes and spaces | External support: Networks and funding |
| <i>Focus of activities</i> | Initiating council formation | Keeping the process going | Preparing council formation |

Source: Sieveking (n.d.) p. 11.

The specific legal framework conditions affecting the evolution of FPCs in Germany were investigated in the fourth paper included in this dissertation (Sieveking & Schomerus, 2020). To date, most FPCs established in Germany were initiated by civil society, with a few exceptions where the process of establishing an FPC was initiated by policymakers/public officials in collaboration with different actors (County Fürstfeldbruck and the City of Bielefeld). The FPCs currently existing in Germany are not relevant under public law. The initiatives, however, which created a registered association (e.g. Berlin or Munich) or joined an already existing one as a project (e.g. Cologne or Oldenburg) are relevant under civil law (§ 52 BGB) as well as those initiatives, which are organised as more loosely organised civil society groups or platforms (§ 705 BGB).

A multi-level analysis of the legal framework conditions for the establishment of advisory councils revealed the particular status at the municipal level, where constitutions allow for the creation of long-term councils with non-elected representatives (Sieveking & Schomerus, 2020, pp. 683-684). At county levels or national level, these kinds of councils are not intended, although FPCs could potentially be realized through a law or a resolution adopted by the respective legislators (Sieveking & Schomerus, 2020, p. 684). One main conclusion of the analysis is that given the recent dynamic of FPCs being initiated from the bottom-up, policymakers and public officials should not impede existing activities through top-down legal regulations. Instead, they might support initiatives in their early stages by providing critical infrastructure (e.g. the provision of meeting spaces) or resources (e.g. funding for a staff coordinator), which are both relevant factors to keep engagement alive as shown in the second peer-reviewed study of this dissertation (*Emergence paper*). Moreover, in cities and

municipalities or regions without FPC initiatives, policymakers and public officials eager to increase stakeholder involvement in food-related policymaking could initiate the process of establishing an FPC at different governance levels. This might for example be relevant for mayors whose cities signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, a decision demonstrating commitment to the issue of food sustainability and the involvement of stakeholders (Halliday & Barling, 2018, pp. 179–180).

In addition to new insights concerning the emergence of FPCs, this dissertation contributes to a more nuanced understanding of different functions and roles of FPCs in policymaking processes. As part of the first peer-reviewed study (*Roles paper*), three theoretical perspectives (social movements, advisory councils, collaborative/participatory governance) were applied to get a better understanding of how FPCs try to influence food-related policymaking (Table 4). Although most FPCs aim to improve food policy, the identified functions point to the different ways FPCs seek to influence food policies (Sieveking et al., n.d., p. 13).

Table 4. Functions of FPCs in policymaking

| Theoretical Perspective | Functions of FPCs |
|--|--|
| Social movements | to advocate for food system change to lobby for specific policies, e.g. urban agriculture |
| Advisory councils | to inform policymakers to give policy recommendations |
| Participatory/collaborative governance | to legitimize/democratize food policy to participate in binding decision-making to include a broad range of stakeholders in food-related decision-making |

Source: Sieveking et al., p. 20 (under review).

Building on these functions and taking into account the diversity of the institutional phenomenon of FPCs in terms of relation to government, mandate and member composition, a typology of FPCs was developed (Table 5, for a more detailed description and discussion of the three identified types including illustrative examples, see Sieveking et al., p. 14-16). Despite the heterogeneity of the phenomenon and potential overlaps of the identified functions in day-to-day operations, this typology identifies the distinct roles of FPCs in policymaking. Most of these organizations tend to focus on their predominant role as either advocate, advisor or an arena of policymaking (Sieveking et al., n.d., pp. 13–14).

Table 5. Typology of FPCs

| | ADVOCACY | ADVICE | ARENA |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Relation to government | exerting influence on | in exchange with | in collaboration with |
| Member composition | non-gov. representatives | non-gov. rep. / non-gov. and gov. rep. | non-gov. and gov. rep. |
| Mandate | grassroots mandate | grassroots mandate/governmental act | recognition by gov. |
| Document | position paper | report/assessment | policy draft |
| Legitimacy | particular interests | competency | balanced membership |

Source: Sieveking et al., p. 21 (under review).

The findings of this dissertation summarised in this chapter provide answers to the research questions listed in Chapter 1.3 in relation to the evolution of FPCs, that is, factors contributing to the institution’s establishment, the institution’s potential roles in policymaking processes and the specific legal framework conditions in Germany, which affect this emerging institutional phenomenon.

In order to generate some ideas how the evolution of FPCs might also contribute to restructuring the broader institutional landscape of food-related policymaking, investigating the institution’s potential regarding the five aspects relevant for realizing the call for more integrated food policy (Candel & Pereira, 2017) might reveal some insights. In the following, FPCs’ potential contributions to address these five challenges outlined in the beginning of this chapter will be presented. First, the construction of a resonating policy frame, i.e. a coherent and convincing set of ideas to which relevant sectors can relate, is a major challenge (Candel & Pereira, 2017, p. 90). As FPCs involve stakeholders from various backgrounds, their experiences in how to relate different perspectives and how to develop a common understanding might be useful. In the case of the Oldenburg FPC, the formulation of a common vision represented a crucial step and a reference point in the further process of institutionalisation (Sieveking, n.d., pp. 7–8) despite disagreements on how the vision should be realized. As regards the second challenge, i.e. the formulation of specific policy goals, FPCs might be relevant actors because they might already be aware of the complexity, but also provide suggestions on how to address the most pressing local challenges. FPCs might also contribute finding possible answers to the third challenge, i.e. the involvement of relevant sectors and levels, because of their own attempt to involve and their experiences with bringing together

diverse stakeholders. FPCs might also potentially provide expertise related to the constitution of optimal policy integration. In the case study on the Oldenburg FPC, it became apparent that the establishment of the FPC should primarily serve the purpose of bringing together actors and coordinating their activities. The initiator, e.g. was mainly fascinated by the idea of connecting already existing activities in the city (Sieveking, n.d., p. 3). Finally, regarding the last challenge, i.e. the design of a consistent mix of policy instruments, FPCs might offer concrete suggestions regarding concrete policy instruments and provide benefits by their experience with soft instruments in the context of raising awareness for food system issues.

A more comprehensive analysis on how FPCs might already have shaped more integrated food policy cannot be carried out here, but the overview of FPCs' potential contribution to solving the challenges demonstrated that their experience and expertise might be helpful for those policymakers who aim to enhance coordination in food-related policymaking. As integrated food policy requires making fundamental decisions about whether and how a transition towards more sustainable food systems should be pursued, successfully addressing the five challenges strongly depends on sustained political leadership (Candel & Pereira, 2017, p. 91). As shown in this chapter, FPCs are not only representing a new institutional actor in the context of food policy. FPCs also have the potential to help resolve the five challenges associated with developing and implementing an integrative food policy and thereby to contribute to a restructuring of the broader institutional landscape of food-related policymaking.

3.3 Re-connecting people with the food system

In this chapter, the results of the dissertation will be reviewed in terms of how FPCs might contribute to re-connecting people with the food system.

Due to processes of industrialisation and globalisation, societies increasingly rely on distal ecosystems for the provision of goods and services (Abson et al., 2016, pp. 34–35). This is particularly the case for the industrialised food system with its global value chains. Despite the fact that human beings naturally have a strong material connection to food through its consumption as part of their everyday life, there is a disconnection at other levels, e.g. to where the food comes from and how the food is produced. Today, about 23% of the food produced for human consumption is traded internationally and several countries depend on imports from other regions for covering the nutritional needs of their population (Odorico et al., 2014). By contrast, a local strengthening of ties to nearby ecosystems is regarded as a means to decouple

consumption of wealthy, urban populations from impacts elsewhere in the world and increase regional self-sufficiency (Ives et al., 2018, p. 1394). Specific interventions for re-connecting people with the food system include e.g. restaurants serving locally grown food or food mile/source country labelling on products to enhance cognitive feedbacks between consumers and production landscapes (Ives et al., 2018, p. 1394). Against the background of the food system becoming ever more globalised and industrialised, many initiatives at the local level offer opportunities for re-connecting people with the food system. Community gardens, for example, are supposed to facilitate broader engagement with the food system, because they have been recognised as contributing to both individual and community re-connection to the socio-cultural importance of food (Turner, 2011).

Investigating the emergence of FPCs in this dissertation revealed a number of aspects related to re-connecting people with the food system. The in-depth case study of the emergence of one of the first German FPCs in Oldenburg, Germany (*Emergence paper*), elucidated that a strong motivation for the people involved in the formation process was a general dissatisfaction with the status quo of food production and consumption and a need to take action (Sieveking, n.d., p. 3). One of the specific topics that drove the members of the coordinating group to initiate the establishment of an FPC was a perceived disconnection from more and more people from their food, for example raised by interviewee 3: “[...] I think it’s similar for all of us, we have the impression that we need more connection to our food, especially the people living here in the city” (Interview 3, p. 2). More specifically, the current lack of direct feedback between producers and consumers was articulated at several occasions, for example during the pre-formation event, where one participant stated “In our days, most people just went grocery shopping without a relationship to the land and the people needed to produce the food” (Participant observation pre-formation, p. 2). Strengthening connections between producers and consumers therefore emerged as one of the initiative’s major aims. The importance of this topic became particularly apparent during the pre-formation event where a committee specifically dedicated to producer-consumer relations was established as one of four thematic working groups (Sieveking, n.d., p. 5). In the following, this committee organised for example excursions to farms in the region in order to establish a direct connection between producers and consumers.

Another important finding concerning the ways in which FPCs re-connect people to the food system is that institutions such as the Oldenburg FPC also involve, in addition to consumers and producers, other food system stakeholders. In line with the results of the literature review

the first peer-reviewed publication included in this dissertation (*Roles paper*), which identified deliberation and coordination as functions of FPCs (Sieveking et al., n.d., p. 20), the findings regarding the Oldenburg initiative showed that enabling a dialogue between a variety of food system stakeholders represented a major concern for the organisers. As one interviewee stated, “For shaping transformation processes, a good linkage between diverse actors is necessary” (Interview 7, p. 2). While other FPCs seek to include a variety of stakeholders using criteria such as affiliation with different sectors, the initiative in Oldenburg, inspired by the first German FPC in Cologne, decided to include people from three different societal realms in their representative body: politics and public administration, business and civil society. For the election of the council’s representatives shortly before the official establishment of the council, the initiative successfully recruited an equal number of candidates from the three realms, thereby achieving its goal of creating a representative body (Sieveking, n.d., p. 5). Maintaining open towards a broad spectrum of stakeholders was also the main reason for choosing a relatively neutral meeting space during the emergence phase (Sieveking, n.d., p. 9).

In terms of policy implications, one main conclusion of the second peer-reviewed study of this dissertation (*Emergence paper*) is that FPCs can be understood as a response to current problems in the food system by finding holistic solutions and that FPCs could re-connect, as in the case of Oldenburg, producers, consumers and other food system stakeholders. One can conclude, then, that “In this sense, FPCs might serve, in line with their core mission, as platforms for a dialogue among food system stakeholders (Sieveking, n.d., p. 13).

The third peer-reviewed study of this dissertation, the *Food democracy paper*, in which the emergence of the Oldenburg FPC was studied from a food democracy perspective, showed that FPCs can foster active citizenship. FPCs allow, for example, citizens to get involved and to influence food policy and related developments, thereby re-connecting with the food system. In terms of the food democracy dimension “Efficacy with respect to food and the food system”, the study showed that the initiative in Oldenburg provided several opportunities for experiencing capacities to act and actually having an effect, e.g. organizing food for events based on their values despite a limited budget (Sieveking, 2019, p. 53). Moreover, in relation to the dimension “Orientation towards the community good”, the analysis demonstrated several ways in which the FPC initiative encouraged individuals to go beyond their self-interests and to care about food as a public good, especially in the thematic working group Edible City (Sieveking, 2019, p. 53). By providing a number of ways to get involved in shaping the food

system beyond only consuming products, FPCs contribute to strengthen active food citizenship, and by this means, also to re-connect with the food system.

Framing the results of this dissertation in terms of re-connect demonstrated three ways through which FPCs might contribute to re-connect people with the food system: First, by allowing people, especially those living in cities, to get in touch with the local food system around them and to strengthen connections between producers and consumers; second, by bringing together and fostering deliberation among different food system stakeholders; third, by providing opportunities for active citizenship in terms of engaging with food beyond consuming products. Although a comprehensive assessment on how these three aspects relate to the different types of human-nature connection (Ives et al., 2018) cannot be carried out here, the findings of this study show that the activities of the FPC in Oldenburg and of other FPCs are not limited to material connections. By offering, for example, excursions to farms in the region, workshops or cooking events, their activities also allow individuals to (re-)establish experiential, cognitive, emotional and, maybe, philosophical connections.

4. Food policy councils as potential levers for sustainability transformation

The results presented in the previous chapter showed that FPCs could lead to changes related to the three identified realms of leverage – knowledge production and use (re-think), institutional change (re-structure) and connections to nature (re-connect) – which, in turn, are assumed to be of particular importance for inducing systemic change towards sustainability (see Chapter 1.1). Looking at the emerging institutional phenomenon of FPCs as a lever, i.e. a specific measure by which influence can be applied to a given leverage point (Abson et al., 2016, p. 36), the analysis showed that FPCs' potential goes beyond re-structuring the institutional landscape of food policy by establishing a new institution and by contributing to more holistic food policy (Chapter 3.2). The institutional phenomenon's evolution can furthermore contribute to re-thinking knowledge use and production in food-related policymaking (Chapter 3.1) and to re-connecting people with the food system (Chapter 3.3). In this sense, FPCs can be interpreted as cross realm levers, i.e. interventions that simultaneously address knowledge production, institutional reform and human-nature interactions (Abson et al., 2016, pp. 36–37).

In the following, the potential of FPCs to serve as levers for sustainability transformation will be discussed realm by realm in light of current debates on the phenomenon and further research needs. Afterwards, FPCs' potential as cross realm levers will be further explored by discussing potential interactions between the three realms.

Leverage potential in terms of re-think

Framing the results of this dissertation in terms of re-think showed that FPCs potentially shape knowledge use and production by providing knowledge and learning opportunities, by enabling information flows, by raising awareness and by integrating different types of knowledge (Chapter 3.1).

In a recent study on the role of knowledge in food democracy, Adelle (2019) also acknowledges the exchange of information and the sharing of perspectives across different sectors and parts of the food system facilitated by FPCs. She found, however, that FPCs often engage in food system research (e.g. food system assessments) for identifying policy recommendations as primary source of knowledge. Adelle therefore argues in favour of more diverse sources of knowledge for food policy, for example co-produced in more ad hoc forums with stakeholders (2019, pp. 216–217). FPCs have recently been acclaimed for their potential to give voice to a whole range of views and positions, including those not yet represented in the food system

(Bornemann & Weiland, 2019, p. 111). Although the various stakeholders involved in FPCs might enrich the policy recommendations proposed by FPCs with their manifold expertise and experience, there might still be a bias towards scientific knowledge and a tendency to neglect other sources of knowledge.

Future research could further investigate how different types of knowledge are considered in the day-to-day operations of FPCs. For a comprehensive assessment of the different types of knowledge, the differentiation between scientific, practical and experiential knowledge introduced in Chapter 3.1 might provide a useful conceptual background. Building on the results, practical tools could be developed for systematically integrating diverse types of knowledge in FPC activities. By building on more diverse sources of knowledge, FPCs may thus increase their potential to induce systemic change regarding knowledge production and use in food-related policymaking.

Leverage potential in terms of re-structure

Framing the results of this dissertation in terms of re-structure showed that FPCs potentially shape re-structuring the institutional landscape of food policy by representing a new institutional actor and by helping move forward integrative food policy beyond their own activities. Both the establishment of FPCs and their potential to help improve food policy are discussed in current debates on food policy at different governance levels.

As noted in Chapter 3.2, there is a need for more integrated food policy. In the recently launched report “Towards a common food policy for the European Union”, the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (iPES Food) specifically points out the missed opportunities to shape food systems towards sustainability due to a lack of integrated food policy at the EU level, where the many policy areas that shape the production and consumption of food (e.g. agriculture, environment, health) are currently handled by different departments in the European Commission and by separate committees in the European Parliament (de Schutter et al., 2019, p. 6). Supporting the creation of an FPC at the EU level that would involve food system stakeholders at multiple stages of the policy process is therefore one of the short-term policy proposals in the context of a new governance architecture for sustainable food systems (de Schutter et al., 2019, pp. 36–37). The establishment of FPCs has also been suggested in the context of the above-mentioned Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), a protocol signed by mayors committed to urban food policy of nearly 200 cities worldwide (MUFPP, n.d.). As one of several selected good practices, the creation of FPCs at city level is

recommended as a mechanism for cross-cutting agency and actor engagement (Forster et al., 2015, p. 16). The example of the County Fürstfeldbruck in Germany, discussed in the *Legal paper*, demonstrates that first attempts by public officials at governance levels between municipal and supranational which seek to promote the establishment of FPCs.

These recent developments indicate that policymakers or institutions such as iPES regard FPCs as a promising new institutional actor in the context of food policy at different governance levels. Political support can be key to the establishment of FPCs as discussed in the *Food democracy paper* and *Legal paper*. The main reason for the dynamic development regarding the emergence of FPCs in Germany during the study period, however, arose from civil society. A recent study on how to create effective collaboration between FPCs and local governments found that structural autonomy, i.e. being organised outside government but maintaining strong collaborations, helps FPCs retain their independence while promoting more inclusive policy making processes (Gupta et al., 2018).

The findings of this dissertation regarding the different types of FPCs (*Roles paper*) in terms of member composition and organizational structure furthermore suggest that among FPCs there are different understandings of appropriate strategies on how to influence food policy. Investigating in more depth how these different types of FPCs correspond with changes in food policies initiated by FPCs could reveal more insights regarding FPCs' actual influence on food policies. Next to a comprehensive study including examples from different countries, it would also be interesting to study the recently emerged initiatives in Germany in terms of if and how they shaped food policies in the first years of their existence.

Leverage potential in terms of re-connect

Framing the results of this dissertation in terms of re-connect showed that FPCs potentially shape individuals' connection to the food system by allowing them to get in touch with the local food system around them (and thereby strengthening connections between producers and consumers), by bringing together and fostering deliberation among different food system stakeholders and by providing opportunities for active citizenship in terms of engaging with food beyond consuming products.

Activities related to (re-)establishing connections are central to FPCs. Their aim to strengthen urban-rural links by connecting local farmers with local consumers was already mentioned in one of the first publications on FPCs (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999, p. 220). More recently, FPCs' potential in terms of re-connect was also acknowledged by iPES Food. In their above-

mentioned report, they state that FPCs “[...] help re-connect food system stakeholders (e.g. producers and consumers, citizens and local policymakers) in a way that restores democracy, accountability, and trust in food” (de Schutter et al., 2019, p. 24). This assumption of accountability and trust was supported by the empirical findings of this dissertation, namely that FPCs go beyond only addressing material connections and potentially shape other ways of how people might re-connect with the food system, e.g. at the emotional level. Further research could investigate how the activities of FPCs address the different types of connectedness suggested by Ives et al. (2018) introduced in Chapter 1.1 in order to deeper explore to what extend FPCs allow individuals to (re-)establish material, experiential, cognitive, emotional and philosophical connections.

Next to the challenge on how to re-connect, it remains an open question who to re-connect to move forward systemic change towards sustainability. As FPCs pursue various approaches in terms of the kind of food system stakeholders they involve (as discussed above, some FPCs for example include people from the diverse food system sectors and different societal realms as opposed to others only including civil society actors), there are also different understandings about who should be (re-)connected. There is a broad spectrum of potentially useful (re-)connections between food system stakeholders to be established through FPCs. They can range from focussing only on those already supporting sustainable alternatives to the dominant food system (see FPCs as umbrella organisations for sustainability initiatives discussed in *Emergence paper*) to integrating also actors embedded in the conventional system of food production and consumption. While one end of the spectrum might have the advantage of strengthening the transformative potential already out there, the other end might have the advantage of reaching out to stakeholders who were not engaged in activities of sustainability transformation prior to joining an FPC. Future research could further explore how the different stakeholder (re-)connections enabled by FPCs play out for inducing systemic changes towards sustainability in the food system.

Interactions between re-think, re-structure and re-connect

In light of the findings in terms of re-think, re-structure and re-connect in this study, FPCs can be understood as cross realm levers for sustainability transformation, i.e. interventions that simultaneously address knowledge production, institutional reform and human-nature interactions (Abson et al., 2016, pp. 36–37).

For example, the different ways how FPCs as new institutional actors are structured (see types in the *Roles paper*) also shape aspects related to re-think and re-connect. The member composition of a given FPC, for example, strongly influences which kinds of connections are established between food system stakeholders or what kind of knowledge is considered for developing policy recommendations. By providing diverse opportunities for individuals to learn about the food system (see *Food democracy paper*), FPCs at the same time contribute to re-connecting people with the food system.

Depending on the kinds of activities (e.g. cooking events, panel discussions or farms visits), learning about and connecting with the food system might happen at different levels, be it materially, cognitively or emotionally. Goodman et al. (2012, p. 8) also refer to the bridge between materiality and meaning, e.g. in terms of knowing how food is grown and what people eat. In this context, they emphasize the importance of shared knowledge between producers and consumers as the foundation of alternative communities of practice. As Adelle claims in her study on the role of knowledge in food democracy (2019, p. 220), it is not only that citizens need to be more knowledgeable about the food system. Citizens also need to be able to inform and shape what is considered relevant knowledge for decision-making. As shown in the *Food democracy paper*, FPCs provide opportunities for citizens to experience actually having an effect, be it related to their private life (e.g. change in diet) or advocacy activities.

In this sense, the institutional phenomenon of FPCs might be promising as cross realm lever by simultaneously addressing human-nature interactions, knowledge production and use and institutional reform. The specific findings of this dissertation regarding the emergence of FPCs (*Emergence paper*) furthermore suggest that even before officially establishing an FPC and thereby affecting institutional change, FPCs address knowledge production and use as well as human-nature connections during their formation process.

5. Implications and limitations

In this chapter, the concept of leverage points, which was applied to answer the overarching research question of this dissertation how FPCs can potentially serve as levers for sustainability transformation, will be reviewed.

Re-think, re-structure and re-think as a lens to explore the potential of specific levers

Framing and analysing the results of this cumulative dissertation in terms of the three realms of leverage identified by Abson et al. (2016) helped investigate and specify FPCs' potential to serve as levers for sustainability transformation. This analysis demonstrated that the three realms re-think, re-structure and re-connect provide a useful lens to look at specific interventions in terms of their leverage potential. The three perspectives, each addressing aspects crucial for societal transformations towards sustainability, might also in other cases help reveal strengths and weaknesses for potential adjustments of specific levers and thereby increase the effectiveness of interventions which are assumed to contribute to transformations towards sustainability.

FPCs as levers in terms of the four system characteristics

Considering the results of this dissertation vis-à-vis the four system characteristics (feedbacks, parameters, design, intent, see Chapter 1.1), which summarise Meadows' original list of twelve leverage points in increasing order of effectiveness, shows that most food policies initiated by FPCs would probably primarily address adjusting parameters, e.g. a higher proportion of organic food in school canteens. Although useful, as argued by Meadows (1999) and Abson et al. (2016), these kinds of interventions might as such not cause deep change in the system. The process of developing, proposing and advocating for such a policy through FPCs, however, also involves aspects related to leverage points assumed to cause deeper change, i.e. design and intent. When studying specific interventions and assessing their leverage potential it therefore seems important to also consider the context and potential side-effects of interventions at first glance little effective in terms of transformative change.

Whereas this dissertation did not explore the leverage potential of specific interventions initiated by FPCs, e.g. specific food policies, it is an in-depth study of the leverage potential of the emerging institutional phenomenon of FPCs as such. As the results of the individual research papers and the analysis of these results in terms of re-think, re-structure and re-connect demonstrated, this endeavour revealed manifold aspects related to places to intervene assumed to have a deeper transformative potential. By creating a new institution, which manages

feedbacks and parameters (design) and constantly deals with values, goals and worldviews of different actors (intent) FPCs go beyond only addressing parameters or feedbacks. Beyond Meadows' original list of twelve places to intervene in a system and its aggregation to four system characteristics by Abson et al., the suggestion to investigate three realms of leverage, which are assumed to be crucial for sustainability transformations, suggested by Abson et al. offers a useful operationalisation of the concept of leverage points. Applying this conceptualisation in this dissertation allowed for investigating a lever's potential to induce changes in three fundamentally different but interrelated ways, i.e. re-think, re-structure and re-connect. Furthermore, this approach helped to reveal concrete aspects for increasing a lever's potential, in the case of FPCs as discussed below for example a more systematic integration of diverse sources of knowledge.

Intervening in systems

When Donella Meadows developed the concept of leverage points twenty years ago, her intention was to provide a tentative list of possible intervention points that stimulate thinking more broadly about the many ways there might be to induce change in systems (Meadows, 1999, p. 3). After having introduced her list of twelve leverage points in order of increasing effectiveness, she still expressed a warning: Even if we might have identified deep leverage points for inducing systemic change in a system, it might be difficult to access these leverage points and to push them into the direction we want to push them. She states: "In the end, it seems that power has less to do with pushing leverage points than it does with strategically, profoundly, madly letting go" (Meadows, 1999, p. 19). This final caution concerning the general idea of purposefully intervening in systems by addressing certain leverage points relativizes also the leverage points concept "[...] as a promising approach for solution-oriented sustainability science" (Abson et al., 2016, p. 32). The concept provides, however, a useful lens to identify potentially effective places to intervene in systems.

6. Conclusions

The findings of this dissertation contributed to a better understanding of FPCs as potential levers for sustainability transformation. Future research addressing the identified research gaps related to re-think, re-structure and re-connect outlined in this framework paper might further deepen this understanding. The four research papers included in this cumulative dissertation provided an in-depth understanding of the recent FPC-phenomenon in Germany regarding the process of FPCs' emergence (*Emergence paper*) and the legal framework conditions which affect their establishment (*Legal paper*). The research papers furthermore elucidated insights regarding the different roles of FPCs in policy-making processes (*Roles paper*) and FPCs' potential to democratise the food system (*Food democracy paper*). Moreover, the various outreach activities during the study period also contributed to raise awareness of the emerging FPC-phenomenon beyond academia. For those involved in FPCs, the findings of this dissertation might provide some insights into framing and improving their activities in the broader context of sustainability transformation. Still, these contributions do neither provide nor guarantee a simple recipe for systemic change. This dissertation reveals, however, several entry points for those who seek to push the further emergence of FPCs, be it activists, policymakers or scientists. As Bassarab et al. state in their recent study (2019, p. 41), it is still an open question to what extent FPC policy outcomes yield transformative food system change. This dissertation suggests that transformative food system change induced by FPCs should not only be assessed by their policy outcomes but that food system change should be considered more holistically including connections between food system stakeholders and processes of knowledge production and use.

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Annex

Annex 1: Overview of articles included in this cumulative dissertation

| Article | Title | Short title | Authorship | Weighting factor | Publication status | Conference contribution |
|---------|--|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| [1] | The Role of Food Policy Councils: Advocate, Adviser or Arena of Policymaking? | <i>Roles paper</i> | Sieveking, Annelie Newig, Jens (JN) Schomerus, Thomas (TS) <i>JN and TS commented on research design and edited the manuscript</i> | 1.0 (Predominant contribution) | Revised version under review at Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning (<i>JEPP</i>) 2018 Impact factor: 4.195 | |
| [2] | From Initiatives to Institutions: the Emergence of Food Policy Councils in Germany | <i>Emergence paper</i> | Sieveking, Annelie | 1.0 (Single authorship) | Rejected after review at Agriculture and Human Values (<i>AHUM</i>) 2018 Impact factor: 3.128 | October 2017 (7th International Conference on Food Studies in Rome, Italy) |
| [3] | Food Policy Councils as Loci for Practising Food Democracy? Insights from the Case of Oldenburg, Germany | <i>Food democracy paper</i> | Sieveking, Annelie | 1.0 (Single authorship) | Published in Politics and Governance (<i>PaG</i>) 2018 Impact factor: 1.333 | July 2017 (12th International Conference on Interpretive Policy Analysis in Leicester, United Kingdom) |
| [4] | Beiräte als Instrument einer Ernährungswende – Die Etablierung von Ernährungsräten in Deutschland | <i>Legal paper</i> | Sieveking, Annelie Schomerus, Thomas <i>TS commented on research design and wrote parts of the manuscript</i> | 1.0 (Predominant contribution) | Published in Natur und Recht (<i>NuR</i>) in 2020 (when dissertation submitted in 2019: article already accepted for submission) | February 2019 (Leverage Points for Sustainability Transformation Conference in Lüneburg, Germany) |

Declaration (according to §16 of the guideline for cumulative dissertations of the Faculty of Sustainability)

I avouch that all information given in this appendix is true in each instance and overall.

Annex 2: Overview of participant observations

| Participant observation number | Occasion | Date |
|--------------------------------|---|------------|
| 1 | Pre-event initial workshop (penal discussion) | 22.04.2016 |
| 2 | Initial workshop (so called Political Soup Pot) | 23.04.2016 |
| 3 | Regular meeting of the coordinating group | 15.03.2017 |
| 4 | Pre-formation event | 10.06.2017 |
| 5 | Regular meeting of the coordinating group | 28.08.2017 |
| 6 | Regular meeting of the coordinating group | 11.09.2017 |
| 7 | Elections | 26.09.2017 |
| 8 | Formation event | 21.10.2017 |

All documents related to the participant observations contain confidential information and are available upon request.

Annex 3: Overview of interviews

| Interview number | Interviewee's role | Date |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Organiser of the initial workshop | 18.05.2016 |
| 2 | Member of the coordinating group (1) | 28.08.2017 |
| 3 | Member of the coordinating group (2) | 11.09.2017 |
| 4 | Member of the coordinating group (3) | 12.09.2017 |
| 5 | Member of the coordinating group (4) | 12.09.2017 |
| 6 | Member of the coordinating group (5) | 26.09.2017 |
| 7 | Member of the coordinating group (6) | 26.09.2017 |
| 8 | Member of the coordinating group (7) | 20.10.2017 |
| 9 | Member of the coordinating group (8) | 21.10.2017 |

All interview transcripts contain confidential information and are available upon request.

Annex 4: Overview of outreach activities

| Contributions on the Leverage Points project's and the university's homepages | | |
|---|--|---|
| November 2017 | “The beginning of a new food movement in Essen”, a blog on the first networking congress of food policy councils in German-speaking countries | https://leveragepoints.org/2017/11/23/the-beginning-of-a-new-food-movement-in-essen/ |
| May 2018 | “Politischer Suppentopf: Forschung zu Ernährungsräten“, an article by Marietta Hülsmann posted as research news on the Leuphana's start page | https://www.leuphana.de/news/meldungen-forschung/ansicht/datum/2018/05/28/politischer-suppentopf-forschung-zu-ernaehrungsraeten.html |
| December 2018 | “Food Democracy Now!”, a blog on the second networking congress of food policy councils in German-speaking countries | https://leveragepoints.org/2018/12/10/food-democracy-now-the-second-networking-congress-of-german-food-policy-councils/ |
| Involvement in the German transdisciplinary case study of the Leverage Points project | | |
| Mai 2016 | Participation in the project's scoping trip to the district of Oldenburg | |
| January 2017 | Participation in a stakeholder workshop in Hatten | |
| February 2019 | “Die Gründung eines Ernährungsrats in der Stadt Oldenburg”, a chapter on the emergence of the Food Policy Council Oldenburg published in an edited collection on the transdisciplinary case study of the district of Oldenburg | |
| Involvement in the Romanian transdisciplinary case study of the Leverage Points project | | |
| March 2019 | Participation in the final workshop of the case study in Alma Vii, Transylvania | |
| Activities in the context of establishing a food policy council in the cities of Lüneburg and Hannover | | |
| November 2016 | Participation in a local round table organised by the transdisciplinary research project “Lünefood” of the sustainability science Master's programme at Leuphana in | http://luenefood.xobor.de/ |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | collaboration with the project Zukunftsstadt (Future City) Lüneburg 2030+ | |
| January 2017 | Participation in a presentation on the possibility of establishing a food policy council in the city of Lüneburg by the transdisciplinary project “Lünefood” as part of the lecture series of the Universitätsgesellschaft (university society) at the local museum | |
| February 2018 | Participation in a presentation on the possibility of establishing a food policy council in the city of Lüneburg as part of the project Zukunftsstadt (Future City) Lüneburg 2030+ | https://www.lueneburg2030.de/project/ernaehrungsrat/ |
| March 2019 | “Einführung Ernährungsräte”, an introductory presentation on food policy councils at the kick-off event of the Food Policy Council Hannover, Germany | https://www.ernaehrungsrat-hannover.de/ |
| May 2019 | Participation in the kick-off event for establishing a food policy council in the city of Lüneburg as part of the city’s future council, organised by the local adult education centre | https://vhs.lueneburg.de/programm/kurs/Ernaehrungsrat+-+Zukunftsrat+Lueneburg/nr/191-14122/bereich/details/ |
| Contact points with policymakers, public officials and other stakeholders | | |
| January 2016 | Participation in the expert dialogue “Avoidance of Food Waste” of the Federal Environmental Agency (UBA) in Berlin | https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/themen/abfall-ressourcen/abfallwirtschaft/abfallvermeidung/abfallvermeidung |
| January 2016 | Participation in the constitutive meeting of the Round Table “Appreciation of Food” at the Lower Saxony Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection in Hannover | https://www.ml.niedersachsen.de/service/pressemitteilungen/agrarminister-meyer-ueberflussgesellschaft-den-stecker-ziehen-140532.html |
| February 2016 | Participation in an expert workshop of the research project “Sustainability in the Out-of-home Dining” (NAHGAST) in Berlin | https://www.nahgast.de/ |

| | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| October 2016 | Participation in the second meeting of the Round Table “Appreciation of Food” at the Lower Saxony Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection in Hannover | https://www.lebensmittelwertschaetzung-niedersachsen.de/runder-tisch/ |
| January 2017 | Participation in an expert dialogue on legal instruments to fight food waste at the Ministry of Environment of North Rhine-Westphalia in Düsseldorf | |
| Media | | |
| August 2016 | “Das Schweizer Taschenmesser der Ernährungswende“, an article by Anja Humburg on food policy councils in <i>Perspective Daily</i> | https://perspective-daily.de/article/63/probiere |
| September 2016 | “Der Politische Suppentopf“, a short documentary film by Werkstatt Zukunft on the first workshop in the context of the emergence of a food policy council in the city of Oldenburg | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SiFeHy3kscw |
| June 2017 | “Heute den Speiseplan für 2030 schreiben“, an article by Laurin Berger on the idea of creating a food policy council in the city of Lüneburg in <i>Was zählt</i> (p. 4), a supplement to <i>Landeszeitung</i> , the local paper in Lüneburg | http://was-zaehlt-magazin.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/WZ_Ausgabe5_Aufho%CC%88ren.pdf |
| September 2018 | “Ausgeschnitzelt“, an article in <i>Enorm</i> by Jan Abele on how to reduce meat consumption | https://enorm-magazin.de/files/downloads/leseprobe/201804_enorm_leseprobe.pdf |
| March 2019 | „Harmonie ist die Schönheit – Strategien für die Nachhaltigkeit in Südsiebenbürgen“, a radio feature on the Leverage Points project in <i>Radio Neumarkt</i> , a radio station in Transylvania | http://www.radioneumarkt.ro/2019/03/26/harmonie-ist-die-schonheit-strategien-fur-die-nachhaltigkeit-in-sudsiebenburgen/ |
| September 2019 | “Ernährung und Klimaschutz“, an interview on the connection between food and climate protection for <i>Hallo Niedersachsen</i> , a local news programme | https://www.ndr.de/fernsehen/sendungen/hallo_niedersachsen/Ernaehrung-und-Klimaschutz-Vegan-leben,hallonds53852.html |

II. Research papers

[1] Roles paper

Authors: Sieveking, Annelie/ Newig, Jens/ Schomerus, Thomas

Full title: The Role of Food Policy Councils: Advocate, Adviser or Arena of Policymaking?

Publication Status: Revised version under review at Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning (*JEPP*)

The Role of Food Policy Councils: Advocate, Adviser or Arena of Policymaking?

Abstract

Considering the massive environmental and sustainability issues associated with current food production and consumption systems, food policy councils (FPCs) have recently emerged as a promising institutional response.

To date, the scant scientific literature on FPCs is primarily focused on empirical cases, while we still lack a conceptual understanding: Are FPCs a form of policymaking? Do they mainly serve an advisory function? Or are they a form of political advocacy? For each of these, different academic literatures are relevant. Therefore, this study aims to shed light on the emerging institutional phenomenon by disentangling the concept and by synthesizing the various aspects specific to FPCs.

To this end, we firstly review the existing literature in terms of historical development, types and functions of FPCs. Secondly, we study the institutional phenomenon from three different theoretical angles in order to examine different roles of FPCs in policy-making processes. Results of both analyses will coalesce in a typology capturing the identified aspects of key relevance to FPCs and accounting for variations in their manifestation. The three suggested types reflect FPCs' dominating manner of exercising influence on food policy: advocacy, advice or governance. We close by identifying avenues for applying these conceptual considerations in further research.

Keywords: advisory councils, collaborative governance, food democracy, food system governance, participatory governance

1. Introduction

In light of a growing recognition of the unsustainability of current food production and consumption, there is a need of rethinking existing structures that shape these patterns. The production and consumption of food is central to the sustainability agenda not least because of its huge impact on the environment and the use of natural resources (Yakovleva, 2007). Food policy therefore needs to integrate issues of health, society, and the environment (Lang et al., 2009). Ecological footprint analysis, for example, demonstrates the environmental impact of food production and can inform policy decisions on sustainable food consumption (Collins & Fairchild, 2007). Apart from individual measures, calls have been made to think more broadly about contemporary agri-food regimes in order to identify transformative pathways that potentially promote sustainable outcomes across the system (Morrissey et al., 2014). In this

context, food policy councils (FPCs) can be regarded as one promising institutional response to food issues at the local level (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999, p. 221). They generally address weaknesses resulting from the globalized conventional food system (Clark et al., 2017, p. 135). FPCs are comprised of representatives from different food system sectors and aim to influence food-related policies. In contrast to ad hoc advisory boards or coalitions, these institutions work on food issues on an ongoing basis. These councils have emerged 'as innovative and much-needed mechanisms to identify and advocate for food system change' (Broad Leib, 2012, p. 1).

Both the empirical phenomenon as well as the academic discourse on FPCs has to date been largely limited to Western democracies. In the US and Canada, FPCs have been emerging since the early 1980s, but especially over the last decade, their number has increased tremendously to over 300 active councils (Mooney et al., 2014, pp. 236–237; Sussman & Bassarab, 2017, pp. 14–15). Most of the early FPCs emerged from informal coalitions of activists in hunger prevention, sustainable agriculture, and community development (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999, p. 219). Having originally focused on social aspects such as access to food, FPCs now usually pursue a broader approach. They are comprised of various representatives from the different segments of the food system community (e.g. members of community organizations, civil society organizations, the retail sector and nutritional education) in order to discuss, coordinate and influence the local food policy (Stierand, 2014, p. 169).

In Europe, the first FPCs only formed over the last decade, and primarily in Great Britain. Recently, there have also been attempts to found FPCs in other European countries, for example in the Netherlands, Austria or Italy. In Germany, ten FPCs have formed since 2016, and throughout the country, a growing number of initiatives is planning to found FPCs in the near future.

The role of FPCs in relation to the development of sustainable food systems has already been investigated in the US and Canada, where the FPC movement has been emerging for several decades (Feenstra, 2002; Schiff, 2008). These studies show how FPCs help institutionalise food system perspectives within the political system: 'In building the capacity of others to implement, and in educating, food policy councils are building political capital and capacity to move further in the development of more sustainable food systems' (Schiff, 2008, p. 226). A comparative study of four FPCs in the US and Canada concludes that 'Food Policy Councils are still in development conceptually and practically' (Fox, 2010, p. 3). Arguably, the existing discrepancies among definitions demonstrate a broad uncertainty and divergence in understanding the overall concept (Schiff, 2008, p. 207). On an empirical level, it is also still unclear how FPCs can be replicated in other countries of the world (Mooney et al., 2014, p. 251). While various authors stress the potential of FPCs and some empirical studies reveal insights into how FPCs work in practice, the theoretical understanding and classification of this emerging phenomenon still appears weak. A Scopus search on 18.10.2018 yielded 34

publications on food policy councils from social science, strongly dominated by scholars from the US and Canada. The research field has been slightly growing during the past ten years, with at least one publication per year. The publications are heterogeneous in terms of authors (there are only four authors with more than one publication). For our literature review, we also considered literature not listed in Scopus, including grey literature. The existing body of literature on FPCs is mainly comprised of case studies and practitioner's guides. Overall, authors show a generally very positive stance towards the phenomenon with regard to food justice, food sovereignty and reorganizing local food systems towards sustainability, with only a few authors criticizing unbalanced stakeholder representation within existing food policy councils.

In this study, we examine FPCs with a particular focus on their functions in the policy process. Theorizing on the different roles of FPCs might allow for a better understanding of the phenomenon. The insights could then be applied to examine and to design FPCs in different countries and political contexts. While most research on FPCs to date is focused on empirical case studies and surveys of existing FPCs, this study strives to identify general patterns of this institutional phenomenon, while taking into account the many aspects discussed in the literature. Considering the diversity of existing FPCs, we try to shed light on different functions and strategies of FPCs. In a first step, the literature will be reviewed with regard to different organizational forms and functions that are attributed to FPCs. The identified functions will then be classified based on their means of targeting food policies. In a second step, the institutional phenomenon will be studied from three different theoretical angles in order to examine different roles of FPCs in policy-making processes. In a synthesis, the results of the analyses will coalesce in a typology capturing the identified aspects of key relevance to FPCs and accounting for variations in their manifestation. The results of the study will help to disentangle differences between existing FPCs but also emphasise commonalities.

2. Characterizing Food Policy Councils

2.1 Spatial Levels, Organizational Structures and Membership

In the literature on FPCs, there is no clear definition of what a food policy council is. This may be due to the considerable diversity among FPCs. Many studies have proposed different approaches to classifying FPCs based on their relation to the government. While they can be hybrids (Chen et al., 2015, p. 33), they are often categorized as either governmental or non-governmental FPCs (e.g. Harper et al., 2009; Schiff, 2008). Clayton et al. distinguish between FPCs directly affiliated with government and non-governmental organizations. The latter type, however, also includes those FPCs that are created by a government entity but operate independently from government (Clayton et al., 2015, p. 5). Offering a more nuanced

perspective, Siddiki et al. (2015) introduce the categories public, nonprofit and informal grassroots organizations to account for the diversity of organizational forms of FPCs.

Many of the first FPCs in the US were created as de facto governmental organizations; these are often referred to as 'Public Sector (Government) FPCs' (Chen et al., 2015, p. 34). Non-governmental FPCs, also known as nonprofit FPCs, emerged later. These FPCs are more likely to be controlled by food advocates, to have more diverse sources of funding and to face fewer bureaucratic restraints compared to public sector FPCs. In contrast to nonprofit FPCs, public sector FPCs may struggle with bureaucratic inefficiency, political infighting, changing levels of support and less attention to community desires, but they are more likely to enjoy the benefits of public legitimacy, public involvement, access to government staff, and coordination across departments than nonprofit ones. Nonprofit FPCs, on the other hand, may face challenges regarding lack of staffing, official standing with elected officials or transparency and public accountability (Burgan & Winne, 2012, p. 13).

Governmental and non-governmental FPCs also differ in terms of how they are founded. Harper et al. (2009) identify three different bodies that initiate the formation of FPCs: non-profit organizations, grassroots groups and politicians. Public FPCs are often established through government policy; purpose, participants, structure and activities are regulated by the official council mandate, which is drafted and adopted at the level (city, county or state) where the council is located (Siddiki et al., 2015, pp. 538–539). Especially at state level, FPCs are often initiated by political action as an official part of the government. The majority of FPCs is, however, founded as a result of grassroots organizing and networking, especially at the local level (Harper et al., 2009, p. 25).

The status, structure and scale of the FPC influence its membership. Harper et al. found that members join FPCs via self-selection, application (e.g. reviewed by the existing council) or election/nomination/appointment (e.g. chosen by governmental officials) (Harper et al., 2009, p. 27). In a survey of FPCs throughout the US, 63% reported self-selection, 25% nomination by FPC, and 27% appointment by someone in authority (Scherb et al., 2012, p. 7). According to Chen et al. (2015, p. 35) 'independent, nonprofit group membership may be self-selecting, while public-sector council members are usually named by executive or legislative appointment'. Spatial levels also play a crucial role in this respect. Whereas in two thirds of FPCs at the state level members are appointed, in more than half of the local FPCs members are self-selected (Harper et al., 2009, p. 28).

As we will discuss below (3.2) in further detail, FPCs include members with different perspectives on and different roles in the food system. A council's mandate often determines how and to what extent members can contribute to its activities. For example, the Berkeley FPC consists of many different stakeholders such as residents or employees at one of the city's

departments. Membership is open to everyone willing to participate, but individuals are only allowed to vote after having attended four council meetings. As most decisions are made through consensus, the requirement for voting represents only a minor obstacle to participation in the council (Borrón, 2003, p. 17). In contrast, the Toronto FPC, representing 'a collective stakeholder experience within the food system', chooses its members based on their knowledge and expertise (Fox, 2010, p. 24). In other cases, the number of representatives from the different food system sectors is specified in the council's mandate (Siddiki et al., 2015, p. 538). A study on FPCs across North America reveals substantial variation in the number of stakeholder groups and also differences in the number of participants: The size ranges from 8 to 25, resulting in 16 council members on average (Siddiki et al., 2015, pp. 541–542).

2.2 Functions

The functions of FPCs discussed in the literature range from deliberation to coordination, advice, advocacy, action, participation and education, as well as covering diverse means of influencing food policy directly or more indirectly (Table 1). Based on an extensive literature review and interviews with people involved in FPCs in North America, Harper et al. identified four functions of FPCs: (1) to serve as a forum for discussing food issues, (2) to foster coordination between sectors in the food system, (3) to evaluate and influence food policy and (4) to launch or support programmes and services that address local needs (2009, p. 19). In the following, we use this categorization, which has been used by many other studies (e.g. Clayton et al., 2015; McClintock et al., 2012; Mooney et al., 2014), to review the literature on FPCs.

The first two functions identified by Harper et al. (2009) have often been discussed in conjunction. FPCs are assumed to provide a space for seemingly disparate sectors and are frequently cited as an effective way to address local and state food system issues (Scherb et al., 2012, p. 4). The inclusion of members from the various sectors reflects the attempt by and potential of FPCs to bring a systems perspective to the fragmented field of food policy (Harper et al., 2009, p. 27). Given their generally broad understanding of the food system (e.g. Dahlberg, 1994, p. 3), most FPCs include representatives from different sectors of the food system. In the US, FPC members mostly represent the production, distribution and consumption sectors, but representation of food processing and waste management is less common (Harper et al., 2009, p. 24). Particularly at the local level, however, the agricultural sector appears to be underrepresented as well (Mooney et al., 2014, p. 238). As FPCs draw on the experience and knowledge of people from across the food system, FPCs can become an important source of information for policymakers (Burgan & Winne, 2012, p. 5), and they can function as a discussion forum and foster coordination. Indeed, FPCs may have emerged as a response to a lack of governmental agencies solely devoted to food policy (Broad Leib, 2012, p. 1).

Considering the third and fourth functions identified by Harper et al. (2009), i.e., to evaluate and influence food policy and to launch support programmes and services that address local needs, several studies have examined how FPCs contribute to the policy process and turn policies into political reality. For example, the majority of FPCs have been found to be engaged in multiple venues and on multiple topics and to participate in the policy process primarily by identifying problems, educating on food policy issues and developing policy proposals (Scherb et al. 2012, p. 8). In the US, FPCs aim to change the contextual conditions of food production and consumption, but also focus on changing individual behaviour. Examples of policy initiatives of FPCs include securing land for urban gardens and urban agriculture by changing zoning laws, re-routing bus lines to improve access to fresh healthy food, support of mandatory menu labelling and the conducting of food system assessments. These policies are complemented by activities such as farm-to-school programmes or the expansion and management of farmers' markets (Harper et al., 2009, pp. 20–21).

In addition to the four functions identified by Harper (2009), FPCs have been claimed to help creating a more democratic food policy and that they also educate citizens about food. Assuming that FPCs can enable individuals to shape a system that strongly affects them, Burgan and Winne argue that a key element of any FPC's mission is to establish food democracy (2012, p. 5). Food democracy, in turn, could serve as a pragmatic approach to transforming the current agro-food system towards sustainability (Hassanein 2003, p. 85). Conceiving of FPCs as organizations that have multiple roles, Schiff (2008, pp. 216–219) concludes that they mainly function as networkers, facilitators and educators in sustainability and food systems. To Schiff, these three roles are closely related: For example, both external education (e.g. governmental agencies) and internal education (e.g. staff, members) involve networking.

[Table 1]

3. Thinking Deeper About the Policy-Related Functions of FPCs

Our literature review reflects the richness of the phenomenon of FPCs, suggesting that FPCs do and could have different roles in society, and in policymaking in particular. One question not answered in the literature is, however, how functions of FPCs are linked to their organizational structures. In the policy process, the diverse functions of FPCs can be better understood by developing a theoretical understanding of their roles. Research on FPC is scant in general, and as Scherb et al. (2012) point out, we know little about FPCs' role in the policy process. While Scherb et al. greatly contributed to the discourse by identifying types of policy activities and topics of FPCs in the US, we seek to theorize different fundamental roles FPCs might play at the interface of society and policy. To achieve this goal, we examine the institutional phenomenon of FPCs from three different perspectives: FPCs as advocates, as

advisers and as arenas of policymaking. These analyses draw on previous research on social movements, advisory councils, and collaborative/participatory governance. Doing so allows us to arrive at a theoretical understanding of how organizational structures and functions are related, and to identify key characteristics and types of FPCs.

3.1 Food Policy Councils as Advocates for Alternative Food Policy

Several studies have discussed FPCs as or in relation to other social movements. Traditionally, social movement studies have examined issues of labour and nations using either a Marxist or a structural-functionalist approach. Since the 1960s, such studies have also investigated 'new social movements' such as women's liberation or environmentalism with pluralist approaches and different research foci (della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 6). In general, social movements are conceptualized as social processes that build upon three mechanisms: conflictual collective action, dense informal networks and collective identity (della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 20–22).

Although they are sometimes regarded as distinct social movements, most studies have described FPCs as part of the community food security movement, which links anti-hunger, sustainable agriculture, nutrition and other groups as well as aiming to address these issues together (Borron, 2003, p. 4; see also Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999, p. 219; Schiff, 2008, p. 207). Morgan interprets the growth of FPCs in North America as one sign of the popular resonance to food planning. Showing that food has become an issue in local planning policy in the US and in Europe and potentially also in the Global South, he argues that 'food planning in its broadest sense is arguably one of the most important social movements of the early twenty-first century in the global north' (2009, p. 343). Whereas these authors describe FPCs as part of broader social movements, Mooney et al. (2014) understand FPCs as a distinct emerging movement, a convergence of several alternative agrifood movements.

As social movements, it is possible to analyse FPCs in terms of the three mechanisms identified by della Porta and Diani, i.e., conflictual collective action, dense informal networks and collective identity.

The first mechanism is based on the idea that social movement actors engage in conflicts with clearly identified opponents as they seek or oppose social change (2006, pp. 20–21). For example, Broad Leib, who conceives of FPCs 'as innovative and much-needed mechanisms to identify and advocate for food system change', argues that FPCs 'advocate for healthy, environmentally sustainable, and economically and socially just food policies' (2012, p. 1). In general, most studies describe FPCs' goal as one of changing food policy (Burgan & Winne, 2012; Chen et al., 2015; Clayton et al., 2015; Fox, 2010; Harper et al., 2009; Scherb et al., 2012; Schiff, 2008; Sussman & Bassarab, 2017). This demonstrates that seeking change in the food system is central to FPCs. Building on this, it is also important to pay attention to how FPCs advocate for food system change. While the use of protest is the major source of influence for

many social movement actors more in general (della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 28–29), FPCs rather rely on compromise and cooperation. The focus of their work is more on advocating *for* instead of advocating *against* specific issues. In a case study on the Oakland FPC, McClintock et al. (2012) reflect on the strategies that were used to promote urban agriculture zoning. Urban agriculture is a topic many FPCs are engaging with: In a survey across the US, urban agriculture proved to be the second policy priority for FPCs in 2015 (Sussman & Bassarab, 2017, p. 23). In the case of the Oakland FPC, it turned out that the use of antagonistic or adversarial advocacy techniques was not a preferred strategy. By contrast, their strategy was focused on building trust and positive relationships. They chose a diplomatic approach and also offered support and resources to foster the process (McClintock et al., 2012, p. 30). However, in order to secure a broad spectrum of societal concerns, for McClintock et al. it is essential to include groups in FPCs that normally use more adversarial approaches and overt protest. For FPCs with an interest in maintaining good relations with government, however, it is essential to channel the activist's ideas and to bring forward their concerns diplomatically.

The second mechanism that characterizes social movements is dense informal networks. As indicated above, in the case of FPCs, these networks include representatives from the different segments of the food system. The diversity of stakeholders representing special interests or groups is confirmed, for example, by a study on public FPCs, i.e., those established through a government policy in the US, by Siddiki et al. (2015). All the stakeholders involved in FPCs represent a special interest or a special group. Barron emphasises that FPCs, in a wider sense, are not limited to the official council members, as FPCs often also include people who can support them or advise them on particular topics (2003, p. 6). In this sense, FPCs are embedded in larger networks. A network can be useful not only for a council's activities, but also for its partners. In the case of the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC), its members were not only part of the task force that developed Toronto's food strategy, but also contributed to this process by activating the extended network of the TFPC, e.g. in feedback sessions (Fox, 2010, p. 20). By embracing new forms of cooperation among actors throughout the food system (Mooney et al., 2014, p. 248), FPCs are able to develop and maintain dense informal networks.

The third mechanism that characterizes social movements as distinct social processes is the sense of a collective identity based on a common purpose and a shared commitment to a cause. This kind of identity can emerge and be fostered by, e.g., organizational networking and communication. Individuals who share a collective identity seem to regard themselves as elements of larger processes of change (della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 21–22). In the state of North Carolina, for example, collective identity emerged as a result a food action plan in 2012, which drew attention to the need for more interaction among the individual councils. The FPCs, which used to work independently, came together and established a state-wide network. Their main motivation for opening up activities from the local level was to share resources and tools,

to communicate actively with each other and to share best practices (Carlson, By Jill & Chappell, 2015, pp. 15–16). This case shows that a sense of collective identity among different FPCs does not necessarily exist but can evolve over time as the number of councils increases and as an awareness of common goals develops. In Germany, where the first FPCs were established in 2016, a shared sense of purpose resulted in the first networking congress in 2017, which sought to bring the existing and emerging FPC initiatives together and to form a basis for future collaboration among FPCs in German-speaking countries.

Looking at the institutional phenomenon of FPCs from a social movement's perspective clearly reveals the strong focus on bringing about change and advocating for specific policies by building on a broad membership base and on broad networks. These results support the perception of FPCs as important food advocates. According to Harper et al. (2009, p. 20), FPCs are especially able to pursue policy change because they are often directly involved with governments. The different ways in which FPCs are connected to governments will be studied in more depth in the following sections.

3.2 Food Policy Councils as Advisers for Food Issues

Several studies have addressed the advisory function of FPCs and some FPCs themselves refer to their advisory role in the organization's title, e.g. Louisville Food Policy Advisory Council or Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (Broad Leib, 2012, p. 48; Mooney et al., 2014, p. 240). In one of the first scholarly works on FPCs in the US, Dahlberg refers to FPCs as advisory bodies that are, similar to other advisory groups, regarded as 'useful bodies to keep the city informed of needs and issues and on what non-profit groups are doing' (1994, p. 6). More recently, FPCs have been described as 'typically advisory' (Siddiki et al., 2015, p. 538), often serving local governments (Borrón, 2003, p. 7). Doing so, FPCs can cover a broad spectrum of advisory functions, e.g. some produce full policies; others produce drafts, recommendations or research that is relevant to their members (Siddiki 2015, p. 538). Below, we examine the advisory role of FPCs in terms of their composition, type, function and external recognition.

As regards complex and interlinked policy issues, expert advice plays an important role in political decision-making processes. Advice is used in various ways, i.e. via established institutions, short-term commissions, ad hoc committees, and informal personal networks. For policymakers, it is important to consider expert advice for two main reasons: First, because it makes their decisions more reasonable, justifiable and effective. Second, it gives decisions a greater claim to public acceptance (Brown et al., 2005, p. 81). The societal discourse as well as the scientific literature on policy advice is stressing science-based expertise (Hoppe, 2005). Scholars investigate for example how dialogue between science and policy could be improved in different policy areas, e.g. biodiversity conversation (Young et al., 2014). Expert advice is therefore typically also evaluated based on scientific validity. Alternatively, the legitimacy of

advice can be judged by the criterion of representativeness, referring to the degree to which advisory institutions incorporate diverse social, political, and disciplinary perspectives (Brown et al., 2005, pp. 84–85). The latter seems central to FPCs because they claim to include a diversity of stakeholders as discussed above. They provide important sources of information for policymakers, precisely because they draw on the knowledge and experience of people from all segments of the food system (Burgan & Winne, 2012, p. 5).

In addition to their composition, one can also analyse the advisory role of FPCs in terms of different types and functions. Lompe suggests distinguishing between the following types of consultancy: singular consultancy, project-based consultancy, continuous sectoral consultancy (with permanent or changing membership), consultancy through specialist or working groups, external scientific institutes, hearings, colloquia or simply informal talks. Although most advisory committees fulfil several functions (delivery of information and expertise, support in implementation processes, early warning, coordination, support of ideas, de-escalation of conflicts, consensus building, education, success monitoring), mostly one function predominates (Lompe, 1981, pp. 55–56).

As illustrated above, FPCs are – in contrast to more temporary and issue-focused ad hoc advisory groups or committee – installed for the long term. FPCs that are continuously asked for recommendations based on their mandate can therefore be classified as continuous sectoral consultancy (with changing membership). The Connecticut FPC, for example, was established in 1997 by an act stating that the council's purpose is to review and comment on any proposed state legislation and regulations that impact food policy and food security (Borron, 2003, p. 21). FPCs that are only occasionally asked for advice by policymakers on certain topics (e.g. urban agriculture) can be considered project-based consultancy. Concerning the different functions of advisory councils identified by Lompe, FPCs predominantly provide advice regarding identifying problems, assessing solutions or implementing policies (Siddiki et al., 2015, p. 538).

The efficiency of any advisory body depends on how it is perceived. A general challenge advisory bodies face is a strong dependence on the political support of the current government. Whether policy recommendations are considered or even heard very much depends on the willingness of the respective policymakers. In this vein, Chen et al. state that a strong relationship between an FPC and government improves FPC legitimacy in the eye of policymakers and helps councils advise government officials and make policy recommendations. In times of political transition, however, the support might be withdrawn (2015, pp. 33–34). The Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy experienced such a shift during the mid-2000s when a new mayor neglected the council. The council regained political support when the mayor of the city changed again (Burgan & Winne, 2012, p. 26). As relationships change over time, a higher degree of formal institutionalisation is more likely to strengthen the councils' power (Dahlberg, 1994, p. 9). This aspect has also been discussed in

the context of councils for sustainable development, which similarly to FPCs exist in different forms: Some are initiated by governments, others emerged as civil society organizations without official mandates (Sieveking, 2017, p. 158). To assure their involvement in decision-making processes over the long term and independent from the political orientation of the current government, Schomerus suggests a strengthening of their legal status. Based on specific laws, the appointment of the council's members, as well as their tasks and competencies could be regulated and expanded (2011, p. 6). Such an approach would allow FPCs to act as a recognized adviser for food issues independent from shifts in government, as in the Connecticut case mentioned above. An even closer way of interacting with governmental entities will be the discussion of the following subsection.

3.3 Food Policy Councils as Arenas of Food-Related Governance

Next to their potential role as advocates or advisers, FPCs may also function as arenas in public governance. In recognition of the growing complexity in policy subsystems and in response to failures of traditional governance approaches, governments have increasingly pursued collaborative governance strategies (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In general, governance comprises 'all modes of governmental steering and societal coordination, from hierarchy to coordination in actor networks to private self-regulation and coordination through (market) competition as well as hybrids of these governing modes, such as networks in the "shadow of hierarchy"' (Hoggl et al., 2012, p. 7). In this sense, FPCs constitute bodies in which a variety of societal actors can engage in joint decision-making, e.g. at the municipal, regional or national level. FPCs may thus provide or complement government functions and thereby address weaknesses or gaps in current governance structures.

In contrast to hierarchical or public-private forms of governance, FPCs could be regarded as instances of collaborative or participatory governance (Siddiki et al., 2015, p. 536). 'Participatory governance' has been used to describe 'processes and structures of public that engage actors from the private sector, civil society, and/or the public at large, with varying degrees of communication, collaboration, and delegation of decision power to participants' (Newig et al., 2017, p. 5). The former term, collaborative governance, has been defined as 'processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government and/or the public, private for-profit, and civic spheres to carry out a public purpose' (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015).¹ Both of these closely related and often overlapping types of governance are assumed to legitimize and

¹ We deliberately leave out the last part of Emerson and Nabatchi's definition, namely "that could not otherwise be accomplished". We maintain that modes of governance, such as participatory or collaborative governance, are a choice rather than a necessity (Newig et al., 2017, p. 3).

increase the effectiveness of political decision-making, e.g. by delivering outcomes that are more sustainable than those of traditional policymaking (Newig et al. 2017). Having said this, there is certainly no agreement, neither in policy nor in the academic discourse, on preferred modes of governance (Driessen et al., 2012). In fact, it is a common critique of participatory and collaborative modes of governance that here, the state – by delegating decision power to private and non-state actors – is shying away from its responsibility to make collectively binding decisions on issues of the general welfare (Rhodes, 2002).

In recent decades, food systems in liberal democracies have been highly influenced by national and international governance processes with a strong producer bias and by several market and state governance crises (Moragues-Faus & Morgan, 2015, pp. 24–25; Renting et al., 2012, p. 304). Thus, they could be revitalized by the collaborative and participatory ‘policy and governance innovation’ (Fox, 2010, p. 2) provided by FPCs. They could facilitate processes of deliberation (Moragues-Faus & Morgan, 2015, p. 2) and thus function as new arenas of food governance. By networking across different interests related to the food system, they can bring about the recognition of the role of local food governance (Mooney et al., 2014, p. 244). Despite a general focus on the local level, some scholars have discussed the possibility of scale convergence, i.e., of local initiatives coalescing at higher levels of governance (Mooney et al., 2014, p. 235). When local FPCs combine and transform their goals, perspectives and information in this manner and engage in collaboration and collective action, we may speak of ‘nested systems of governance’, as in the example of the North Carolina FPC (Carlsson 2000, p. 17).

A central dimension to collaborative and participatory governance arrangements is the breadth of involvement, i.e., the range of stakeholders and other actors included in the process (Newig et al., 2017, p. 5). As discussed above (see 2.1), there are, e.g., FPCs with open membership and some with self-selected or appointed members who may represent different segments of the food system or contribute different kinds of expertise. Two recent studies explicitly addressing FPCs as a phenomenon of collaborative governance reveal some deeper insights concerning stakeholder involvement. Siddiki et al. (2015) found that FPCs in the US established through government policy differ substantially regarding the diversity of stakeholder groups represented. For example, the government is represented in some councils, but not in others. This study also shows that the range of policy output tends to widen as membership diversity increases. Conducting a case study of one FPC in the western US, Koski et al. observe that representation by design and representation in practice varies considerably, for example in terms of attendance of meetings and agenda setting. They also identified several factors that might limit substantive representation in the collaborative governance settings of FPCs: restrictive process norms, lack of structure or mission clarity and unequal resources (2016, p. 16).

The breadth of involvement in FPCs affects, at least to some extent, the legitimacy of the political decision-making processes to which they contribute. Whereas many decisions in the current food systems of Western democracies are made by elected representatives or lobbyists, FPCs allow citizens to participate in debates on and contribute to the development of food policy. Indeed, FPCs often explicitly or implicitly frame their activities as responses to a food system that is perceived as undemocratic. They are self-conscious efforts to extend democracy in the governance of the food system (Mooney et al., 2014, p. 245). Seen in this light, the participatory and collaborative governance of FPCs, which brings together citizens, experts and public officials, can be regarded as 'an experiment in democratic governance' (Fox, 2010, p. 3). For example, the first Canadian FPC provided not only resources but also further legitimacy to municipal governance by creating a complementary arena of food policymaking (Welsh & MacRae, 1998, p. 252).

3.4 Functions of FPCs in Policymaking

Taken together, our analysis of FPCs in light of the literature on social movements, advisory councils and governance, allows us to identify several key functions of FPCs in policymaking (Table 2). Our analysis reveals that despite the considerable heterogeneity of the phenomenon, FPCs share the aim of changing food policies. Individual FPCs differ, however, in terms of the way that they seek to influence food policies. Although there might be some overlap between these functions in the day-to-day operations of FPCs, most of these organizations tend to focus on advocacy, advice or governance. In the next section, we suggest a typology of FPCs that reflects these different functions and related characteristic features discussed above, e.g. mandate or membership.

[Table 2]

4. Synthesis: A typology of FPCs

Our above analysis reveals that the phenomenon of FPCs is quite multifaceted. There are not only differences in terms of the organization's relation to government, but also in its mandate, member composition, or its primary way of exerting influence on food policy. As discussed above, the relationship between FPCs and government can range from very close to quite distant. In terms of membership, FPCs can be either limited to non-governmental representatives or include both non-governmental and governmental representatives. FPCs also vary in terms of the formal degree of their mandate, their source of legitimacy and the policy documents they typically produce to influence food policy. Despite these differences, it is, we argue, possible to distinguish between three types of FPCs: advocacy, advice and arena for policymaking (Table 3).

[Table 3]

4.1 Type 'Advocacy'

FPCs primarily committed to advocacy typically emerge and operate outside of and independently from government structures, although they might receive public funding. They do not work closely with the government; they might even oppose government policy if it does not sufficiently reflect the particular interests shared by the members of the FPC. These FPCs consist of various stakeholders from different segments of the food system but are limited to people who are not members of the current government or public administration. Membership is regulated in an internal statute and therefore lacks authority beyond the scope of the FPC. This kind of mandate is often referred to as a grassroots mandate. These kinds of FPCs tend to release position papers.

One example of this type is the FPC Berlin (Ernährungsrat Berlin) in Germany. It was established in 2016 as a result of grassroots organizing. As stated in its mandate, this FPC is a broad alliance of citizens striving to transform the current food system (Ernährungsrat Berlin, 2016). After having developed a shared vision of a just and future-oriented food system, they recently launched a list of demands to the government concerning the implementation of a local food strategy (Ernährungsrat Berlin, 2017).

4.2 Type 'Advice'

FPCs that seek to influence food policy by primarily providing advice are usually not part of the government or public administration but in continuous exchange with these institutions. They are only or at least mainly comprised of non-governmental representatives from different sectors of the food system. In some cases, members of the current government or public administration may also join these councils. Their mandate is limited to the council, but in some cases, the council might be officially recognized as an advisory body to the government. Their legitimacy is determined by the level of expertise and the diversity of their members. Typical policy documents issued include reports and assessments.

One example of this type is the FPC Cologne (Ernährungsrat Köln) in Germany, which was founded in 2016 as a result of grassroots organizing in collaboration with the city. It functions as a permanent advisory council to the city regarding food issues. Members include committed and experienced citizens from civil society, leaders of local businesses as well as politicians and members of the public administration. Each of these groups provides one third of the council members (Ernährungsrat Köln, 2016). The FPC is tasked with the development of a regional food strategy, including measurable indicators, and is financially supported by the city (Stadt Köln, 2017, p. 1).

4.3 Type 'Arena'

In contrast to the other two types, FPCs primarily operating as an arena of participatory and collaborative governance have an official mandate as a result of a governmental act (e.g. a law), which also defines the composition of the council and its responsibilities. Its legitimacy derives from the balanced composition of its members. These councils often include both government and public administration officials working on food-related issues and experienced non-governmental representatives. As these FPCs are directly involved in the process of developing food policies, they often release policy drafts.

One well-known example of this type is the FPC Toronto in Canada, which is part of the municipal government (Toronto Department of Public Health). Since the 1990s, this council has promoted local sustainable food systems, e.g. via institutional buying, and various food-related social and economic projects (Friedmann, 2007, p. 391). Members from across the food system are chosen based on expertise in order to represent 'a collective stakeholder experience within the food system' (Fox, 2010, p. 24). One well-known policy initiative is the development of Toronto's food strategy, the first of its kind in Canada (Mansfield & Mendes, 2013, p. 45).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study of the emerging phenomenon of food policy councils provides two main insights: First, FPCs may exhibit three distinct functions to serve their overall purpose of influencing food policy: to advocate for sustainable food policy, to advise government, and to provide an arena for collaborative and participatory food governance. Second, individual FPCs may – ideally – be attributed to any one of these three functions, thus yielding a typology of ideal-typical FPCs. These roles may overlap in real-world contexts, but the typology that we propose here offers a more nuanced perspective on FPCs compared to traditional categorizations, e.g. the distinction between governmental, non-governmental and hybrid FPCs. This typology does not only capture the different functions of FPCs in policy-making processes we identified, but also takes into account the differences with regards to relation towards government, membership, mandate, legitimacy and typical policy documents. In line with Clarc et al., who discuss transitions from civic-oriented towards politically oriented coalitions (2017, p. 138), we assume that FPCs can also switch their status and the strategies that they use to influence food policies. Individual FPCs can therefore represent different ideal-types at different points in time.

We deliberately focused on FPCs' role in policy-making processes because changing food policies is at the core of their mission. We do not wish to imply that other functions attributed to FPCs, e.g. education, are less important or that FPCs have no societal impact in these

respects. Indeed, some FPCs seem to prefer project over policy work, but this preference might often be due to a lack of resources or expertise (Scherb et al., 2012, p. 4).

Our findings could be used to investigate how FPCs fulfil their role as advocate, advisor, or arena for public governance, as we still know very little about FPCs' impact on food policy (Clark et al., 2017; Scherb et al., 2012). The typology could also serve as a tool for investigating FPCs in different political systems, especially those outside North America. However, generalising or transferring analytical tools could see limits, as both overall governance structures and prevailing food-related challenges may differ starkly across hemispheres, in particular where food access and food security dominate over considerations of sustainability.

In recent years, FPCs have been founded in many European countries. Future studies on these emerging FPCs could draw on and empirically test the typology developed here. One question to be addressed would be whether and to what extent political contexts can contribute to or limit the development and legitimacy of FPCs. It is not clear to what extent political contexts may allow some types of FPCs to flourish or may limit their growth. As policymakers are facing more and more complex and interrelated problems and gaps in the political system that cannot be addressed using traditional governance approaches, the typology proposed in this study might also serve as a starting point to identify and initiate new ways of stakeholder involvement in food policy and in other areas of environmental policymaking. At the same time, more empirical research is needed to assess the performance of FPCs in addressing public food-related sustainability issues, notably compared to traditional state-based modes of governance.

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Table 1. Functions of food policy councils (literature review)

| Function | Authors | Means of influencing food policy (ranging from directly to indirectly) |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Advocacy</i> : to evaluate and influence food policy | Harper et al. 2009 | Providing suggestions |
| <i>Advice</i> : to inform policymakers | Burgan & Winne 2012 | Providing information and advice |
| <i>Coordination</i> : to foster coordination between sectors in the food system | Schiff 2008; Harper et al. 2009; Broad Leib 2012; Burgan & Winne 2012, | Enabling information flows |
| <i>Deliberation</i> : to serve as a forum for discussing food issues | Harper et al. 2009; Broad Leib 2012; Scherb et al. 2012 | Involving stakeholders and enabling information flows |
| <i>Participation</i> : to enable food democracy | Hassanein 2003; Burgan & Winne 2012 | Empowering and involving stakeholders |
| <i>Action</i> : to launch or support programmes and services that address local needs | Harper et al. 2009 | Promoting alternatives and demonstrating best practice examples |
| <i>Education</i> : to educate (internally and externally) | Schiff 2008; Burgan & Winne 2012; Scherb et al. 2012 | Raising awareness |

Table 2. Functions of FPCs in policymaking

| Theoretical Perspective | Functions of FPCs |
|--|--|
| Social movements | to advocate for food system change to lobby for specific policies, e.g. urban agriculture |
| Advisory councils | to inform policymakers to give policy recommendations |
| Participatory/collaborative governance | to legitimize/democratize food policy to participate in binding decision-making to include a broad range of stakeholders in food-related decision-making |

Table 3. Typology of FPCs

| | ADVOCACY | ADVICE | ARENA |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Relation to government | exerting influence on | in exchange with | in collaboration with |
| Member composition | non-gov. representatives | non-gov. rep. / non-gov. and gov. rep. | non-gov. and gov. rep. |
| Mandate | grassroots mandate | grassroots mandate/governmental act | recognition by gov. |
| Document | position paper | report/assessment | policy draft |
| Legitimacy | particular interests | competency | balanced membership |

[2] Emergence paper

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From initiatives to institutions: the emergence of food policy councils in Germany

Abstract

Food policy councils are increasingly becoming important in shaping alternative approaches to the predominant agri-food system. Whereas these stakeholder groups set up to influence government food policies are well established in the US and Canada for several decades, food policy councils are a recent development in Germany, with the first councils formed only in 2016. This study investigates this emerging institutional phenomenon in Germany by using a case study approach focused on the initiative in the city of Oldenburg. A mixed-methods qualitative research design consisted of participant observation, interviewing and document analysis. Results showed that several elements played a crucial role in the formation process. A theory on food policy council emergence was then developed showing how different phases and factors contribute to council formation, i.e. people, infrastructure and external support. The policy implications of this study address three gaps in current food systems and show how food policy councils may shape the development of food policies: 1) as umbrella organizations for sustainability initiatives, 2) as platforms for a dialogue among food system stakeholders and 3) as intermediaries between citizens and policymakers.

Keywords: civil society initiative; emergence; food democracy; food policy; food policy council; alternative food system.

1. Introduction

Since 2016, more and more food policy councils (FPCs), currently referred to as food councils in German, have been established in Germany. Often initiated by civil society, these stakeholder groups strive for a more sustainable food system by raising awareness, taking action and influencing policies. While the first two FPCs formed in the large cities Cologne and Berlin, today more and more councils are emerging in smaller cities but also at the county level. The rising dynamic of FPCs in German-speaking countries became particularly apparent during the first networking congress in autumn 2017, when over 100 people from over 40 different cities gathered in order to exchange ideas and to share experiences regarding the formation of FPCs. While FPCs are a fairly new institutional phenomenon in Germany, comparable institutions have been in existence in other countries such as the United States and Canada for several decades (Sussman & Bassarab, 2017, p. 14). FPCs in these countries are usually comprised of representatives from different segments of the food system, but vary strongly in terms of their member composition, mandate and thematic focus (Scherb, Palmer, Frattaroli, & Pollack, 2012; Siddiki, Carboni, Koski, & Sadiq, 2015). As most of the councils are only staffed with a part-time coordinator (if at all), they highly depend on volunteers (Harper et al., 2009, p. 23). In some cases, council representatives include policymakers and members of the public administration, while others are only grassroots-based. Clayton et al. (2015, p. 5) distinguish for example between non-governmental FPCs and those directly affiliated with government. The FPCs in Germany vary in member composition and legal status as well. Although policymakers are involved in their activities at various degrees, FPCs are mainly initiated by civil society actors. Policymakers may have become aware of the importance of FPCs in enhancing stakeholder participation in developing food policies, particularly at the city level, after the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact was launched in 2015. The development of FPCs as broad based stakeholder platforms contributes to current international debates about the representation of different groups and concerns in the development of food policies (Timotijevic, Barnett, & Raats, 2011). For food activists, the participation in FPCs might help scaling up their activities, e.g. urban gardening (Mcivor & Hale, 2015, p. 738) and, more generally, allow for an activism that is strategic, political and collaborative (Simkins, 2019, p. 372). FPCs seem to constitute a new institutional phenomenon in Germany, but also in several other European countries, for example Austria or Switzerland, as the increasing number of FPC initiatives demonstrates. Studies of the recent emergence of FPCs on the European continent are also of international interest as they allow investigation of the challenges facing initiatives in the early stages of FPC formation.

This study investigates the emergence of the FPC in the city of Oldenburg (160,000 inhabitants) in Lower Saxony, created in 2017. The in-depth case analysis offers a rich description of the emergence of one of the first FPCs in Germany. At the same time, this study reveals several factors that seem to be crucial for the creation of FPCs in general, i.e. the people involved, suitable infrastructures, and external support, resulting in a model on FPC emergence.

In the methods section, I describe the mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis used for investigating the emergence of FPCs in Germany. In the results section, I first present the diverse elements essential to the process of the emergence of the council in Oldenburg, for example the development of their self-understanding as well as the challenges and opportunities they faced. Second, I identify the factors that enabled the Oldenburg initiative to build on their initial euphoria and form a council as well as the different phases in that emergence process. In the discussion section, these results are put in context with insights from other emerging initiatives in Germany. In a next step, I elaborate on three gaps in current food systems, which FPC initiatives in Germany, and potentially elsewhere, seem to respond to in three different ways: 1) as umbrella organizations for sustainability initiatives, 2) as platforms for food system stakeholders and 3) as intermediaries between citizens and policymakers. I conclude with an outlook on further research questions, building on the proposed process model of FPC emergence.

2. Methods

2.1 Case study approach

As FPCs are a fairly new institutional phenomenon in Germany and basic research is still lacking, this study followed a case study approach, which is particularly suitable for new research fields: A case study is “a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534). This approach not only allows for a rich description of specific cases, it can also inform the development of theories grounded in the data: “Theory developed from case study research is likely to have important strengths like novelty, testability, and empirical validity, which arise from the intimate linkage with empirical evidence” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 548).

The main selection criterion for this case was timing. When the study was designed, the first two FPCs in Germany were just about to be established (March/April 2016). Scoping activities revealed that in several German cities there were groups planning to form councils in the near future. The activities in Oldenburg, with an initial workshop organized at that time (April 2016), promised the opportunity to pursue my particular interest in studying the emergence of an FPC from its beginning. An additional criterion of selecting the Oldenburg case was its setting in Lower Saxony, the geographical location of the larger research project this study is part of.

2.2 Data collection and analysis

In a two-year study period (April 2016 to April 2018), the activities in Oldenburg leading to the official formation of the FPC in October 2017 were studied with different social science methods (participant observation, interviews and document analysis) in order to get an in-depth understanding of the case and to triangulate the findings.

The purpose of observational data is to develop an in-depth and detailed description of the setting, the activities taking place, the people participating in the activities, and their meanings of what is being observed (Patton, 2015, p. 332). Participant observation not only allows direct and personal contact with the field, it also enables the researcher to understand and capture the context within which people interact. Moreover, the researcher has the opportunity to see things that may routinely escape the awareness of people in the setting and are therefore difficult to find out in interviews (Patton, 2015, pp. 332–333). As a participant observer, I accompanied the process of the formation of the council during the whole study period, including participation in public events but also in regular internal meetings. This process was documented carefully.

Qualitative interviewing helps researchers to find out things they cannot directly observe, for example thoughts and feelings (Patton, 2015, p. 426). Semi-structured interviews moreover enable researchers to learn more about stakeholder perceptions and to gain relevant background information. In addition, this

method allows the researcher to follow up on patterns that come up during the observations. During the study period, nine interviews with members of the coordinating group were conducted, with one taking place shortly after the initial workshop and eight between the pre-formation and the official formation of the council. All interviews were conducted in German¹, and were recorded and transcribed, following the rules of Kuckartz (2014, p. 136).

In addition to the primary data (observations and interviews), secondary data on the case was collected for document analysis as well. The data set consists of documents that were produced during the study period. It includes a wide range of text documents (for example meeting protocols, press releases, homepage articles) complemented by a documentary film and sketch notes resulting from the documentation of the initial public workshop.

Data analysis followed the grounded theory approach initially developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The key idea of staying open to what emerges in the field was reflected in decisions about when to collect additional data. In periods of longer absence from the field, I kept track of ongoing activities by phone calls and by being on the internal mailing list. The interpretation process began with data transcription and, from the very beginning, was conducted in part with a group of peers in order to be aware of different readings. The analysis was guided by the basic assumption of the grounded theory methodology of persistent interaction between the researcher and the data: “The iterative process of moving back and forth between empirical data and emerging analysis makes the collected data progressively more focused and the analysis successively more theoretical” (Bryant, A., & Charmaz, 2007, p. 1). The whole grounded theory process of identifying codes, categories and concepts was supported and facilitated by the use of a software program (Atlas.ti).

The end of the study was marked by a half-day workshop where I presented my preliminary findings to those people I had interviewed beforehand. The purpose of the workshop was twofold: For me, it allowed direct feedback on my preliminary findings from the people involved. For them, it provided transparency and an opportunity to reflect on the process of forming the council two years after they had started their activities and half a year after they had established the council.

In addition to the comprehensive study of this case, I participated in the first networking congress of recently created FPCs and initiatives in German-speaking countries. This enabled me to get in touch with people involved in comparable activities elsewhere and to collect additional data for triangulation.

3. Results

3.1 Elements of the emergence process

Between the initial idea of establishing an FPC in Oldenburg and the official formation there were many steps and it was not always clear whether the idea would be realized in the end. In the following subsections, I will outline seven elements that appear to be of great importance in the formation process: the motivations of the people involved, the structures created, the work of the coordinating group, the development of a self-understanding, the opportunities and challenges, the activities undertaken, and the role of networks.

3.1.1 Starting point: motivations of the people involved

The initiator of the activities in Oldenburg, working for a development NGO, was, from her position as a “one world promoter on agriculture and fair trade”, tasked with developing local solutions to problems related to the globalized food system. She stated, “Also at a community level, we can develop visions and take actions that go beyond consuming products” (Interview 1). She became fascinated about creating an FPC because this would facilitate connecting current activities and make their alternative approaches more visible in the city. A general dissatisfaction with the status quo of food production and consumption and a need to take action appeared to be a strong motivation for the people involved in the formation process. The topics that drove the individuals varied however. While some were primarily concerned about global consequences, others felt uncomfortable with more local effects, i.e. more and more people disconnected from their food (for example Interview 3) or decreasing food skills among

¹ All data presented in this article has been translated from German into English by myself.

children (for example Interview 4). At the initial workshop in the formation process, many people stated that the idea of creating a council was an interesting approach that could complement existing activities. As one participant in a small group discussion said, “My impression is that there’s already a lot going on in Oldenburg and that we would gain a lot by connecting everything“. At this first workshop, it was primarily representatives from food initiatives who came together, with only a couple of participants from other backgrounds. Connecting people from all sectors of the food system, however, turned out to be crucial in the further course of the formation activities. As part of their vision (see 3.1.4), the coordinating group wished to strengthen collaboration among different interest groups such as consumers, grassroots initiatives, producers, retailers, and politicians.

Another motivation for moving forward was the observation that many people in Oldenburg were uninformed about food issues. Therefore, raising awareness played a central role during the formation process and the phase afterwards. This motivation was articulated by many participants and covered diverse aspects. While some stressed the importance of consumption issues, such as food quality, others pointed to current problems in regional food production, such as the decline of family farms or decreasing milk prices. In this context, the need for reconnecting consumers with producers was stressed, for example at a plenary during pre-formation: “In our days, most people just went grocery shopping without a relationship to the land and the people needed to produce the food” (Participant pre-formation event).

Another facet of raising awareness, which came up in the formation period, was to make food become a topic seriously considered by politicians and public officials in Oldenburg. Already during the initial workshop, the participants envisioned several ideas how the city could take action, for example incentivizing food appreciation or requiring more organic and regional food in public canteens. An interviewee talked about her concern of not being appreciated by local politicians, except the Greens, even after the formation of the council. She felt food was just not regarded as a relevant topic on the local policy agenda and it also did not play a role in the recent municipal elections (Interview 2). In the invitation to the pre-formation event, the coordinating group envisioned the future council as an advisory body to the city.

3.1.2 From an informal “Political Soup Pot” to a formal council: structures created

Beginning and background story

In April 2016, a one-day workshop took place where the idea of creating an FPC in Oldenburg was discussed publicly for the first time. The workshop was organized by a group of interested people and coordinated by the local “one world promoter on agriculture and fair trade”, based at a development NGO. When she was travelling during her holidays in the US, where urban FPCs have existed for several decades, she noticed a strong presence of local food and alternative food systems in several cities. Coming back, she was keen on bringing together existing local food initiatives to propose a similar structure in Oldenburg as well. An appropriate tool for this undertaking seemed to be a so-called “Political Soup Pot”, developed by the German NGO INKOTA, where people gather to cook and eat together and develop a vision of how to take action for a more sustainable food system (Interview 1).

Political Soup Pot and coordinating group as the resulting structure

About 50 people from different backgrounds (local food initiatives, students, researchers, politicians, citizens, farmers) joined the invitation to participate in the one-day workshop. In the first part, an international guest from South Africa shared her thoughts on the complexity of the globalized food system and gave examples – from her context as a food activist and researcher – of how to support or initiate local structures. In particular, she emphasized the connecting power of food and the importance of building networks between those who share similar aims (sketch note 1). In a next step, eleven local food initiatives presented their diverse activities, such as the organization of group cooking or community gardening. Afterwards, topics were chosen for five parallel small group discussions. The results were then presented and discussed in a plenary session. In between the sessions, the participants made a vegetable soup that was eaten as a communal meal to conclude the event. The “Political Soup Pot” mainly served the function of spreading the idea and testing if there was sufficient interest and support to establish a local FPC. In a follow-up meeting, where the organizing committee evaluated the

workshop, several people showed interest in moving forward. After a public preview of a documentary on the workshop, they presented possible further steps and invited others to join the newly founded coordinating group (see 3.1.3).

Pre-formation event and committees with spokespersons as the resulting structure

In June 2017, roughly a year later, the coordinating group issued an invitation to the pre-formation event “From seeds to plants”. Around 30 participants joined this event with the aim of starting the work of the council before its official formation. After an update on the process by the coordinating group, the participants gathered in small groups to elaborate visions and tasks for the future topic-related committees of the council: “Food Appreciation”, “Producer-Consumer Relations”/“Education and Events” and “Edible City”. After a short presentation of each group in another plenary session, there was an informal time set aside for exchange between the participants. To wrap up, the coordinating group presented the steps to be taken until the planned formation of the council four months later. After the pre-formation, the committees, coordinated by their spokespeople, met regularly to clarify their aims and to take action in their respective fields. The committee on producer-consumer relations for example organized excursions to farmers in the region.

Election with representatives as the resulting structure

In September 2017, the coordinating group sent out an invitation to the election of the council representatives. Beforehand, they had approached several people from politics and public administration, business, and civil society, as the council representatives were supposed to cover these three backgrounds equally. This approach was based on the idea that the council should gain legitimacy through a broad range of stakeholders in the food system. After a short introduction by the coordinating group, the candidates introduced themselves and stated their motivations for becoming council representatives. The representative body was to be composed of 15 members. With the committee spokespeople being automatically part of the body, 12 more were elected in one secret ballot. Candidates not elected were encouraged to join the council in other ways, for example the committees. Initially the representatives decided to meet four times a year, but in the observation period, they met more often to work through their agenda.

Formation with part-time coordinator and spokesperson team as the resulting structure

In October 2017, the coordinating group organized the official formation of the council with a ceremony at the state museum in Oldenburg. After a cabaret performance by an artist introducing the topic, the mayor, who later presented the council members with a certificate, welcomed the guests. A member of the coordinating group then gave a presentation stressing the need for an FPC in Oldenburg because of unsustainable patterns in the local food supply. She furthermore reported what had happened so far and presented the organizational structure of the council (Fig. 1). Afterwards, the committees gave an overview of their work and invited interested people to join their next meetings. In addition, the council representatives introduced themselves. As part of the outlook, the coordinating group announced that they had succeeded in getting funding from the state ministry of Lower Saxony for a part-time coordinator. The event, which was attended by about 60 people, including media representatives, ended with an informal get-together in the museum café. These formation events, their main function and the resulting structures are summarized in Table 1.

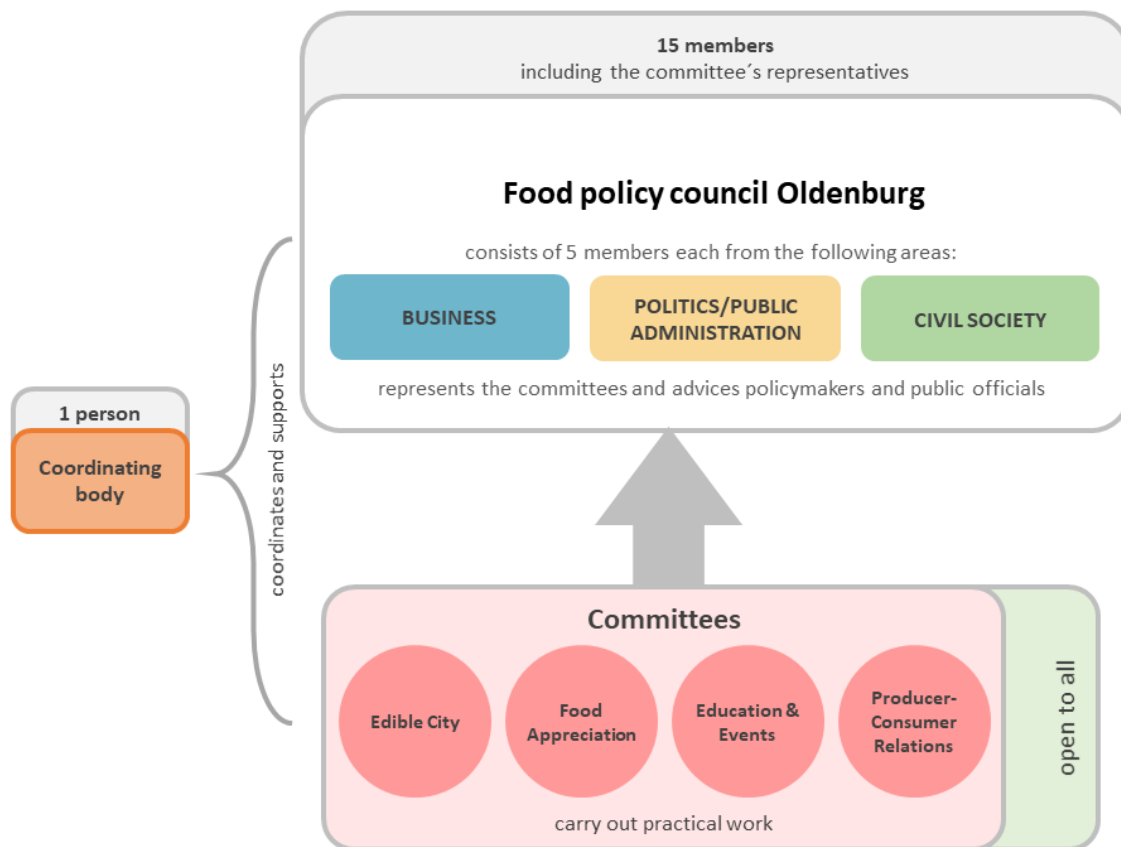


Fig. 1 Structure of the emerging food policy council in Oldenburg, presented at the formation event (my translation). (Please find this colored figure in the supplementary file Fig.1)

Table 1 Events, their main function and the resulting structures during council emergence.

| Time | Event | Function | Structures |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| April 2016 | Political Soup Pot | Spreading and testing the idea | Coordinating group |
| June 2017 | Pre-formation | Getting started | Committees “Producer-Consumer Relations“, “Education and Events“, “Edible City“, “Food Appreciation“ and spokesmen |
| September 2017 | Elections | Gaining legitimacy | 15 Representatives (5 civil society, 5 business, 5 public administration/politics) |
| October 2017 | Formation | Becoming visible | Spokesmen-team Coordinator (part-time) |

3.1.3 Moving the process forward: the coordinating group

The coordinating group started their work after the positive resonance toward the idea of creating an FPC in Oldenburg at the Political Soup Pot (see 3.1.2). Most group members were already involved in this workshop, either as participants or as part of the organizing team. Until the official formation of the council one and a half years later, however, there was fluctuation in the membership. Nevertheless, a core group of eight to ten people continually worked on moving the formation process forward and even after the formation continued their work for the council in different roles. This core group worked on a voluntary basis, although some also worked full-time in related fields, for example a research project on transformative ways of producing food or an NGO promoting fair trade. Their networks often served as door openers (see 3.1.6). In the interviews, the members stated that the coordinating group was organized on a grassroots basis, implying a commitment to consensus and openness to new members. In practice, decisions were often prepared by a small group of people (for example a presentation of their aims or a concept for an event), which were then discussed and agreed upon in a plenary session (Interview 2). In case of disagreement, they decided to postpone decisions until the council was elected, as they did not have the authority to make contested decisions. As one interviewee pointed out: “If there’s no consensus, there’s just no consensus. Then it’s important to talk about it and to keep things open if they’re still unclear” (Interview 4).

In the time between the initial workshop and the official formation, the coordinating group usually met every second week for two hours. The members had a broad range of tasks requiring different skills, for example organizing regular meetings, applying for funding, networking, building and updating the homepage or organizing events. As one member said: “It was a unique opportunity to have such a diversity of resources within the group” (Interview 9). Sometimes they also struggled with the amount of work and expressed a need for support. After the pre-formation, several people helped organize the formation, for example by sending out invitations or organizing the catering. In that period, they struggled to keep an overview due to the growing number of activities and people needing to be coordinated. The need for a staff coordinator became more of an issue. Shortly before the official formation of the council, they received positive feedback on their request to the state ministry so that funding for their activities, including a part-time coordinator, was assured in the first year after the formation.

During the formation process of the council, I also observed quite different understandings among the members of how they saw their role in pushing this process forward. Their degree of involvement ranged from “I’m not the one who keeps this running, but I like to provide support” (Interview 4) to “Sometimes I’m just doing things because no one else is doing it. I like to keep things running” (Interview 3) at opposite ends of the spectrum. After the official formation of the council, the members changed their roles, with most of them still supporting the part-time coordinator and others focusing more on the work of the representatives or the committees.

3.1.4 Clarifying the agenda: the development of a self-understanding

The general idea of establishing an FPC in Oldenburg, which would link the existing activities with regard to transforming the current food system, received positive feedback from the participants of the initial workshop. On this occasion, one participant stressed the importance of not building a new structure that would be opposed by local politicians and public officials, but instead collaborating with them: “Maybe here in Oldenburg, we can do it together” (Participant Political Soup Pot). As the subsequent formation process of the council was built on voluntary work, the volunteers played an important role in clarifying the objectives and design of the future council. Furthermore, food issues on the agenda were strongly influenced by the committees established at the pre-formation event. After their formation, the committees took up those activities that attracted enough volunteers. In interviews, when asked about which food issues were on their agenda, all coordinating group members referred to the committee structure in their answers. A self-understanding of being responsible for creating structures, but not for determining specific topic-related activities, characterized the work of the coordinating group (see, for example, internal minutes number 9). The development of a common identity among FPC members was an ongoing and not always easy process, involving some

disagreement, even after the official formation. Clarification in process, however, was advanced at some points, i.e. self-presentation before public events and differentiation from other actors.

Upcoming events and public appearance

After a year of long discussions on the objectives and vision of the council, inspired by the Political Soup Pot, came somehow to an end shortly before the pre-formation and other events. At the pre-formation event, the coordinating group presented their slogan “Together for sustainable nutrition in the region”, with regionality, fairness, need-orientation, self-determination, and ecology as important dimensions. Often they made important decisions right before these events because they needed to agree at least on a basic understanding of who they are or wish to be. Afterwards, these public statements were seen as “kind of binding” (Interview 2). Another interviewee also stressed the importance of the council’s appearance in public in general: “Even if I don’t like it because it’s outward-oriented, I think the launch of the homepage or the printing of flyers brought us very much forward” (Interview 4). Before the elections when they had difficulties to define their understanding of sustainable nutrition for the council statutes, the coordinating group left it to the future council representatives to decide on specifications. This example illustrates the coordinating group’s self-understanding of being “in formation”, which was also part of their logo. Also, they made important decisions with regard to the council structure, but left room for further specification by the representatives. The specific topics and activities of the FPC being formed would also depend on the committee members. After the formation, they established a working group tasked with elaborating criteria for sustainable nutrition.

Differentiation from other actors

Reflecting on their differences to other groups was crucial to clarifying council aims and tasks. When the coordinating group members discussed different places where they could hold their meetings, they opted for a neutral space (instead of at the university or the local NGO) because they hoped to attract a variety of different stakeholders and did not want to be in a “niche” (Interview 7). Debates on who should be included in the council’s activities often assumed there was agreement, at least in principle, on fundamental goals. At the opening workshop, for example, the participating initiatives were united in the need to bring about alternatives to the dominant system of food production, for example community supported agriculture that promotes direct contact between producers and consumers or food sharing to avoid food waste. “We invited those who are really willing to bring about change” (Interview 1). Later on, the coordinating group discussed their understanding of bringing change to the current system and the role of the FPC vis-à-vis other local or regional networks such as that of “Nordwest isst besser”, a network of regional farmers using conventional agricultural methods.

After the pre-formation, the committees also clarified their aims by considering what other groups were engaged in alternative food projects. The Food Appreciation committee, for example, discussed how their work would differ from the local food-sharing initiative. As they were interested in complementing existing activities, this committee decided to focus on finding additional places in the city where food waste could be avoided, for example the farmers’ market, and so contribute to their common goal of reducing food waste.

Different understandings of the emerging institutions’ role

In the context of clarifying aims and developing a vision for the future council during the formation process, a broad spectrum of possible roles were discussed for the emerging institution: an umbrella organization for existing initiatives, a common voice, a space for ideas, a platform for dialogue, an intermediary between civil society and politicians, a pool of experts, a contact person for queries, an advisory body, and a means of policymaking. The potential functions of FPCs related to these different understandings will be a subject in the policy implications section of this article.

3.1.5 Enabling and hindering factors: opportunities and challenges

In the emergence process of the council, the coordinating group faced several challenges but also took advantage of several opportunities that occurred during that time. A constant challenge was how to acquire funding, not only for a staff coordinator, which turned out to be a crucial step, but also for smaller amounts, i.e. paying rent for meeting space or flyers and food for bigger events. As one participant said, “We put so much effort into acquiring money and often failed. This was extremely

frustrating” (Interview 2). Initially they approached several people at city level, for example the mayor and public administration employees. The people contacted did not offer any financial support, stating that the council’s activities were not limited to the city level and they should therefore consider the state level for funding opportunities. From the very beginning, the state ministry had been informed about their activities as the state minister for food and agriculture had been invited to a panel discussion the evening before the Political Soup Pot. When he visited Oldenburg again, they approached him, and he agreed to be their patron. His support played a crucial role in processing their funding request in the state ministry and the request “gained momentum in the context of the elections” (Interview 2), which could have resulted in a new minister of food and agriculture.

With regard to political support, it was not easy to involve all of the political parties. The coordinating group’s activities were supported by the Greens, both at state and city level. The election program of the Greens in Oldenburg even included support for an FPC (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen Stadtverband Oldenburg (The Green Party City of Oldenburg Association), 2016, p. 7). Eventually, two politicians from the Greens and one from the Social Democrats were elected as FPC representatives. Other parties represented in the city council were not present at the FPC elections, but afterwards voiced interest in working together (Interview 9).

Internally, a constant challenge was to balance the workload and to manage membership fluctuation. Some members had to leave the group for personal reasons, while others joined. One interviewee pointed out that unfortunately the coordinating group did not have an established practice of mentoring new members (Interview 2). Here, it became apparent that there was no “head of everything”. One interviewee commented: “Voluntary work remains voluntary work so we cannot expect too much from those willing to contribute in their free time (Interview 6). On the other hand, they took advantage of the many volunteers willing to use their skills and contacts for the coordinating work.

Another difficulty was communication within the coordinating group, as many members already knew each other from other contexts, for example the university. This led to a conflict when one member suggested on short notice to meet at the university instead of their usual place. Afterwards, they agreed on having all future meetings at Kreativlabor, a co-working space in the city center. Agreeing on a neutral meeting space was important with regard to maintaining open communication towards a broad spectrum of stakeholders. After the formation, the new staff coordinator professionalized information flows with specific mailing lists and a communication platform.

In terms of their legal status, the initiative became a project of the local association Transfer, which supports several sustainability initiatives in Oldenburg. This affiliation enabled them to receive state ministry funding through this partner organization instead of having to create a new association.

3.1.6 Widening the scope: the role of networks

Building on existing networks and establishing new ones played a crucial role in the formation process. The embeddedness of several members of the coordinating group in diverse local networks was appreciated and seen as an advantage not only to get more people on board but also for practical support, such as knowing someone who can provide food for an event or design a logo. As the strongest connections were those to civil society initiatives, which all of the members were also somehow involved with, it was somewhat more difficult to network with local politicians and public officials and businesspeople (internal meeting minutes number 23). One member of the coordinating group, however, was able to take advantage of the network she had built during her time as a politician in the city council.

The coordinating group also invested time in a new nationwide network. In November 2017, several members participated in the first networking activities among FPC initiatives in Germany, where international experts from the US, Canada, the UK and Brazil were involved as well. They had already contacted the recently formed FPCs in Cologne and Berlin to learn from their experiences. Half a year after the council formed, they initiated a meeting between the initiatives in Lower Saxony (see 3.1.7) to start building a statewide network.

3.1.7 Gaining visibility: activities

Before the official formation (April 2016-October 2017)

In this period of time, activities were mainly focused on preparing the formation of the council, including the tasks specified in 3.1.3. These were mainly internal activities such as agreeing on working processes, clarifying aims, discussing the future structure of the council and acquiring funding. In addition, a major part was the organization of the public events (see 3.1.2). The strong focus on coordinating activities led to frustration at some point, as there was no time left to work more on food issues (Interview 3). Even if the focus was on internal activities, members of the coordinating group had already participated in external events before the formation of the council: “We tried to be present at any food-related event in Oldenburg in order to advertise the future council and its idea” (Interview 4). On these occasions, such as a sustainability week at the local university or a food truck event, they informed the public about the council and tried to get people to think about food issues, for example with a memory game on the CO² emissions of different vegetables.

Since the official formation (October 2017-April 2018)

After formation of the council, internal activities concentrated very much on clarifying roles and agreeing on effective ways of communication between the different council elements, i.e. the representative body with the spokespeople team, the topic-related committees with their respective spokespeople, the coordinating group and the part-time coordinator. Information flows among the different bodies of the council were sometimes facilitated by some members’ overlapping roles, for example being in a committee and the representative body. Especially in the first phase, the coordinating group met regularly with the new coordinator in order to support her. In the meantime, the committees organized themselves, clarified their goals and started to undertake several activities, such as excursions to local farms (Producer-Consumer Relations/Education and Events), approaching the authorities with regard to planting orchards (Edible City) or the local farmers market to discuss means of reducing food waste (Food Appreciation). Aside from these activities, the council organized its first networking meeting between the FPC initiatives in Lower Saxony and started to prepare a participative process aiming at developing a comprehensive food strategy for the city of Oldenburg, with a first workshop in summer 2018.

3.2 Factors contributing to council formation

Building on the elements that influenced the formation process presented in 3.1, this section identifies three major factors that affected the formation process (Table 2) to a different degree at different stages, but significantly contributed to turning a local grass-roots initiative into a distinct institution. These factors include the kinds of individuals involved, the processes and locations used, and the local conditions and specific circumstances, in this case especially the ready availability of funding (see 3.1.5) in Oldenburg.

3.2.1 People

To establish an FPC, an initiator is needed to motivate a group of people fascinated by the idea and willing to put effort in establishing structures. In the case of the Oldenburg FPC, the initiator had a background in NGO work with an emphasis on development and had come across FPCs while traveling in the US.

In addition to initiators, a group of interested and motivated people is necessary to manage the workload and to move the process of establishing an FPC forward. While individual motivations for joining such a group might vary, in addition to being drawn to the idea of an FPC these people need to be willing to invest time and resources to establish structures over the course of a longer period of time, in the case of the Oldenburg FPC for 18 months. More specifically, these individuals had to commit to establishing processes and creating an infrastructure, which allows others to join at a later stage when an FPC has already been institutionalized. Some members seemed to be particularly drawn to the early stages of the project. As one member of the coordinating group put it, “I like to do project work and working in a team but now it just takes too long. I get impatient and just feel that I’d like to start a new project” (Interview 3).

3.2.2 Infrastructure

The initiators and individuals who come together to establish an FPC have to agree on how they will collaborate. As the Oldenburg case demonstrates, it is necessary to establish basic structures and processes, for example with regard to the frequency and sequence of meetings and record-keeping, in part because these groups strive to be transparent and because of the high turnover of members during the early phases of establishing an FPC. Interviewees agreed that it was very helpful that one member was in charge of preparing and moderating meetings and thereby facilitating the process. A Dragon Dreaming workshop, moderated by a new group member six months prior to the pre-formation, helped the Oldenburg initiative to sort out their working processes, for example by forming small working groups that focused on specific tasks formerly addressed in the regular plenary.

To involve individuals with different personal and professional backgrounds and different political affiliations in the process, an integrative space for regular meetings and bigger events was found to be helpful. Although they had the option of using, for example, a space owned by an affiliated NGO free of charge, the group members in Oldenburg decided to meet at a location called Kreativlabor (see 3.1.5), which allowed them to attract a wide range of potential members representing different perspectives and demographics.

3.2.3 External support

To reach the point of establishing an FPC, initiatives also need positive feedback and external support. In the Oldenburg case, networking and publicity turned out to be key activities in that respect. Extending the group's network helped them reach more people interested in the council and willing to collaborate in the future, for example politicians from the city council. Furthermore, new volunteers joined the core group preparing the formation and provided short-term practical help with respect to organizing the event at which the FPC was officially established.

As the workload increased approaching council formation, the limitations of voluntary work became more apparent. Interviewees in Oldenburg indicated that it was difficult to accomplish the various tasks related to council formation and to keep track of everything. For being able to receive public funding, they joined the local association Transfer. The application for a staff coordinator position to reduce their workload, and the prospect of its success, motivated the volunteers to continue to work toward establishing an FPC.

These results illustrate that both internal and external factors shape the formation of FPCs initiated by civil society groups. These enabling factors are crucial at different stages in the formation process (see Table 2). Internal factors seem to be necessary conditions to start a process, i.e. an initiator and a group of motivated people, as well as essential to keep the process going and to follow up on the initial euphoria, i.e. establishing suitable working processes and finding integrative meeting places. As broad stakeholder involvement is required and voluntary work capacities are limited, initiatives might still not reach the stage of council formation without external help such as networks and funding.

Table 2 From initiative to institution: Process model on FPC emergence

| <i>Temporal dimension</i> | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <i>Main contributing factor</i> | People: Initiator(s) and a supporting group | Infrastructure: Working processes and spaces | External support: Networks and funding |
| <i>Focus of activities</i> | Initiating council formation | Keeping the process going | Preparing council formation |

4. Discussion

This case study of the FPC Oldenburg reveals several key elements and factors that affect the emergence and subsequent institutionalization of FPCs. As this case shows, elements such as developing a self-

understanding or creating structures, and factors such as people or internal processes significantly contribute to this process. While some of the circumstances may be unique, the model on the emergence process developed based on the Oldenburg case could serve as a template for other grassroots initiatives. In this section, the specific findings of this study will be discussed in the context of other emerging FPCs and— given the strong increase of initiatives during the study period – as regards three major policy implications of this recent development.

4.1 People: initiator(s) and a supporting group

The specific finding of this study, namely that initiators tend to have a professional background related to the food system, is in line with other reports addressing this issue. In the case of Berlin, for example, initiators were also characterized by a broad diversity of backgrounds related to the local food system (Pohl & Oertel, 2018, p. 209). It should be noted that as the number of FPCs in Germany has increased in recent years, it has become much easier for individuals to get in touch with local FPCs or to contact those in other cities. Traveling abroad and tapping into international networks might still be relevant for those who want to learn more about FPCs or who hope to benefit from the experience of initiatives in other countries, but it is likely that prior experience will become less important. For example, non-expert initiators, mostly civil society actors affiliated with grassroots initiatives, could draw on the expertise provided by the network of FPCs in German-speaking countries, established at their first congress in 2017. This group could, however, also include public officials who seek to initiate this kind of process.

As shown in the case of the Oldenburg FPC, initiators can only be successful if they join forces with individuals who are committed to the cause from the very beginning. Instead of simply joining, for example, the local food sharing group, the individuals in Oldenburg decided to develop structures and dealt with a wide range of related tasks. In this sense, their voluntary engagement may differ from that of others in groups focused on specific food issues. How and to what extent these motivated individuals are different from other food activists has yet to be investigated. Responses by interviewees indicate that the desire to affect change and to create something new might be one reason for individuals to get involved in the early stages of the process.

4.2 Infrastructure: working processes and spaces

As suggested by the results concerning the Oldenburg FPC, establishing a basic infrastructure and assigning specific tasks to individuals or small working groups are important steps toward professionalization and institutionalization. From a management perspective, this allows initiatives to streamline processes during the early phases. Ideally, initiatives might also want to give newcomers options when it comes to new tasks to build on their interests and abilities. To increase motivation and create long-term commitment, initiatives would also be well advised to integrate newcomers to a greater extent than in the case of the Oldenburg FPC. Social activities involving the entire team, for example celebrations after successful events, were regarded as a success factor for establishing a council by both the coordinating group in Oldenburg and by members affiliated with other local initiatives.

As shown in the case of the Oldenburg FPC, it is important for initiatives to meet at neutral and readily accessible locations. Affiliation with specific organizations might discourage people who are eager to contribute but do not fully agree with the work of, for example, a specific NGO. If FPCs do want to be umbrella organizations, they need to emphasize commonalities, shared interests and concerns. A more neutral space, such as the Kreativlabor in Oldenburg, may also prevent some undesirable developments, for example a small group of individuals exerting too much influence on the process. This consideration might also be relevant when choosing venues for large-scale events prior to council formation and council activities afterwards, for example the development of a local food strategy.

4.3 External support: networks and funding

While it is important to attract motivated people who seek to move the idea forward and who establish the basic infrastructure at the beginning, initiatives need to reach out to other demographics and attract other kinds of external support if they want to establish an institution. To achieve this goal and official recognition, they need to involve not only citizens but also policymakers. Because FPCs initiated by civil society in Germany usually do not have the right to be heard in food-related decision-making

processes, they need to develop local, regional, and national networks and promote their efforts, for example at public events.

To overcome the limits of initiatives developed by volunteers, emerging FPCs need to acquire funding to hire a staff coordinator prior to institutionalization. In the case examined here, funding was, compared to other FPC initiatives, readily available. In the case of Hanover, it took two years to have funds approved, a delay that adversely affected the activities of this initiative. As also discussed at the first networking congress, finding and securing funding has been a major concern for most if not all emerging FPCs in Germany. To be eligible for external financial support, especially public funds, they need, as discussed above, to become legally registered associations. Initiatives therefore either join existing ones, as in the Oldenburg or the Cologne cases, or they create a new one, for example in the Berlin case, an approach that gives them greater administrative freedom. Public funding acquired by German initiatives is usually tied to specific short-term projects; in the Oldenburg case, the initial funding was limited to one year. A lack of a long-term perspective and phases without funding might lead to considerable turnover in terms of staff. Regardless of the financial situation, volunteers continue to play an important role even if initiatives have the wherewithal to hire a coordinator, usually on a part-time basis. In some cases, FPCs might even still be entirely run by volunteers long after they have been established.

4.4 Policy implications

The findings of this study on the emergence of FPCs in Germany have three major policy implications. These correspond with current developments related to food systems that might have led to the increasing dynamic of FPC emergence in Germany during the study period. First, establishing an FPC might be a means of connecting food-related sustainability initiatives and individuals concerned about the current food system. In this sense, they could function as *umbrella organizations for sustainability initiatives* that may also involve other more or less closely related initiatives, for example those working on soil or water issues. This approach may allow these kinds of initiatives to advance their agenda by tapping into an existing network, and, in turn, FPCs might fully realize their potential by developing strategic alliances or coalitions and by drawing on the expertise and influence of established initiatives. Second, FPCs, which can be understood as a response to the need to find holistic solutions to current problems in the food system, could reconnect, as in the case of the Oldenburg FPC, producers, consumers, and other food system stakeholders. In this sense, FPCs might serve, in line with their core mission, as *platforms for a dialogue among food system stakeholders*. Third, FPCs might contribute to the development of food policy, particularly at the local level. In the case of the Toronto (Welsh & MacRae, 1998, p. 252) and Oldenburg FPCs, individuals involved in the initiatives sought to address what they perceived as a gap in policy, namely a lack of consideration of food issues by local governments. FPCs might thus become actors in what has been referred to as food democracy by giving citizens the opportunity to regain control over food beyond mere consumption (Hassanein, 2003). FPCs thereby can also contribute to the broader debate on involving and representing a diversity of stakeholders in food policy decisions (Timotijevic et al., 2011). Political commitments such as the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (Massari & Allievi, 2016; Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, 2015) also stress the importance of enhancing stakeholder participation. In short, FPCs might function as *intermediaries between citizens and policymakers*.

These three implications are, to some extent, reflected in the three phases of the emergence process (Table 2). During the first phase, the focus might be more on bringing together those who already contribute to the push toward sustainable food systems. In the next phases, different stakeholders from the entire food system could come together using the platform provided by the FPC. In the third phase in particular, FPCs, as intermediaries between citizens and policymakers, extend networks and gather political support as they evolve into institutions. This theoretical understanding of the processes can be used, for example, to generate grassroots support and to strategically develop FPCs. More specifically, it can help initiatives navigate some of the initial obstacles.

The theoretical model proposed here can also be used to evaluate the potential political impact of FPCs. Influencing food policies is assumed to be at the core of any FPC's mission (Scherb et al., 2012), but during the emergence process, this influence seems to be limited to functions such as raising awareness of food issues (Walsh, Taggart, Freedman, Trapl, & Borawski, 2015). Nevertheless, crucial decisions,

for example with regard to member composition or institutional affiliation, are made during this period, and these strongly influence the ways in which FPCs might influence policies at a later stage (N.N., n.d.). This does not mean that an FPC's agenda and related organizational structures might not change after council formation or that initiatives might not face severe challenges balancing different objectives, for example when they seek to bring together sustainability initiatives and a wide range of stakeholders embedded in predominantly conventional food systems. The kind and level of influence on policymaking can be assessed with the theoretical model proposed here.

6. Conclusions

This case study analyzed the emergence process of an FPC and proposed a theoretical model including three distinct phases and the key factors of people, infrastructure, and external support. This study also identified different policy implications of FPCs at different stages of the emergence process of FPC initiatives as umbrella organizations for sustainability initiatives, as platforms for a dialogue among food system stakeholders, and as intermediaries between citizens and policymakers. Pointing to several gaps in the current food system, these findings also provide a tentative explanation for the emergence of the phenomenon of FPCs. The constant rise of FPC initiatives, also in other countries, i.e. the US and Canada, is however still little understood and deserves future research. It is, for example, not clear how current trends in food-related policymaking may contribute or prevent the emergence of FPCs. It is also possible that not all concerns with regard to the current food system can ultimately be addressed by a single institution. The findings presented here have important implications for a wide range of actors and stakeholders in the food system, especially at the local level. Grassroots initiatives can, for example, use the theoretical model proposed here to develop FPCs and to avoid potential challenges. Local policymakers can likewise draw on the findings of this study to involve citizens in policymaking and to advance food democracy. Future studies could empirically test the validity of this model using larger national or international samples. More specifically, they could compare the developments of recently established councils and examine the relative importance of factors contributing to council formation. Comparative studies considering FPCs in other European countries or beyond would be relevant because they could shed light on cultural factors affecting the emerging institutional phenomenon of FPCs.

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Article

Food Policy Councils as Loci for Practising Food Democracy? Insights from the Case of Oldenburg, Germany

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Abstract

In the highly concentrated and consolidated 21st century food systems, a broad range of stakeholders are rarely involved in food-related decision-making processes. One innovative institutional response is the establishment of food policy councils (FPCs). These institutions are often initiated by civil society actors and seek to transform prevailing agro-industrial food systems. They aim to raise awareness for alternative practises of food consumption and production, and they try to shape food policies at different governance levels. FPCs have been acclaimed for their democratic potential in the past. This study uses the five key dimensions of food democracy identified by Hassanein (2008) to assess the ways in which FPCs might represent loci for practising food democracy. This is achieved by taking one of the first FPCs in Germany as an example. During a two-year study period (2016–2018), the emergence of the FPC Oldenburg was studied through participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Data analysis reveals examples of, as well as challenges related to, all five dimensions of food democracy. In addition, the in-depth analysis of the case also illustrates the importance of taking additional aspects into account, i.e., openness and transparency. Looking at an additional dimension of food democracy, which covers the “How?” of the deliberative process, might allow for a more nuanced analysis of the democratic potential of food initiatives in the future.

Keywords

civil society; empowerment; food citizenship; food democracy; food policy council

Issue

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1. Introduction

In the highly concentrated and consolidated 21st century food system, citizen participation in food-related decision-making processes in Western democracies has mainly been limited to indirect control by representative democratic institutions. These processes have also been influenced by professional organizations and interest groups. It is perhaps the perceived outsized influence of some of these groups which has contributed to a lack of support for policy measures and a legitimacy crisis of the representative democratic system (Renting, Schermer, & Rossi, 2012, pp. 296–297). More specifically, food citizenship—i.e., the involvement of citizens in food-related decision-making processes—has been ad-

versely affected by four developments: the corporate control of the food chain, the limited information available to consumers about products, the manipulation of supermarkets to increase sales, and a proliferation of deskilling convenience food (Welsh & MacRae, 1998, p. 243). These developments notwithstanding, the food system affects people’s daily life in a very intimate way, which might provide a strong motivation and opportunity for individuals to reclaim their citizenship.

In the context of diminishing food citizenship, “civil society-based initiatives become an important source of innovation through social learning, the building of new capacities and by creating ‘space to manoeuvre’ for organizing food production, distribution, and consumption differently” (Renting et al., 2012, p. 298). These ini-

tiatives reflect new relationships between, on the one hand, civil society and markets (active involvement in re-constructing alternative systems of food provisioning) and, on the other hand, between civil society and public institutions (civic engagement in shaping public opinion, culture, institutions and policies by communication, lobbying, and political activism; Renting et al., 2012, p. 300). Alternative food networks are but one example of the new connections which have emerged in recent decades (Goodman, Dupuis, & Goodman, 2012).

The emerging phenomenon of food policy councils (FPCs) seems to address both new linkages: These initiatives are mainly initiated by civil society (Harper et al., 2009, p. 25) and are striving to bring together stakeholders from a variety of sectors related to food, including public institutions and business. Their main aim is to influence local food policies, but under their umbrella, new food markets also emerge, e.g., community-supported agriculture. They comprise various representatives from the different segments of the food system community (e.g., members of community organizations, civil society organizations, the retail sector, and nutritional education) in order to discuss, coordinate, and influence the local food policy (Stierand, 2014, p. 169). FPCs can be regarded as concrete examples of a deliberate attempt to develop the practise of food democracy (Allen, 2010, p. 301; Hassanein, 2003, p. 79). Carlson and Chappell (2015) emphasize FPCs' potentially unique role in connecting the "How?" of deliberative processes with the "What?" of food access and justice. They furthermore stress FPCs' high potential for being "inclusive, transparent, and intentional spaces for dialogue" (p. 15). A tentative assessment of the democratic potential of FPCs based on a power-based concept of complex democracy is given by Bornemann and Weiland (2019).

Originating in the US in the early 1980s, the number of FPCs in North America has been increasing ever since, especially over the last decade. Based on a comprehensive survey, the latest Food Policy Report refers to 341 active councils in North America and Canada (Bassarab, Santo, & Palmer, 2019, p. 3). One well-known example is the Toronto FPC in Canada, which has also been discussed in terms of food democracy. Providing a mechanism for people's active participation in shaping the food system was an explicit goal of the Toronto FPC from its very beginning (Welsh & MacRae, 1998, p. 238). Its initial set up as a round table with people of differing political views and a variety of food system sectors (p. 250) is still characteristic of many FPCs. In contrast to North America, FPCs are a rather new institutional phenomenon in Europe, especially in Germany. The first two FPCs formed in 2016 in the cities of Cologne and Berlin. During the period of this study, four more FPCs were established in German cities (Frankfurt, Dresden, Oldenburg and Kiel). Currently, there are around 40 more FPC initiatives in Germany and German-speaking countries planning to form FPCs. To the best of my knowledge, no research has been done on these initiatives and their potential regarding food democracy.

This article seeks to disentangle a variety of aspects that potentially make FPCs loci for practising food democracy. Participation of citizens in the food system requires places where citizens have the opportunity to express and negotiate their interests and concerns. To study different expressions of food citizenship, it is necessary to move beyond simply conceptualizing food as a commodity and people as consumers (Welsh & MacRae, 1998, p. 240). Along these lines, this study aims to apply and refine existing conceptualizations of food democracy. The analytical framework developed by Hassanein, consisting of five key dimensions of food democracy, is meant to serve as a lens for analysing food initiatives and their democratic characteristics (Hassanein, 2008, p. 306).

This lens was applied to the emerging phenomenon of FPCs in Germany. The aim was to investigate one of the first German FPCs, the exemplary case of the FPC in Oldenburg (a city with approximately 167,000 inhabitants in Lower Saxony) in terms of food democracy. The process of its formation was studied in a qualitative case study between 2016 and 2018. The analysis of the emerging FPC Oldenburg (1) allows for a more nuanced understanding of the particular case and (2) represents a key step in conceptualizing how FPCs, in general, can contribute to a strengthening of food citizenship. By analysing the phenomenon of FPCs from a food democracy perspective and by extending Hassanein's analytical framework by adding additional aspects to be taken into account, this study contributes to existing research on food democracy both empirically and conceptually.

After an introduction to the food democracy concept and Hassanein's operationalization in particular (Section 2), the methodological approach for studying the phenomenon of FPCs in terms of food democracy will be explained in greater detail (Section 3). In the subsequent section, the results of the analysis will be presented vis-à-vis each food democracy dimension identified by Hassanein (Section 4). In the following section, the findings of this study will be discussed in the broader context of emerging FPCs in Germany and regarding the practise and concept of food democracy more generally (Section 5). The article concludes with a short summary and considerations concerning further research.

2. Conceptual Background

The food democracy concept is based on the assumption that food is more than a commodity and that people are more than consumers (Hassanein, 2003, p. 79; Welsh & MacRae, 1998, p. 239). In contrast to the ongoing process of diminishing food citizenship mentioned above, food democracy is about citizens having the power to determine agro-food policies and practises locally, regionally, nationally, and globally: The concept strives for active citizen participation in shaping the food system (Hassanein, 2003, p. 79). Food democracy, therefore, challenges the anti-democratic forces of control and claims the rights and responsibilities of citizens to participate in decision-

making instead (Hassanein, 2003, p. 83). According to Hassanein, every incremental step of pragmatic politics should be oriented towards the vision of an ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially just system of food and agriculture. As achieving sustainability involves conflict over values, food democracy considers active participation and political engagement as necessary prerequisites if solutions to the dominant system are to be achieved (Hassanein, 2003, pp. 84–85). For Hassanein, active citizen participation is needed to achieve sustainability. In turn, citizen participation as such does not necessarily lead to more sustainable outcomes (Newig, Challies, Jager, Kochskaemper, & Adzersen, 2017).

One basic principle of substantive democracy is that people should have an equal opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them. Taking this notion of democracy seriously, the core of the food democracy concept “is the idea that all people participate actively and meaningfully in shaping food systems” (Hassanein, 2008, p. 289). In order to build and extend the theory of food democracy, Hassanein suggests an analytical framework consisting of five key dimensions of food democracy (Hassanein, 2008, pp. 290–291):

1. Collaborating towards food system sustainability;
2. Becoming knowledgeable about food and the food system;
3. Sharing ideas about the food system with others;
4. Developing efficacy concerning food and the food system; and
5. Acquiring an orientation towards the community good.

The first dimension (i.e., collaboration towards food system sustainability) refers to the need for partnerships which may increase citizens’ power and which may thus make a difference beyond individual decisions and actions. Effecting changes towards sustainability requires strong coalitions that involve differing interests (Hassanein, 2008, p. 290). Becoming knowledgeable about food and the food system is an additional dimension of food democracy because knowledge is considered a prerequisite for meaningful citizen participation: “Hence, food democracy means that people have a broad knowledge of the food system and its various facets” (Hassanein, 2008, p. 290). Furthermore, being engaged in deliberation and having shared ideas (dimension 3) are assumed to help people make better decisions for both themselves and others: Ongoing discussion and deliberation are therefore key to food democracy as they help citizens clarify issues and scrutinize their own values. The fourth dimension of food democracy (developing efficacy concerning food and the food system) relates to citizens’ ability to determine their relationship to food and to address and solve community problems instead of just being passive consumers. Lastly, acquiring an orientation of the community good implies a willingness to recognize the value of mutual support and interdepen-

dence, and to promote the well-being of the community. This sense of, and care for, the public good is central to food democracy and requires citizens to go beyond their self-interest (Hassanein, 2008, pp. 290–291).

Hassanein’s attempt to operationalize the concept of food democracy was one the first and remains highly influential. It can help researchers and practitioners identify strengths and weaknesses in alternative agri-food initiatives concerning their democratic characteristics (Hassanein, 2008, p. 306).

3. Methodology

The recently founded FPC in Oldenburg, Lower Saxony, serves as an exemplary case of the emerging phenomenon of FPCs in Germany. The formation process of one of the first FPCs in Germany was studied between April 2016 and April 2018 in a qualitative case study, including participant observations, semi-structured stakeholder interviews, and document analysis. The rich dataset of eight participant observations, nine interviews, and a huge number of documents (e.g., internal protocols) allows for a detailed analysis of the FPC initiative. Data collection followed an iterative process between data collection and analysis that was carefully documented. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and transferred to the software Atlas.ti for coding. All data collected from the case is in German and the quotations in this article are my translations. Additional data on other emerging FPC initiatives were collected during my participation in the first and second networking congress between FPC initiatives in German-speaking countries in 2017 and 2018.

Taking the Oldenburg case as an example to provide initial answers to the question of how FPCs might serve as loci for practising food democracy, this study considers the whole dataset on the emerging FPC but focusses on a crucial event during the formation process (the so-called pre-formation). The so-called pre-formation marks the beginning of the phase during the emergence, in which the core initiators—after a long period of preparation—presented their ideas in public and inspired a couple of new people to join their activities prior the official formation. This particular occasion, therefore, allows for a comprehensive illustration of how the five food democracy dimensions identified by Hassanein played out in the case. Data analysis was guided by five sub-questions covering the five food democracy dimensions.

This pre-formation event took place in June 2017, one and a half years after the initiative had started their activities and four months before the council was officially established. This event was organized by the coordinating group, consisting of ten volunteers who prepared the formation of the council. At that time, the initiative’s activities were solely based on voluntary work although the members had already started applying for funding. Around 30 participants joined the pre-formation event. The main aim of the event was to found different com-

mittees (thematic working groups), representing the basis of the future FPC. After an initial plenary session, the participants gathered in small groups to elaborate on the visions and tasks for the future committees of the council (see Figure 1). After a short presentation of each group in another plenary session, there was an informal slot dedicated to exchange between the participants. Afterwards, the coordinating group presented the next steps towards the formation of the council four months later.

4. Results

The results will be presented in five subsections, each covering one dimension of food democracy. As outlined in the methods section, the analysis takes the entire dataset of the case study into account but illustrates key findings with examples from the pre-formation event.

4.1. Collective Action towards Sustainability: To What Extent Does the Initiative Strive for Collective Action towards Sustainability?

The Oldenburg FPC initiative’s activities started with a first workshop in April 2016 in the format of a so-called “Political Soup Pot,” where people gather to talk about how to take action while preparing a communal meal. As one event during the city’s Future Days, an annual

series of events related to sustainable living, this workshop provided an opportunity to exchange ideas among interested citizens about how to nourish Oldenburg in the future. Local initiatives that are “following new paths regarding a socially and ecologically just food production and consumption” (invitation flyer) were invited to present their projects, e.g., on community gardens or food sharing. In small group discussions around topics collectively selected in the plenary, such as food waste or education, the workshop participants exchanged ideas about how to move forward. One group discussed the idea of establishing an FPC in the city of Oldenburg in order to give the pre-existing transformative efforts a common voice.

After this event, a core group of about ten volunteers prepared the formation of the FPC and launched the pre-formation stage one year later. During this event, four different committees (see Figure 1) formed and the participants started planning future activities. The committees on different food-related topics had the main function of bringing together pre-existing transformative activities in Oldenburg and creating a network. These committees were meant to be open for everyone interested in participating based on their interests and resources. More formally, the 15 members of the representative body of the council (see Figure 1), equally covering civil society, public administration/politics, and business were formally

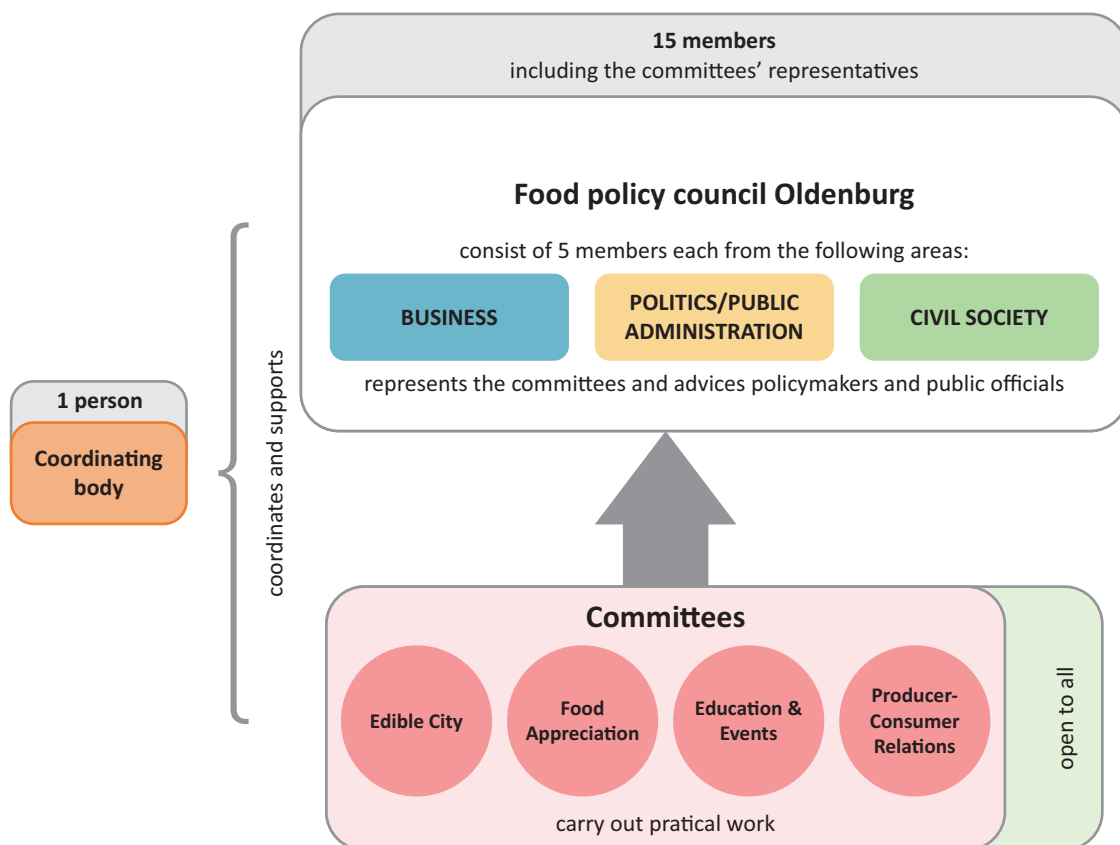


Figure 1. Structure of the emerging FPC initiative in Oldenburg, presented at the formation event (by Desirée Diering, my translation).

ected for an initial period of two years shortly before the official establishment in October 2017. At that stage of the emergence of the FPC, the volunteers successfully acquired public funding for a part-time coordinator for the first year following the formation. All meetings, activities, and events of the initiative were open to the public and announced in advance on the homepage.

At the pre-formation event in June 2017, the coordinating group presented the motto they had agreed upon as a baseline for the future work of the FPC: “Together for sustainable nutrition in the region,” including the elements “regional, fair, need-oriented, self-determined, and ecological” (presentation at the pre-formation event). During this presentation, the initiators also outlined the need for dialogue between different stakeholders, e.g., producers and consumers, but also processors, retailers, and public officials. They also emphasized the ideal of having all of these groups being involved in the council, either as a representative or as an active member in one of the committees. The FPC initiative strives for collective action towards sustainability based on a broad group of stakeholders agreeing on a shared set of values regarding more sustainable food production and consumption.

In the emergence phase, the initiative’s members were not able to agree on a more detailed version of their vision. Apart from disagreements, they also did not feel that they should determine specific criteria prior to the official formation without being able to take future members into account. After the council had been established, the representative body started a discussion about specific criteria and installed a working group to develop these in greater detail.

4.2. Knowledge about Food and the Food System: How Does the FPC Initiative Support Individual Learning about Food and the Food System?

In its early stages, the FPC initiative offered numerous opportunities for learning about the food system, simply by making it possible for individuals to get in touch with one another. Coming together on this multi-stakeholder platform, individuals who were ready to collaboratively strive for a transformation of the current system, encountered a number of different aspects of the food system. This diversity of perspectives was also a result of different ways to be involved, ranging from voluntary engagements in existing food initiatives, e.g., food sharing, to formal professional work, e.g., as a restaurant owner or employee of a retail company. The initiative mostly focused on the local food system, but dissatisfaction with the globalised food system often framed their activities. At the first workshop, for example, a food activist from South Africa, Zayaan Khan, gave a presentation about current challenges in the global food system and the need for local responses.

At the pre-formation event roughly a year later, the coordinating group defined education and the raising of

awareness as central tasks of the initiative. The members presented examples of food-related events in Oldenburg where they informed the public about the initiative’s goals (e.g., a sustainability week at the local university or a food truck event). On these occasions, the group members tried to make people think about food issues, for example with a memory game on the CO₂ emissions of different vegetables (presentation pre-formation event). The committees, as initiated at the pre-formation, particularly supported self-organized learning in the four different thematic areas (see Figure 1) chosen by participants. Despite huge interest in the work of the Education and Events Committee, it was initially difficult to find people willing to take on responsibility because of limited resources. In the following, the committees’ activities ranged from excursions to farms in the region, harvesting and processing locally grown food to workshops in schools. These activities provided learning opportunities about how to enact alternatives to the predominant methods of food production and consumption in daily life.

Despite many activities being undertaken during the initial phase, at times it was still difficult to keep all the committees alive. This is why the FPC turned the committees into more concrete and manageable projects shortly after the end of the study period.

4.3. Sharing Ideas with Others: How Does the FPC Initiative Enable Discussion and Deliberation?

In its emerging phase, the FPC initiative provided space for discussion and deliberation in various ways. Internally, the coordinating group was organized on a grassroots basis, implying a commitment to consensus and openness to new members. In practise, decisions were often prepared by a small group of people (e.g., the formulation of the initiative’s aims or a concept for an event), which were then discussed and agreed upon in a plenary session (Interview 2). This practise implied that some people were more involved in certain steps than others; however, they always fed the results back into the whole group for comments and took decisions collectively to try to find a consensus. Majority voting was only rarely used. Someone always took minutes of the meetings so people were able to follow what had been discussed. In the course of their activities, the group distributed certain tasks to individual members (e.g., the facilitation of their regular meetings). This decision in particular facilitated smooth meetings and a more structured setting for discussing contested issues. After the official formation, protocols were made public on the initiative’s homepage.

Regarding external communication, the group members approached a huge number of people from different backgrounds (e.g., the mayor or different parties) and also participated in public food-related events, such as panel discussions with representatives from the conventional farmers’ organization where they were also con-

fronted with those who did not share their vision of sustainability. At the pre-formation event, the coordinating group announced dialogue between different stakeholders as one of the initiative's central tasks. As with the other events they had organized and as with their regular meetings, they asked the participants to introduce themselves. Additionally, the organizers explicitly dedicated certain time slots to the informal exchange of ideas (e.g., after each committee presented the ideas previously elaborated in the small group discussions).

As time went on, it became increasingly difficult for the members to monitor their activities (Internal Meeting 23). Even though the initiative tried to have regular reports from each committee in the representative body's meetings, they did not always have this update due to a lack of presence or other topics being given greater priority. For newcomers, it was sometimes not clear whom they should talk to. Once, for example, a woman came to the representative's body meeting to report on a potentially interesting topic for the initiative but was then sent directly to the Edible City Committee.

4.4. Efficacy with Respect to Food and the Food System: What Kind of Opportunities Does the FPC Initiative Provide for Experiencing Capacities to Act and Actually Having an Effect?

The emerging FPC initiative was explicitly aimed at establishing new structures to allow individual citizens to participate: "I think we firstly need to learn democracy, to really talk and listen to each other and then becoming engaged at local level," as one interviewee pointed out when talking about the initiative's motto "Together for sustainable nutrition in the region" (Interview 7). The group also referred to self-determination as an important part of the realization of their vision (presentation pre-formation event). In the course of their activities, they created a variety of opportunities for experiencing capacities to act and to actually have an effect. On the one hand, citizens were always invited to join the committees and the activities undertaken (e.g., a bike tour to orchards in the city). On the other hand, the coordinating group always tried to organize their events according to their values and were, although being limited financially, always able to offer high-quality organic food due to donations from regional companies and their networking activities. In this sense, their activities provided a number of examples of how people can actually make a difference.

As regards to influencing policymakers and public officials, the initiative's members—despite many disappointments in the beginning—also experienced cases where they actually had an impact, e.g., the minister of food and agriculture becoming the FPC initiative's patron, the positive approval of a funding request, or the invitation to be part of a working group on improving the city's school catering. A strong motivator to go ahead with the actual establishment of the council was the strong reso-

nance manifested in new people joining the group after the pre-formation event. As one interviewee said: "After a long period of discussion, also including phases of internal difficulties manifested in less capacities for preparing the event, we just needed such a success to go ahead" (Interview 7).

4.5. Orientation towards the Community Good: To What Extent Does the FPC Initiative Encourage Individuals to Go beyond Their Self-Interest and Care about the Public Good?

In the emerging FPC initiative, there was a general orientation towards collective action as outlined in Section 4.1. As a result of their holistic approach "Together for sustainable nutrition in the region," being part of the initiative as such required an interest in food as a public good. The members of the coordinating team joined the initiative because of dissatisfaction with the current system of food production and consumption, e.g., the lost connection between producers and consumers (Interview 3) or decreasing food skills among children (Interview 4). In the Edible City Committee, orientation towards the community good became maybe the most obvious, e.g., when thinking about how urban areas could be used for planting crop plants in collaboration with the city. In the Producer–Consumer Relations Committee, participants were introduced to a recently founded community-supported agriculture initiative. This approach points exactly to the aspect of mutual support and interdependence between food producers and consumers. Additionally, the committee members organized several excursions to farms in the region. Here, participants were able to get in touch with farmers and to develop a better understanding of food production patterns. Internally, many members of the coordinating group used their individual skills for the good of the initiative (e.g., moderation, writing, or presentation skills).

At some point, many volunteers felt overwhelmed by the number of tasks and it became obvious that a staff coordinator was needed to support them. Several members also quit the group because they were no longer able to help due to other obligations. And among those who stayed, there was a constant feeling of doing too much for the initiative at the expense of their private life (clearly articulated by Interviewee 9). This situation improved when the initiative received funding to hire a part-time coordinator after the official formation of the council.

5. Discussion

The analysis of the emerging FPC initiative in terms of food democracy elucidates a broad spectrum of aspects that potentially make this case and comparable cases loci for practising food democracy. The analysis also reveals challenges related to the five dimensions. In the following section, the results of the case will be dis-

cussed and contextualized in the broader landscape of the first German FPCs, which have been established in different cities during the study period (Cologne, Berlin, Frankfurt, Dresden, Kiel) as well as the numerous initiatives which were planning to form at that time and participated in the networking congresses of emerging initiatives in German-speaking countries in 2017 and 2018. Building on these reflections, implications for the practise and the concept of food democracy and FPCs' potential to democratise the food system will be discussed.

5.1. Contextualizing the Case of the Oldenburg FPC

Building on its broad membership and its multi-faceted activities, the emerging Oldenburg FPC can be interpreted as an example of a civil society initiative trying to establish new relationships between civil society and public institutions as well as new relationships between civil society and business (Renting et al., 2012). Indeed, the FPC Oldenburg did attract a variety of stakeholders in its emerging phase, e.g., people from all three targeted societal realms (civil society, public administration/politics and business) who became members of its representative body, as was also the case in Cologne. The FPC in Berlin, to give another example, also approached and attracted a variety of stakeholders in its emerging phase, but this initiative did not want certain groups to become members of the FPC (e.g., policymakers and public officials). Despite differences in member composition, all emerging initiatives build on the idea of bringing together a diversity of stakeholders in order to foster collective action towards sustainability (dimension one).

The in-depth analysis of the Oldenburg case based on Hassanein's dimensions illustrated in various ways how an emerging FPC can serve as a locus for developing a practise of food democracy (Allen, 2010) by offering opportunities for learning, sharing ideas, experiencing efficacy, and strengthening a sense of care for the community good. Despite a general focus on the local, involving experts from abroad seems to be a learning strategy used in the emerging German FPC movement. Having an international guest at the first event as in the Oldenburg case seems to be an exception and might be explained by the professional background of the initiator, who worked at a development NGO. Already during the first networking congress in 2017, however, international guests from Brazil, Canada, the UK, and the US played an important role by sharing their knowledge and experience with the emerging initiatives in Germany.

Raising awareness of food system issues more generally seems to be a central topic for all initiatives that were established during the study period as reflected in corresponding committees or working groups dedicated to educational activities. Despite a huge interest in that topic, it was initially difficult to implement the activities of the Education and Events Committee in the Oldenburg case because of a continual lack of personnel. As dealing with limited and shifting personnel is a crucial topic

for many groups of volunteers, it might also be helpful to learn from initiatives at similar stages. Another emerging FPC initiative in Germany, for example, institutionalized continuous learning opportunities by starting their regular meetings with a short input on a specific topic (conversation second networking congress 2018). Such an approach might be appropriate for emerging FPCs and similar initiatives because it ensures ongoing mutual learning and provides an opportunity to step back from the time-consuming discussion of everyday operations.

Regarding the provision of opportunities for discussion and deliberation (dimension three), all emerging initiatives have to negotiate how to communicate with each other (e.g., in their regular meetings). In the Oldenburg case, designating a moderator for their meetings represented a crucial step in structuring their internal culture of deliberation and becoming more efficient. While the group members emphasized the positive effects (i.e., an improved flow of their meetings), attributing the moderator's role to group members is challenging and can be problematic because of personal stakes in the content under deliberation and a certain power to shape the outcome of the discussion. One solution to this role conflict might be to hire professional moderators as the organizers of the first networking congress between initiatives in Germany and German-speaking countries did. Other emerging initiatives decided to rotate the moderator's role in regular meetings. This approach allows all members to gain experience of being responsible for the process and is also applicable in the case of a lack of will or budget to hire professionals.

As the chosen structure of the Oldenburg FPC (a representative body, a coordinating team and committees) resulted in some gaps in terms of information flow, the people involved in the initiative currently rethink the structures they established and plan to have a regular plenary similar to the FPC initiative in Berlin. This format is assumed to allow for a more regular and direct sharing of ideas and projects (conversation networking congress 2018). Formats that allow sharing ideas are increasingly important for FPC initiatives that try to remain open towards new ideas and developments in their communities. These open formats might also serve as a tool for integrating new members, a concern of many emerging initiatives, which was also discussed during the first networking congress.

The emerging FPC initiative in Oldenburg provided a number of opportunities for experiencing one's actions actually having an effect (dimension four). Next to more tangible results of individual engagement such as having donated organic food at their events, for experiencing actually having an impact, it seemed essential to convince other people to join or support the initiative. The strong resonance, especially during the pre-formation event, indicated a broad interest among diverse stakeholders to shape the current food system. Instead, fluctuation of membership and varying degrees of involvement led to frustration regarding efficacy. The dilemma of not

wanting to overburden volunteers while at the same being a reliable organization seems to be a typical phenomenon in groups of volunteers (Turinsky & Nowicka, 2019, p. 261). As all emerging FPC initiatives mainly build on voluntary work, it remains a constant challenge to join forces to have an impact, which, in turn, increases motivation to go ahead.

As regards to the Oldenburg initiative's effects in the public sphere, being invited to an official working group on how to improve the city's school catering is relevant because this offer to participate implies being heard and acknowledged by public officials, at least to a certain extent. Improving public catering is also on the agenda of all other German FPCs that formed during the study period. The FPC Frankfurt, for example, is currently also part of a city's working group. This FPC is running a pilot project demonstrating that improving school meals within the current budget is possible (FPC Frankfurt, 2019). At a well-attended working group meeting during the second networking congress in 2018, it also became clear that improving public catering seems to be an area where FPCs in the early stages try to have an effect in their communities.

While FPC initiatives might raise awareness of food as a collective good in policy-making processes, they also provide many opportunities for citizens to develop a sense of care for food as a public good. The analysis of the Oldenburg FPC illustrated this with different examples, e.g., harvesting fruits from orchards or planting crops in urban areas. The initiative's variety of topics and activities seems to resonate with many people. This may also be the case because, in the FPC, people find a space where they can combine personal interests (e.g., in gardening or educating people) with an orientation towards the community good. Furthermore, pre-existing private initiatives for the community good can potentially gain more visibility through FPC initiatives, e.g., community gardens.

5.2. Implications for the Practise and the Concept of Food Democracy

Applying Hassanein's analytical framework to the Oldenburg case and its contextualisation within the broader context of pioneer initiatives in Germany demonstrated FPCs' potential to act as loci for developing a practise of food democracy in terms of the five dimensions. Despite several challenges and problems, all dimensions seem to become manifested in the emerging institutional phenomenon of FPCs. In this sense, the emergence of FPCs seems to be promising, suggesting a recent strengthening of food democracy despite the ongoing trends which tend to diminish food citizenship (Welsh & MacRae, 1998, p. 243).

The manifestations of the five food democracy dimensions in this study also demonstrate that the framework suggested by Hassanein seems to capture general aspects of food democracy that are relevant beyond the

particular initiative she was studying when identifying the five dimensions. In this sense, this study offers a certain validation of her framework. Looking for greater specificity of the food democracy concept through practical exploration (Hassanein, 2008, p. 289), the insights from the case of the Oldenburg FPC potentially also elucidate avenues for further theoretical elaboration of the food democracy concept. Hassanein acknowledges the importance of processes and basic principles of substantive democracy (Hassanein, 2008, p. 289), but these aspects are not explicitly addressed in the five dimensions. Drawing on Carlson and Chappell's understanding of FPCs as playing a potentially unique role in connecting the "How?" of deliberative processes with the "What?" of food access and justice (Carlson & Chappell, 2015, p. 15), I argue that more process-oriented aspects should also be reflected in an analytical framework identifying characteristics of food democracy. The case of the Oldenburg FPC clearly demonstrates that the how of deliberative processes matters.

In the emerging FPC initiative, both striving for transparency and openness turned out to be central working principles. Regarding transparency, the members always took minutes of the meetings and made them available online so everyone could follow their activities. At the pre-formation event, when the council initiators launched the committees, the main requirement for the committees was to work transparently (presentation pre-formation event). This process criterion of transparency is closely linked to the second criterion to add, namely openness. As the group of volunteers always invited everyone to participate in the events they launched and their meetings were open to the public, the initiative can also be interpreted as inclusive compared to other food initiatives or interest groups which promote a particular interest and represent only a small group of people.

Openness and transparency appeared to be particularly relevant in the case of the Oldenburg FPC because conflicts in the emergence phase could often be attributed to situations in which information flows were interrupted or when it was not clear whether members or committees were entirely open about their actions or motivations. As a result, the initiative agreed to follow certain procedures (e.g., taking minutes or issuing open invitations to their events). The aspect of openness towards a broad spectrum of stakeholders, perspectives, and opinions is particularly relevant for multi-stakeholder platforms such as FPCs. Openness as a working principle, however, seems to be fundamental to food democracy more generally as an open mind could be regarded as a prerequisite for sharing ideas and learning from each other (dimensions two and three).

Openness vis-à-vis members and perspectives to be included in a civil society group, however, can also make the process of agreeing on certain venues and projects more difficult. Given the diversity of actors involved during the emergence of the FPC in Oldenburg, it is not surprising that they were unable to agree on the criteria to

specify their vision in the emergence phase. Managing to remain vague, by having agreed on a general baseline understanding, can also be regarded as a means to remain open and supports the role of FPCs as multi-stakeholder platforms. The FPC Berlin, in contrast, being less open in terms of not including policymakers and public officials as members of their initiative, launched a list of demands to the government concerning the implementation of a local food strategy roughly a year after its formation, stressing more FPC's roles as advocates for particular interests. This example illustrates different degrees of openness vis-à-vis members and perspectives to be included even within the emerging FPC movement in Germany.

This study suggests that food democracy goes beyond the five dimensions identified by Hassanein. The case of FPCs demonstrates that the how of the deliberative process needs to be taken into account when studying concrete expressions of food citizenship. Although there is certainly more refinement needed regarding different manifestations of deliberative processes in different kinds of initiatives beyond FPCs, aspects related to the how of the deliberative process, e.g., transparency and openness should be considered in an analytical framework designed for studying the practise of food democracy. In their study on state-driven participation processes, Baldy and Kruse (2019) also identified transparent processes for deliberating ideas as a key category of food democracy.

5.3. FPCs' Potential to Democratise the Food System

FPCs provide an example of bottom-up democratization dynamics because they are mostly initiated by civil society. Their approach to collaboration across sectors and their aim to shape food policies, however, needs support from policymakers and public officials. Because of FPCs' orientation towards food as a public good, public support, including the funding of FPC initiatives, seems appropriate. Providing a space where practising democracy can take place requires time and resources as illustrated in the case study. If FPCs are to become recognized spaces of deliberation, there needs to be public support for providing opportunities for meaningful participation in all five key food democracy dimensions as well as for ensuring processes based on substantive democracy (e.g., transparency and openness).

Given their recent emergence, it is not yet possible to assess FPCs' impact on food-related policymaking in Germany. Having representatives from FPC initiatives at municipal working groups for improving a city's school catering can be seen as a first opportunity for advocating for the initiatives' beliefs (e.g., more organic and more regionally produced food) in policy-making processes. FPC initiatives are able to negotiate based on a more comprehensive orientation towards the public good in contrast to stakeholders, such as organic farmers, who directly profit from a higher proportion of organic food being in the city's school catering. Such an involvement

in policymaking might be expanded to other working groups or political committees concerned with food issues. Improving food systems by providing information for policy decision-making is one of the central tasks of FPCs (Clayton, Frattaroli, Palmer, & Pollack, 2015, p. 9). This information is less specific, and possibly less biased than that provided by those advocacy groups focused on more specific concerns.

Despite reaching out to three societal realms (civil society, business, public officials, and policymakers), the exemplary case studied here did not equally represent the food system's sectors. Farmers, for example, were seldom present at the initiative's events, while the food business stakeholder group of the representative body included only one farmer. The need for a stronger involvement of farmers was articulated (e.g., Interview 1) and discussed (e.g., Internal Meeting 12) but not achieved in the initial period of the FPC initiative. This lack of farmer involvement is typical for the phenomenon of FPCs: In the US, FPC members mostly represent the production, distribution, and consumption sectors (Harper et al., 2009, p. 24), but particularly at the local level, the agricultural sector appears to be underrepresented (Mooney, Tanaka, & Ciciurkaite, 2014, p. 238). Bassarab, Clark, Santo, and Palmer (2019) show that membership composition significantly influences the policy priorities of FPCs.

The potential for democratising the food system through FPCs could be assessed by who is represented in these councils. Considering that most FPCs in Germany, but also elsewhere, are initiated by civil society and primarily build on volunteers, FPCs mainly rely on those who are willing to become part of FPCs. Trying to cover different societal realms as in the case of the Oldenburg FPC is just one approach to think about member composition. Another attempt would be the approach referred to above (i.e., to have all food system sectors represented), which is often the case in FPCs initiated through government policy in the US. A recent study on representation in a public FPC in the US, however, demonstrated that representation by design and representation in practise varies considerably, for example in terms of attendance of meetings and agenda-setting (Koski, Siddiki, Sadiq, & Carboni, 2016). Their first attempt to identify factors that limit substantive representation refers e.g., to restrictive process norms, lack of structure or mission clarity and unequal resources (2016, p. 16). These findings support the argument of paying more attention to the process of how FPCs and similar initiatives practise food democracy in their day-to-day operations (e.g., regarding transparency and openness as suggested by the analysis of the Oldenburg case studied here). Any design concerning representation in FPCs should be crucially examined regarding representation in practise.

The potential for FPCs to democratise the food system should however not only be judged on who is represented and how initiatives are trying to strive for equal representation through certain working principles. By

involving citizens in decision-making processes and in other activities shaping the food system, FPCs might play an important role in empowering citizens' capacity to act. By offering different ways to participate, FPCs might also serve as an important tool concerning the legitimacy crises representative democracies are currently facing. Participation in decision-making in democratic systems is, however, not an alternative to political representation and expertise, but acts a complement to them (Fung, 2006, p. 66).

Diverse advisory councils such as FPCs—not limited to one stakeholder group but integrating citizens from various backgrounds—might represent an important tool for citizen participation in representative democracies more generally. The need for local platforms that bridge diverse forms of knowledge and expertise, has also recently been discussed in the broader context of innovations for sustainability (Perry, Patel, Bretzer, & Polk, 2018). Similar to other community-based food initiatives such as Urban Gardening, FPCs seem to provide the opportunity and space in which citizens can get involved and collaborate across different interests and perspectives. These experiences might strengthen citizens' democratic capacity (McIvor & Hale, 2015, p. 738).

6. Conclusions

This study applied Hassanein's five key dimensions of food democracy to FPCs, an emerging phenomenon that has been acclaimed for its democratic potential. In order to allow for a thorough analysis and to provide concrete examples of how these dimensions work in practise, a case study approach was chosen. Data analysis revealed that the FPC in Oldenburg, Germany, during its emerging phase provided a number of opportunities for learning, for sharing ideas, for experiencing capacities to act, and for developing a sense of care for food as a public good. The results also revealed that the initiative in Oldenburg faced several challenges related to Hassanein's key dimensions (e.g., joining forces for having an impact or creating regular spaces for sharing ideas). As the discussion revealed, these aspects seem to be relevant for other emerging FPC initiatives in Germany as well. Still, it would be desirable to have a more comprehensive survey of how these dimensions are covered by more established FPCs in different parts of the world. The analysis of the case of the Oldenburg FPC also revealed that additional aspects related to the how of deliberative democracy (e.g., openness and transparency) need to be taken into account when conceptualizing food democracy. A critical assessment of how initiatives beyond FPCs practise transparency and openness when inviting citizens to shape the food system might further our understanding of this additional dimension. The extension of Hassanein's framework by this additional dimension covering the how of deliberative processes might allow for more nuanced analyses of alternative agri-food initiatives in terms of food democracy in the future.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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[4] Legal paper

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sich bei Gewässern um sehr dynamische Lebensräume handelt, sodass sich zumindest unter ökologischen Gesichtspunkten vergleichsweise schnell neue verfestigte Zustände einstellen, werden solche deutlich kürzeren Zeiträume sogar eher die Regel als die Ausnahme sein. Dies belegen auch die Erfahrungen im Zusammenhang mit der naturschutzrechtlichen Eingriffsregelung, wo sich gezeigt hat, dass in den meisten Fällen ab einem Zeitraum von bereits zehn Jahren Ausgleichs- und Ersatzmaßnahmen keiner Entwicklungspflege mehr bedürfen, weil sich nach diesem Zeitraum die Verhältnisse ausreichend verfestigt haben.⁵² Liegen daher für die Gestalt des Gewässers maßgebliche Eingriffe oder Ereignisse zehn Jahre oder mehr zurück, spricht der erste Anschein für den Eintritt neuer verfestigter Verhältnisse. Dieser neue Zustand kann dann nicht einfach durch entsprechende behördliche Anordnung rückgängig gemacht werden. Vielmehr würde sich dies seinerseits als Gewässerausbau darstellen, der gemäß § 68 Abs. 1 WHG grundsätzlich der Planfeststellung bedarf.

Bezogen auf die nachträgliche Legalisierung einer formell illegalen Anlage ist jedoch darauf hinzuweisen, dass die Frage der verfestigten Verhältnisse lediglich für das Vorliegen eines Gewässerausbaus relevant ist. Die Rechtsfolge dieses Befunds besteht indes lediglich darin, dass bejahendenfalls gemäß § 68 Abs. 1 und 2 WHG ein Planfeststellungs- oder Plangenehmigungsverfahren durchzuführen ist. Von welchem Zustand bei Prüfung der materiell-rechtlichen Voraussetzungen für die Zulassung des Vorhabens im Planfeststellungs- bzw. Plangenehmigungsverfahren auszugehen ist, bestimmen indes weder § 67 Abs. 2 Satz 1 noch § 68 WHG, sondern beurteilt sich ausschließlich nach dem einschlägigen materiellen Recht (dazu bereits oben 3.1 bis 3.5).

5. Fazit

Demnach kann festgehalten werden, dass der Grundsatz der Maßgeblichkeit der Sach- und Rechtslage zum Zeitpunkt der Genehmigungserteilung auch im Fall der nachträglichen Legalisierung gilt. Will die Verwaltung verhindern, dass der Antragsteller in den Genuss der Früchte illegalen Handelns kommt, muss sie entsprechend den dafür bereitgehaltenen gesetzlichen Ermächtigungsgrundlagen und regelmäßig in Ausübung pflichtgemäßen Ermessens repressiv gegen jenes Handeln bzw. dessen Resultate vorgehen. Diese Korrekturmaßnahmen in Gestalt von Nutzungsuntersagungen, Wiederherstellungsanordnungen sowie Rückbau- oder Kompensationsverfügungen sind dann auch in dem der nachträglichen Legalisierung dienenden Genehmigungsverfahren zu berücksichtigen. Um Zirkelschlüsse zu vermeiden, kann im Rahmen der Ermessensausübung zum Erlass der jeweiligen Korrekturmaßnahme die Legalisierungsfähigkeit des rechtswidrigen Handelns lediglich in den Fällen ermessensleitend sein, in denen durch die rechtswidrige Schaffung von Fakten keine genehmigungsrelevanten Umstände beeinflusst worden sind. Beim Gewässerausbau sind einem repressiven Einschreiten überdies dahingehend Grenzen gesetzt, dass hier neue verfestigte Verhältnisse selbst dann den Maßstab bilden, wenn sie illegal geschaffen wurden. In diesem Fall bedarf die Wiederherstellung des Ausgangszustands ihrerseits der Planfeststellung. Solange ein entsprechender Planfeststellungsbeschluss nicht vorliegt, ist der tatsächlich vorfindliche Zustand maßgeblich.

52) Fischer/Zeidler, NuL 2009, 209, 210.

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Beiräte als Instrument einer Ernährungswende – Die Etablierung von Ernährungsräten in Deutschland

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Deutschlandweit sind Ernährungsräte im Kommen. Diese im angelsächsischen Raum als „food policy councils“ bekannten Gremien sind überwiegend zivilgesellschaftlich initiiert und versuchen z. B. durch Öffentlichkeitsarbeit oder Forderungen an Politik und Verwaltung eine Ernährungswende voranzubringen. Der Beitrag untersucht die Möglichkeiten einer stärkeren rechtlichen Verankerung dieser Gremien.

1. Einleitung

Ernährung ist ein wichtiger Teilaspekt von Nachhaltigkeit. Ziel 2 der 17 globalen Ziele für nachhaltige Entwicklung lautet: „Den Hunger beenden, Ernährungssicher-

heit und eine bessere Ernährung erreichen und eine nachhaltige Landwirtschaft fördern“. ¹ Auch wenn Hunger im engeren Sinne in Deutschland und der EU kein vordringliches Problem darstellt, ist doch die Qualität der Ernährung immer stärker in den Fokus der interessierten Öffentlichkeit gerückt. Gesunde und nachhaltige Ernährung stellt auch hier eine große Herausforderung dar. Sie ist ein wichtiges Thema im Hinblick auf Gesundheit, Umwelt und Soziales. Ernährungsbedingte Krankheiten scheinen zuzunehmen. ² Unter dem Umweltaspekt wird die Verschwendung von Ressourcen immer mehr thematisiert. Studien zeigen auf, dass pro Jahr und Kopf in Deutschland ca. 82 kg Lebensmittel in den privaten Haushalten zu

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- 1) S. Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, Die globalen Ziele für nachhaltige Entwicklung, Ziel 2, Stand 1.9.2019 abrufbar unter https://www.bmz.de/de/ministerium/ziele/2030_agenda/17_ziele/ziel_002_hunger/index.html.
- 2) S. etwa: Ungesunde Ernährung ist weltweit größtes Krankheitsrisiko, 2015, Stand 16.8.2020, abrufbar unter <https://healthcare-in-europe.com/de/news/ungesunde-ernaehrung-ist-weltweit-groesstes-krankheitsrisiko.html>.

Abfall werden.³ Die Vermeidung von Lebensmittelabfällen war ein wesentlicher Beweggrund für die Änderung der Abfallrahmenrichtlinie,⁴ was wiederum in der beabsichtigten Novelle des KrWG im Abfallvermeidungsprogramm in § 33 Abs. 3 Nr. 2 g aufgenommen wurde.⁵ Hinzu kommt die erhebliche Klimarelevanz unserer Ernährung. Auf den verschiedenen Wertschöpfungsstufen für Lebensmittel und durch die erforderlichen Transporte entstehen erhebliche Treibhausgasemissionen, die etwa 23 Prozent der jährlichen Gesamtemissionen Deutschlands ausmachen.⁶ Bestimmte Ernährungsformen schlagen hier besonders zu Buche. So ist das Treibhauspotenzial tierischer etwa viermal so hoch wie das pflanzlicher Produkte.⁷

Mit diesen und vielen weiteren Aspekten des Gesamtbereichs von Ernährung und Landwirtschaft befassen sich Ernährungsräte als neue Akteure neben den bisherigen etablierten Interessenvertretern aus der Agrarwirtschaft, der lebensmittelverarbeitenden Industrie, den Verbraucher- und Umweltverbänden und nicht zuletzt den staatlichen und kommunalen Institutionen. Ernährungsräte können als ein Unterfall der auf ein breiteres Themenspektrum gerichteten Nachhaltigkeitsräte angesehen werden. Nachhaltigkeitsräte wurden als Gremien bezeichnet, „die von Organisationen einberufen werden, um diese im Hinblick auf deren nachhaltiges Handeln zu beraten“.⁸ Übertragen auf Ernährungsräte können diese definiert werden als Gremien, deren wesentliche Aufgabe darin liegt, relevante Akteure in der gesamten Lebensmittelwertschöpfungskette von Produktion, Verarbeitung, Transport, Konsum und Entsorgung einschließlich der Vermeidung von Lebensmittelabfällen im Hinblick auf Nachhaltigkeit zu informieren und zu beraten. Sie können auch nur einzelne dieser in vielen ernährungsrelevanten Themen adressieren. Ein Ernährungsrat kann in diesem Sinne verstanden werden als „[...] eine Multi-Akteurs-Plattform, in der sich nach Möglichkeit alle diejenigen, die relevantes Wissen über, Einflussmöglichkeiten auf, Interesse an oder Ressourcen für ein nachhaltiges lokales Ernährungssystem haben, versammeln“.⁹ Die Zusammensetzung der Ernährungsräte im deutschsprachigen Raum variiert, dennoch sind in den meisten Fällen Personen aus Zivilgesellschaft, Lebensmittelwirtschaft sowie Politik und Verwaltung involviert.

Potenzieller Adressat der Ernährungsräte ist neben der Politik vor allem auch die Öffentlichkeit. Sie können in Projekten, in Arbeitsgruppen oder in alternativen Formen auf das derzeit vorherrschende Ernährungssystem einwirken und insbesondere dazu beitragen, den Kontakt zwischen Erzeugern und Verbrauchern sowie anderen Akteuren (wieder)herzustellen. Sie können das Bewusstsein in der Bevölkerung für eine nachhaltige Ernährung stärken, aber auch politische Entscheidungen in diese Richtung beeinflussen. Auf diese Weise kann die Etablierung von Ernährungsräten einen Hebelpunkt für die nachhaltige Entwicklung¹⁰ darstellen.¹¹

Der Beitrag befasst sich mit der Frage, wie und auf welchen Ebenen Ernährungsräte in Deutschland bereits aktiv sind. Darüber hinaus wird untersucht, welche rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen möglich und geeignet sind, um Ernährungsräte als neue Akteure einer Ernährungswende zu stärken. Letztlich geht es darum, welche Chancen und Möglichkeiten Ernährungsräte bieten, um eine Ernährungswende voranzubringen.

Dazu wird im Folgenden zunächst kurz geschildert, wo und in welcher Form sich bereits Ernährungsräte etabliert haben (2.). Darauf werden Einblicke in Ernährungsräte als Akteure einer Ernährungswende gegeben und es wird der Frage nachgegangen, wie insbesondere Politik und Verwaltung durch diese beraten werden können (3.). Unter 4. geht es dann um den derzeitigen rechtlichen Status von Ernährungsräten in Deutschland und die Möglichkeiten einer stärkeren rechtlichen Verankerung von Ernährungsräten, um schließlich ein Fazit zu ziehen (5.).

2. Die Etablierung von Ernährungsräten

In den Vereinigten Staaten und Kanada existieren Ernährungsräte, sogenannte „*food policy councils*“, schon seit mehreren Jahrzehnten. Die ersten Räte entstanden Anfang der 1980er Jahre in den USA, bzw. Anfang der 1990er Jahre in Kanada. Der aktuelle Bericht des Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future verdeutlicht, dass die Anzahl von Ernährungsräten in den USA und Kanada seitdem kontinuierlich zugenommen hat, mit einem besonderen Anstieg in den letzten zehn Jahren. Derzeit wird von 341 aktiven Ernährungsräten auf verschiedenen politischen Ebenen berichtet, wobei die Mehrheit (71 Prozent) auf lokaler Ebene agiert.¹² Die Ernährungsräte der ersten Stunde entstanden häufig aus informellen Koalitionen in den Bereichen Hungerbekämpfung, nachhaltige Landwirtschaft und Kommunalentwicklung.¹³ Begrenzter Zugang zu gesunden Lebensmitteln und ein Mangel an Koordination in Bezug auf Ernährungsplanung führten 1982 zur Gründung des ersten Ernährungsrats in der Stadt Knoxville, Tennessee, der seitdem viele Aktivitäten zur Verbesserung der Situation (z. B. im Bereich Schulverpflegung) angestoßen hat.¹⁴ Während anfangs ein Schwerpunkt auf sozialen Themen lag, verfolgen Ernährungsräte heute einen breiteren Ansatz, der soziale, umwelt- und gesundheitsbezogene sowie wirtschaftliche Aspekte miteinbezieht und Menschen zusammenbringt, die sich in verschiedenen Bereichen für das Thema Ernährung engagieren.¹⁵

In Europa gründeten sich erst in der vergangenen Dekade die ersten Ernährungsräte, überwiegend in Großbritannien (z. B. Bristol und Cork). Seit Kurzem gibt es auch in anderen europäischen Ländern erste Bestrebungen, ver-

- 3) Kranert et al., 2012, Ermittlung der weggeworfenen Lebensmittelmengen und Vorschläge zur Verminderung der Wegwerfrate bei Lebensmitteln in Deutschland.
- 4) S. Art. 9 Abs. 1 lit. g) der Änderungsrichtlinie (EU) 2018/851 vom 30.5.2018 zur Änderung der Richtlinie 2008/98/EG über Abfälle, ABl. 2018 L 150, S. 109.
- 5) Gesetzentwurf der Bundesregierung, Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Umsetzung der Abfallrahmenrichtlinie der Europäischen Union, Bearbeitungsstand: 3.2.2020, abrufbar unter <https://www.bmu.de/gesetz/referentenentwurf-eines-gesetzes-zur-umsetzung-der-abfallrahmenrichtlinie-der-europaeischen-union/>.
- 6) Jepsen/Vollmer/Eberle/Fels/Schomerus, Entwicklung von Instrumenten zur Vermeidung von Lebensmittelabfällen, TEXTE 85/2016 des Umweltbundesamts, S. 22f.
- 7) Ebenda, S. 24f.
- 8) Schomerus, Nachhaltigkeit braucht Institutionen – zur Institutionalisierung von Nachhaltigkeitsräten, NuR 2011, 1, 2.
- 9) Wissmann, in: Antoni-Komar/Kropp/Paech/Pfriem (Hrsg.), Transformative Unternehmen und die Wende in der Ernährungswirtschaft, 2019, S. 317.
- 10) Vgl. Abson/Abernethy/Fischer/Lang/Leventon/Ives/Newig/Schomerus/Vilsmaier/von Wehrden, Leverage points for sustainability transformation: Institutions, people and knowledge, 2016, *Ambio* 46(1):30.
- 11) Das Potenzial von Ernährungsräten als Hebelpunkte für nachhaltige Entwicklung wird in der Doktorarbeit von Annelie Sieveking, die sich derzeit noch im Verfahren befindet, ausführlich untersucht (Sieveking (unv.): Food Policy Councils: Levers for Sustainability Transformation?).
- 12) Bassarab/Santo/Palmer, 2019, Food Policy Council Report 2018, Stand 1.7.2019, abrufbar unter <http://www.foodpolicynetworks.org/food-policy-resources/>, S. 3.
- 13) Pothukuchi/Kaufman, 1999, Placing the food system on the urban agenda: The role of municipal institutions in food systems planning, *Agriculture and Human Values*, 16, S. 219.
- 14) Harper/Shattuck/Holt-Giménez/Wolf/Workman/Clare-Roth/El-Khoury/Turrell/Strong, 2009, Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned. Food First Institute for Food and Policy, Stand 1.7.2019, abrufbar unter <https://foodfirst.org/publication/food-policy-councils-lessons-learned/>, S. 17.
- 15) Stierand, Speisräume. Die Ernährungswende in der Stadt, 2014, S. 169.

gleichbare Gremien zu etablieren, so z. B. in den Niederlanden oder in Italien¹⁶. In Deutschland wurden 2016 die ersten beiden Ernährungsräte in den Großstädten Köln und Berlin gegründet. Seitdem gab es eine sehr dynamische Entwicklung im deutschsprachigen Raum. Bei einem ersten Treffen der Initiativen im Herbst 2017 kamen über 100 Personen aus über 40 verschiedenen Orten zusammen, um sich zu vernetzen und Erfahrungen bei der Gründung von Ernährungsräten auszutauschen. Rund ein Dutzend weitere Räte haben sich mittlerweile formiert, überwiegend in Städten, aber auch vereinzelt auf anderen politisch-administrativen Ebenen (z. B. 2018 im Landkreis Fürstentfeldbruck oder 2020 im Land Brandenburg¹⁷). Außerdem gibt es derzeit an über vierzig Orten im deutschsprachigen Raum Initiativen, die die Gründung von weiteren Ernährungsräten vorbereiten.¹⁸ Beim zweiten Netzwerktreffen der Gründungsinitiativen und der bestehenden Ernährungsräte im Herbst 2018 kamen mehr als 150 Vertreterinnen und Vertreter aus Deutschland, Österreich, der Schweiz, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden zusammen und verabschiedeten als Leitlinie für die Arbeit eine erste gemeinsame Erklärung mit dem Titel „Ernährungsdemokratie jetzt“.¹⁹

3. Ernährungsräte als Akteure einer Ernährungswende in Deutschland

3.1 Begleitung der Etablierung von Ernährungsräten durch Politik und Verwaltung

Bisher gab es vereinzelte Initiativen seitens der Politik, die Gründung von Ernährungsräten anzustoßen. In Bielefeld stellte die CDU-Fraktion im Oktober 2016 einen Antrag im Ausschuss für Klima und Umwelt, die Einführung eines Ernährungsrates für Bielefeld durch die Verwaltung zu prüfen und wenn möglich umzusetzen.²⁰ Auf diesen einstimmig angenommenen Antrag folgte eine erste Auftaktveranstaltung mit verschiedenen Vertreterinnen und Vertretern von Organisationen, Vereinen und Institutionen, die sich mit Ernährung befassen sowie die Installation einer Kerngruppe, welche die weiteren Treffen koordinierte. Bei der Gründung des Bielefelder Ernährungsrates im November 2018 kamen ca. 75 engagierte Menschen aus unterschiedlichen Bereichen zusammen, unterzeichneten symbolisch die im Vorfeld erarbeitete „Bielefelder Charta für gutes und gesundes Essen“ und gründeten drei Arbeitsgruppen.²¹ Der Bielefelder Ernährungsrat ist kein städtisches Gremium, aber der gesamte Prozess wurde und wird von der Verwaltung begleitet.²²

Im Landkreis Fürstentfeldbruck wurde die Gründung des ersten deutschen Ernährungsrates auf Landkreisebene auf einer Regionalkonferenz angestoßen, die vom Regionalmanagement veranstaltet wurde. Die Initiierung eines Ernährungsrates wurde als das meist favorisierte Projekt vorgeschlagen und im Folgenden vom Agenda-21-Büro des Landkreises vorgebracht.²³ Nach der Einladung zu einer ersten Veranstaltung zur Vernetzung interessierter Akteurinnen und Akteure wurden ein Gründungsausschuss und später vier thematische Arbeitsgruppen gegründet, die Projekte in verschiedenen Bereichen verfolgen. Das Engagement der Beteiligten wird weiterhin vom Agenda 21-Büro organisatorisch unterstützt, z. B. durch die Einladung zu Treffen oder das Verfassen von Protokollen.²⁴

Die dargestellten Beispiele verdeutlichen, dass in Deutschland bereits vereinzelt die Gründung von Ernährungsräten von Politik und Verwaltung angestoßen wurde. Dennoch sind die bisher in Deutschland gegründeten Ernährungsräte zur großen Mehrheit auf zivilgesellschaftliche Initiative hin entstanden. Auch wenn in vielen Fällen Mitglieder aus Politik und Verwaltung involviert sind, berichteten bei den Netzwerktreffen der Initiativen auch viele davon, dass es schwierig war, mit Politik und Verwaltung ins Gespräch zu kommen.²⁵

Andere Initiativen möchten zwar mit Personen aus Politik und Verwaltung zusammenarbeiten, aber diese nicht als Mitglieder in das Gremium involvieren, wie z. B. der Ernährungsrat Berlin, der sich als breites zivilgesellschaftliches Bündnis im Sinne einer „unabhängigen Interessensvertretung ernährungspolitisch engagierter Bürger*innen der Stadt“²⁶ versteht.

3.2 Beratung von Politik und Verwaltung durch Ernährungsräte

Auch wenn auf Landesebene bisher seitens der Politik noch keine Gründung von Ernährungsräten angestoßen wurde, haben dennoch mehrere Bundesländer in den letzten Jahren Beratungsbedarf im Kontext einer Ernährungswende artikuliert. In einem speziellen Themenbereich, der Vermeidung von Lebensmittelabfällen, wurden Runde Tische zum Thema Lebensmittelwertschätzung einberufen. In NRW z. B. lädt das Verbraucherschutzministerium seit 2010 jährlich verschiedene Vertreterinnen und Vertreter aus Landwirtschaft, Einzelhandel, Lebensmittelwirtschaft, Wissenschaft und Verbraucherschutz ein, um „[...] die Aufmerksamkeit und die Sensibilität für das Thema Lebensmittelverschwendung entlang der gesamten Lebensmittelwertschöpfungskette zu erhöhen und das Bewusstsein für den Wert der Lebensmittel zu steigern“²⁷. Durch den Austausch wurden landesweit verschiedene Projekte, wie z. B. die Nachhaltigen Ernährungstage NRW, initiiert.²⁸ Auch in anderen Bundesländern wurden in den letzten Jahren vergleichbare Runde Tische eingesetzt, z. B. in Hamburg (2015), in Niedersachsen (2016) oder im Saarland (2016). Die Bundesländer mit ihren bereits bestehenden Aktivitäten wie z. B. der Förderung einer Vernetzung der Akteurinnen und Akteure in Runden

16) Forno/Maurano, 2016, CIBO, sostenibilità e territorio. dai sistemi di approvvigionamento alternativi ai food policy councils. *Rivista Geografica Italiana*, 123(1).

17) Der Ernährungsrat Brandenburg versteht sich als Zusammenschluss der regionalen Ernährungsratsinitiativen in Brandenburg und wurde am 13.1.2020 in Potsdam gegründet. Weitere Informationen, Stand 16.8.2020, abrufbar unter <https://ernaehrungsrat-brandenburg.de/aktuelles/>.

18) Eine Übersicht über die Gründungsinitiativen im deutschsprachigen Raum ist zu finden in Thurn/Oertel/Pohl, Genial lokal. So kommt die Ernährungswende in Bewegung, 2018, S. 192–197 und auf der Homepage des Netzwerks der Ernährungsräte, Stand 16.8.2020, abrufbar unter <http://ernaehrungsraete.org/>.

19) Netzwerk der Ernährungsräte, 2019, Ernährungsräte verabschieden Frankfurter Erklärung für gute Ernährung und Produktion, Stand 1.7.2019, abrufbar unter http://ernaehrungsraete.org/2018/11/27/frankfurter_erklaerung/.

20) CDU-Fraktion des Rates der Stadt Bielefeld, Antrag zur Sitzung des Ausschusses für Umwelt und Klima am 4.10.2016 (Drs. 3732/2014–2020).

21) Umweltamt Bielefeld, Beschlussvorlage der Verwaltung zum Ernährungsrate Bielefeld zur Sitzung des Ausschusses für Umwelt und Klimaschutz am 15.1.2019 (Drs. 7795/2014–2020).

22) Gespräch mit Frau Kleiner vom Dezernat Umwelt/Klimaschutz der Stadt Bielefeld am 3.7.2019.

23) Landkreis Fürstentfeldbruck, Ernährungsrat für den Landkreis Fürstentfeldbruck, Stand 5.7.2019, abrufbar unter <https://www.ernaehrungsrat-ffb.de/>.

24) Gespräch mit Frau Bock vom Agenda 21-Büro des Landkreises Fürstentfeldbruck am 5.7.2019.

25) Gespräche mit Vertreterinnen und Vertreter verschiedener Ernährungsratsinitiativen bei den bisherigen Kongressen des Netzwerks der Ernährungsräte in Essen (2017) und Frankfurt (2018).

26) Ernährungsrat Berlin, 2017, Ernährungsdemokratie für Berlin, Stand 5.7.2019, abrufbar unter <http://ernaehrungsrat-berlin.de/ernaehrungsdemokratie-fuer-berlin/>.

27) Ministerium für Umwelt, Landwirtschaft, Natur- und Verbraucherschutz des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Lebensmittelverluste reduzieren – Wertschätzung für Lebensmittel erhöhen, Stand 4.7.2019, abrufbar unter <https://www.umwelt.nrw.de/verbraucherschutz/konsum-und-wertschaetzung-von-lebensmitteln/>.

28) S. ebenda.

Tab. 1 Rechtliche Rahmenbedingungen für Ernährungsräte als pluralistisch besetzte, langfristig eingerichtete Beratungsgremien

| | De lege lata | De lege ferenda |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Bundesebene | Langfristige Beratungsgremien: nur ausgewählte Mitglieder, keine Einbeziehung Externer | Schaffung einer Rechtsgrundlage (Inhalte: Gründung von Ernährungsräten, Aufgaben, Mitglieder)? |
| Länderebene | Langfristige Beratungsgremien: nur ausgewählte Mitglieder, keine Einbeziehung Externer | Schaffung einer Rechtsgrundlage (Inhalte: Gründung von Ernährungsräten, Aufgaben, Mitglieder)? Ausdehnung bestehender Runder Tische zur Wertschätzung von Lebensmitteln? |
| Kommunale Ebene | Rechtliche Möglichkeit zur Einrichtung von Gremien, z. B. § 71 NKomVG : Ausschüsse der Vertretung Unterscheidung zwischen Beratungs- und Entscheidungsgremien Obligatorische Einrichtung bestimmter Gremien | Ernährungsräte als obligatorische Gremien im Kommunalverfassungsrecht? |

Tischen werden als wichtige Partner bei der Umsetzung der *Nationalen Strategie zur Reduzierung der Lebensmittelverschwendung* benannt.²⁹ Ziel dieser Strategie, die im Februar 2019 vom Bundeskabinett verabschiedet wurde, ist es, im Einklang mit der *Agenda 2030 für Nachhaltige Entwicklung* der Vereinten Nationen die Verschwendung von Lebensmitteln bis zum Jahr 2030 zu halbieren.³⁰

Ein anderer spezieller Themenbereich, in dem aktuell Beratungsbedarf seitens Politik und Verwaltung gesehen wird und in dem viele der bestehenden Ernährungsräte in Deutschland bereits aktiv sind, ist die öffentliche Gemeinschaftsverpflegung mit einem besonderen Schwerpunkt auf Schulen und Kitas. In mehreren Städten werden Ernährungsräte bereits in städtische Arbeitsgruppen miteinbezogen. Die Stadt Oldenburg entwickelt z. B. derzeit im Rahmen der Arbeitsgruppe „*Mensakonzept*“ Kriterien zur Vergabe von Aufträgen an Caterer für die Schulverpflegung. In dieser Arbeitsgruppe ist der Ernährungsrat mit einer Person vertreten, die sich dafür einsetzt, dass soziale und ökologische Kriterien bei der Konzeptentwicklung berücksichtigt werden.³¹ Der Ernährungsrat Oldenburg hat in diesem Zusammenhang ein Positionspapier mit Vorschlägen und Forderungen erarbeitet.³² Diese Forderungen bilden die aus Sicht des Ernährungsrats relevanten Aspekte ab und bieten konkrete Ansatzpunkte, wie die öffentliche Gemeinschaftsverpflegung der Stadt im Hinblick auf Nachhaltigkeit verbessert werden könnte.

Die Ausführungen verdeutlichen, dass Ernährungsräte bisher nicht kontinuierlich von Politik und Verwaltung zur Beratung herangezogen werden, aber punktuell und themenspezifisch, wie derzeit von mehreren Städten bei der Verbesserung von Gemeinschaftsverpflegung. Die von mehreren Bundesländern initiierten Runden Tische zum Thema Lebensmittelwertschätzung weisen auf ein zunehmendes Interesse an der Beratung durch verschiedene gesellschaftliche Akteure im Ernährungsbereich hin.

4. Rechtliche Verankerung von Ernährungsräten in Deutschland

4.1 Derzeitiger rechtlicher Status von Ernährungsräten

Die bisher in Deutschland gegründeten Ernährungsräte sind mit wenigen Ausnahmen (s. Kapitel 3.1) aus zivilgesellschaftlicher Initiative entstanden. Teilweise sind die Räte zivilrechtlich organisiert als eigenständiger Verein (z. B. in Berlin und München) oder als Projekt eines vorher bereits bestehenden Vereins (z. B. in Köln und in Oldenburg). In anderen Fällen sind die Räte als lose zivilgesellschaftliche Bündnisse organisiert. Auch wenn in vielen Fällen Vertreterinnen und Vertreter aus Politik und Verwaltung schon in der Gründungsphase involviert waren, sind die Ernährungsräte bisher im öffentlich-rechtlichen Sinne formal nicht relevant.

Rein zivilgesellschaftlich organisiert zu sein ist durchaus typisch für das institutionelle Phänomen der Ernäh-

rungsräte: Nach einer aktuellen Erhebung zum Status der Ernährungsräte in den USA und Kanada sind 34 Prozent eingebettet in eine andere zivilgesellschaftliche Organisation, 20 Prozent agieren als unabhängiger Graswurzelzusammenschluss und 13 Prozent als eigenständige zivilgesellschaftliche Organisation. Dennoch sind auch 26 Prozent der dortigen Ernährungsräte staatlich eingebettet und somit Teil des politisch-administrativen Gefüges.³³ Von diesen staatlich eingebetteten Ernährungsräten ist ungefähr die Hälfte auf der Grundlage eines Gesetzes entstanden. Mehrheitlich werden die Mitglieder dieser Räte von staatlicher Seite benannt und die Gremien werden außerdem in den meisten Fällen von staatlicher Seite finanziell unterstützt.³⁴

4.2 Möglicher rechtlicher Status von Ernährungsräten *de lege lata* und *de lege ferenda*

Die bisher in Deutschland gegründeten Ernährungsräte agieren wie dargelegt ohne öffentlich-rechtliche Grundlage. Dennoch stellt sich die Frage, ob unter den derzeitigen rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen bereits die Möglichkeit bestünde, Ernährungsräte auch in Deutschland staatlich/kommunal einzubetten bzw. unter welchen Umständen eine rechtliche Einbettung zukünftig denkbar wäre. Die Ergebnisse der Analyse sind unten in Tabelle 1 zusammengefasst.

Da es sich bei Ernährungsräten um Gremien handelt, die langfristig Politik beraten, können sie nicht mit Kommissionen gleichgesetzt werden, die für einen begrenzten zeitlichen Rahmen eingesetzt werden, um in Hinblick auf spezifische Beratungsanliegen zu beraten, wie z. B. die Rürup-Kommission. Weder auf Bundes- noch auf Länderebene gibt es gesetzliche Grundlagen, aufgrund derer Beratungsgremien, die nicht ausschließlich aus gewählten Vertreterinnen und

29) Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft, *Nationale Strategie zur Reduzierung der Lebensmittelverschwendung 2019*, Stand 4.7.2019, abrufbar unter https://www.bmel.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/Ernaehrung/Nationale_Strategie_Lebensmittelverschwendung_2019.html, S. 9.

30) S. Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft, *Nationale Strategie zur Reduzierung der Lebensmittelverschwendung 2019*, Stand 4.7.2019, abrufbar unter https://www.bmel.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/Ernaehrung/Nationale_Strategie_Lebensmittelverschwendung_2019.html, S. 5.

31) Ernährungsrat Oldenburg, *Projekt Außer-Haus-Verpflegung*, Stand 4.7.2019, abrufbar unter <https://ernaehrungsrat-oldenburg.de/ueber-uns/projekte/ausser-haus-verpflegung/>.

32) Ernährungsrat Oldenburg, 2019, *Positionspapier Städtische Gemeinschaftsverpflegung als Vorbild für ein zukunftsfähiges Ernährungssystem*, Stand 4.7.2019, abrufbar unter <https://ernaehrungsrat-oldenburg.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Positionspapier-St%C3%A4dtische-Gemeinschaftsverpflegung.pdf>.

33) *Bassarab/Santo/Palmer*, 2019, *Food Policy Council Report 2018*, Stand 1.7.2019, abrufbar unter <http://www.foodpolicynetworks.org/food-policy-resources/>, S. 11.

34) Ebenda, S. 16.

Vertretern bestehen, längerfristig eingesetzt werden. Auf der kommunalen Ebene ist hingegen die Einrichtung von verschiedenen beratenden Beiräten und Ausschüssen durch- aus vorgesehen. Prinzipiell wird zwischen Pflichtausschüs- sen, bedingten Pflichtausschüssen und freiwilligen Aus- schüssen unterschieden. Pflichtausschüsse müssen von den Gemeinden eingerichtet werden, bedingte Pflichtausschüsse nur in dem Fall, dass sich die Gemeinde einer bestimmten Angelegenheit annimmt. Wenn es keine gesetzlichen Vor- gaben gibt, kann die jeweilige Volksvertretung selbst über das Ob und die Anzahl von Ausschüssen entscheiden.³⁵ In den Gemeindeordnungen wird zwischen beschließenden und beratenden Ausschüssen unterschieden. In allen Bun- desländern mit Ausnahme Sachsen-Anhalts können sowohl beschließende Ausschüsse als auch beratende Ausschüsse durch schlichten Gemeindebeschluss gebildet werden.³⁶ Be- schließende Ausschüsse können nur aus gewählten Vertre- rinnen und Vertretern bestehen, da sie demokratisch legiti- miert sind. Die Vertretung kann aber beratende Ausschüsse einrichten, in denen neben den gewählten Vertreterinnen und Vertretern auch nicht-gewählte Mitglieder angehören. In § 71 Abs. 7 NKomVG³⁷ ist z. B. geregelt, dass mindestens zwei Drittel der Mitglieder dieser beratenden Ausschüsse Abgeordnete sein sollen, darüber hinaus aber Mitglieder im Ausschuss sein können, die nicht der Vertretung angehören. Letztere haben allerdings auch kein Stimmrecht. Nach § 43 Abs. 4 BbgKVerf³⁸ können sog. sachkundige Einwohner zu beratenden Mitgliedern der Ausschüsse berufen werden und haben dann ein aktives Teilnahmerecht in dem Ausschuss. Auch nach § 36 Abs. 5 KV M-V³⁹ können neben einer Mehr- heit von Mitgliedern der Gemeindevertretung weitere sach- kundige Einwohner in die beratenden Ausschüsse berufen werden. Ähnliches gilt für verschiedene andere Kommu- nalverfassungen, so etwa nach § 41 Abs. 1 GO B-W,⁴⁰ § 49 Abs. 3 KVG LSA⁴¹ oder § 58 Abs. 3 GO NRW.⁴² Die sach- kundigen Bürger kommen nach diesen Regelungen zu den gewählten Ratsmitgliedern im jeweiligen Ausschuss hinzu, der Ausschuss ist aber „nur beschlussfähig, wenn die Zahl der anwesenden Ratsmitglieder die Zahl der anwesenden sachkundigen Bürger übersteigt“ (so § 58 Abs. 3 GO NRW).

Nach diesen kommunalverfassungsrechtlichen Vor- gaben können z. B. Ernährungsräte als Ausschüsse der Städte- und Gemeinderäte errichtet werden, die in ihrer Mehrzahl aus gewählten Mitgliedern bestehen, zu denen aber weitere nicht dem Rat angehörige, in Ernährungsfragen sachkun- dige Bürger hinzukommen können. Die Bestellung erfolgt regelmäßig durch den Rat mit der Mehrheit der Stimmen der Ratsmitglieder (so nach § 58 Abs. 1 GO NRW). Mit der Bestellung können die Aufgaben eines kommunalen Ernährungsrats bestimmt werden, z. B. welche Stufen in der Wertschöpfungskette abgedeckt werden sollen. Not- wendiger Inhalt der Bestellung wären zudem Zahl und Zu- sammensetzung des Ernährungsrats. Weiter kann festgelegt werden, in welcher Weise der kommunale Ernährungsrat an Entscheidungen des Rates beteiligt wird, ob er z. B. bei bestimmten ernährungsbezogenen Angelegenheiten ange- hört werden muss.

Darüber hinaus existieren auf kommunaler Ebene in der Regel Beiräte, die den Stadt- oder Gemeinderat beraten, in denen aber keine Ratsmitglieder vertreten sind, wie z. B. Ausländerbeiräte oder Jugendvertretungen.⁴³ Diese Bei- räte werden auf der Grundlage eines Gesetzes bzw. einer Verordnung, in der die Anzahl und Zusammensetzung der Mitglieder geregelt ist, eingerichtet.

Unter den bestehenden gesetzlichen Rahmenbedingun- gen ist die Einrichtung von langfristigen beratenden Grem- ien, die auch bzw. nur nicht gewählte Vertreterinnen und Vertreter umfassen, nur auf der kommunalen Ebene vorge- sehen. Die Einrichtung beratender Beiräte auf Bundes- oder Landesebene beruht zurzeit nicht auf gesetzlicher Grund- lage, sondern auf der Organisationsgewalt der einsetzenden Stellen. Ein Beispiel für ein Beratungsgremium auf Bun-

desebene ist der *Parlamentarische Beirat für nachhaltige Entwick- lung* (BPnE), der 2004 beschlossen und auch in der laufen- den Legislaturperiode erneut eingesetzt wurde, um „[...] die Nachhaltigkeitspolitik der Bundesregierung auf parlamentari- scher Ebene in geeigneter Weise fachübergreifend zu begleiten“.⁴⁴ Dieser besteht ausschließlich aus Mitgliedern der Fraktio- nen entsprechend der Sitzverteilung im Parlament.⁴⁵ Aus nicht-gewählten Personen setzt sich der *Rat für nachhaltige Entwicklung* (RNE) zusammen, der 2001 erstmalig von der Bundesregierung berufen wurde. Zuletzt wurden von der Bundeskanzlerin im Jahr 2016 15 Personen des öffentlichen Lebens als Mitglieder für eine dreijährige Amtsperiode be- rufen. Darüber hinaus kann der RNE für die Dauer von Projekten Persönlichkeiten mit spezieller Fachexpertise ko- optieren.⁴⁶ Der RNE hat die Aufgabe, Beiträge für die Um- setzung der Deutschen Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie zu entwi- ckeln, konkrete Handlungsfelder und Projekte zu benennen sowie Nachhaltigkeit zu einem wichtigen öffentlichen An- liegen zu machen. Dabei ist er in der Wahl seiner Themen und Aktionsformen unabhängig und verfügt zur Durchfüh- rung seiner Aufgaben über eigene finanzielle Mittel.⁴⁷

Mit dem wissenschaftlichen Beirat für Agrarpolitik, Er- nährung und gesundheitlichen Verbraucherschutz (WBAE) gibt es seit 2015 auf Bundesebene auch ein unter anderem auf die Ernährungspolitik fokussiertes, ausschließlich professo- ral mit 19 Mitgliedern besetztes Gremium, dessen derzeitige Mitglieder durch das Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft bestellt wurden. Zu dessen Aufgaben gehört es unter anderem, „die Entwicklung des Agrar- und Ernährung- systems in Bezug auf seine wirtschaftliche, ökologische und soziale Nachhaltigkeit wissenschaftlich zu analysieren“, zu bewerten so- wie „Vorschläge für die Weiterentwicklung der Agrar- und Ernäh- rungspolitik zu erarbeiten“.⁴⁸ Der WBAE hat sich in diversen Veröffentlichungen auch mit Fragen der Ernährungspolitik befasst, z. B. 2012 in einer Stellungnahme zu „Ernährungs-

35) Ehlers, in: Mann/Püttner (Hrsg.), Handbuch der kommunalen Wissenschaft und Praxis, 2007, S. 495 f.

36) Wolff/Bachhof/Stober/Kluth, Verwaltungsrecht 2, 7. Aufl. 2010, S. 741.

37) Niedersächsisches Kommunalverfassungsgesetz (NKomVG) v. 17. 10. 2010, Nds. GVBl. S. 576.

38) Kommunalverfassung des Landes Brandenburg (BbgKVerf) v. 18. 12. 2007, GVBl. I/07, [Nr. 19], S. 286.

39) Kommunalverfassung für das Land Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Kommunalverfassung – KV M-V) v. 13. 7. 2011, GVOBl. M-V S. 777.

40) Gemeindeordnung In der Fassung vom 24. 7. 2000, GBl. S. 582.

41) Kommunalverfassungsgesetz des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt (Kom- munalverfassungsgesetz – KVG LSA) v. 17. 6. 2014, GVBl. LSA S. 288.

42) Gemeindeordnung für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen (GO NRW) in der Fassung der Bekanntmachung v. 14. 7. 1994, GV. NRW. S. 666.

43) S. Ehlers, in: Mann/Püttner (Hrsg.), Handbuch der kommunalen Wissenschaft und Praxis, 2007, S. 495 f.

44) S. den Antrag der Fraktionen CDU/CSU, SPD, AfD, FDP, DIE LINKE und BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN auf Einsetzung des Parlamentarischen Beirats für nachhaltige Entwicklung, BT- Drs. 19/1837 vom 24. 4. 2018, S. 1.

45) S. S. den Antrag der Fraktionen CDU/CSU, SPD, AfD, FDP, DIE LINKE und BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN auf Einsetzung des Parlamentarischen Beirats für nachhaltige Entwicklung, BT- Drs. 19/1837 vom 24. 4. 2018, S. 1.

46) Rat für nachhaltige Entwicklung (RNE), Mitglieder, Stand 3. 7. 2019, abrufbar unter <https://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/ueber-den-rat/mitglieder/>.

47) Rat für nachhaltige Entwicklung (RNE), Über den Rat, Stand 3. 7. 2019, abrufbar unter <https://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/ueber-den-rat/>.

48) Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft, Wis- senschaftlicher Beirat für Agrarpolitik, Ernährung und gesund- heitlichen Verbraucherschutz, Stand 16. 8. 2020, abrufbar unter https://www.bmel.de/DE/Ministerium/Organisation/Beirats-ete/_Texte/AgrOrganisation.html#doc429078bodyText1.

sicherung und nachhaltige Produktivitätssteigerung“.⁴⁹ Mit seiner ausschließlichen auf Beratung durch die Wissenschaft gestützten Ausrichtung entspricht der WBAE nicht dem Muster eines Ernährungsrats im hier vertretenen Sinne.

Auf Landesebene sind die Naturschutzbeiräte ein Beispiel für beratende Gremien mit pluralistischer Besetzung. Diese Beiräte werden auf Grundlage der Landesnaturschutzgesetze auf verschiedenen Ebenen der Naturschutzverwaltung eingesetzt. In den Landesbeirat für Natur- und Umweltschutz in Baden-Württemberg werden gemäß einer Verordnung des Umweltministeriums z.B. neben je einem Mitglied aus den Fraktionen Personen aus verschiedenen gesellschaftlichen Bereichen wie der Naturschutzvereinigungen, Verbraucherverbände, Kirchen oder des Sports berufen, um das für zuständige Ministerium in Fragen des Naturschutzes zu beraten.⁵⁰ Das Vorschlagsrecht für die verschiedenen Bereiche liegt nach § 4 der Verordnung bei den zuständigen Verbänden.

Die vorgestellten Beispiele verdeutlichen, dass bei entsprechenden politischen Mehrheiten auch auf Bundes- und Landesebene Beiräte eingerichtet werden könnten, die pluralistisch besetzt sind und die Politik und Verwaltung in Bezug auf Ernährungsfragen beraten könnten. Die Einrichtung solcher Beiräte durch oder aufgrund eines Gesetzes hat den Vorteil einer besseren Verankerung und größeren Unabhängigkeit des Beirats. Dagegen hat die Einsetzung durch einen Organisationsakt der jeweiligen Regierung den Nachteil einer größeren Abhängigkeit. Auf der anderen Seite ist dies aber weniger aufwendig, da es keines Gesetzgebungsverfahrens, sondern eines einfachen Regierungs- bzw. Ministeriumsbeschlusses bedürfte.

5. Pro und Contra einer stärkeren rechtlichen Verankerung von Ernährungsräten

Die Analyse der rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen hat verdeutlicht, dass auf kommunaler Ebene bereits jetzt beratende Beiräte eingerichtet werden können, die nicht bzw. nicht ausschließlich aus gewählten Vertreterinnen und Vertretern bestehen. Auf Bundes- und Landesebene könnten auf Gesetzesinitiative hin oder durch einfachen Regierungsbeschluss ebenfalls entsprechende beratende Gremien eingerichtet werden. Es stellt sich allerdings die Frage, ob eine stärkere rechtliche Einbettung der bereits gegründeten Ernährungsräte überhaupt sinnvoll ist, sowohl aus Sicht derer, die beraten als auch aus Sicht derer, die beraten werden. Grundvoraussetzung wäre seitens der Politik eine Mehrheit dafür, in Ernährung im umfassenden Sinn, d.h. in Bezug auf Produktion, Verarbeitung, Vertrieb, Konsum und Verwertung sowie die in der Einleitung dargestellten Bezüge zu Umwelt, Gesundheit, Verbraucherschutz und Regionalentwicklung überhaupt ein Beratungsanliegen zu sehen und Ernährungsräte als Beratungsinstrument anzuerkennen.

Die in Kapitel 3 vorgestellten Beispiele haben auch verdeutlicht, dass Ernährungsräte im speziellen Themenfeld der Gemeinschaftsverpflegung bereits von Politik und Verwaltung zur Beratung herangezogen werden. Auch im Bereich Lebensmittelwertschätzung wurde von mehreren Ländern mit der Einrichtung von Runden Tischen bereits ein Instrument benutzt, um möglichst viele Personen aus dem Ernährungsbereich punktuell zu involvieren. Die Verbesserung der Gemeinschaftsverpflegung und die Reduzierung von Lebensmittelabfällen sind allerdings nur zwei von vielen Themen, mit denen sich Ernährungsräte beschäftigen. Die Nutzung bzw. Ausweisung städtischer Flächen für Nutzpflanzen oder gemeinschaftliche Gartenprojekte, die Stärkung regionaler Erzeugerinnen und Erzeuger, die Förderung von Ernährungskompetenzen in der Bevölkerung sind nur einige Beispiele, die das breite thematische Spektrum von Ernährungsräten verdeutlichen. Mit ihren vielfältigen Aktivitäten geben Ernährungsräte zahlreiche Ansatzpunkte für die Gestaltung einer Ernährungswende und tangieren weitere Handlungsbereiche, in denen die ver-

schiedenen politisch-administrativen Ebenen Handlungsspielraum haben wie z. B. die Stadtplanung in Hinblick auf Flächennutzung oder Initiative ergreifen können, wie z. B. bei der Förderung regionaler Vermarktungsstrukturen.

Vor diesem Hintergrund könnte eine stärkere rechtliche Einbettung von Ernährungsräten dazu beitragen, dass die Belange einer Ernährungswende politisch vermehrt angegangen werden und in der Öffentlichkeit über den Bereich der ohnehin Engagierten bekannter würden. Wie in Kapitel 4 dargelegt, wäre es bei entsprechenden politischen Mehrheiten grundsätzlich möglich, Ernährungsräte als beratende Beiräte auf verschiedenen politisch-administrativen Ebenen einzurichten. Dies würde z.B. beinhalten, dass die Zusammensetzung der jeweiligen Gremien geregelt würde sowie die Art und Weise, in der sie beraten (z. B. Anhörung in thematisch relevanten Ausschüssen) und die Gremien ggf. eine finanzielle Aufwandsentschädigung bekämen, um ihrem Mandat nachzukommen.

Eine derartige Institutionalisierung würde andererseits aber die Offenheit der bestehenden Ernährungsräte und Gründungsinitiativen einschränken und liefere damit Gefahr, die dynamische Entwicklung von Ernährungsräten aus der Zivilgesellschaft heraus zu bremsen. In jedem Fall sollte eine stärkere rechtliche Einbettung bestehender Ernährungsräte nur in Abstimmung mit den bereits Beteiligten geschehen. Wie oben dargelegt variieren die Selbstverständnisse der Initiativen, und teilweise gibt es auch innerhalb der Initiativen verschiedene Auffassungen, auf welche Weise eine Zusammenarbeit mit Politik und Verwaltung sinnvoll ist.

Vor diesem Hintergrund erscheint es adäquat, in jedem Einzelfall genau auszuloten, wie seitens Politik und Verwaltung gesellschaftliches Engagement für eine Ernährungswende gefördert und ggf. auch initiiert werden kann. Besteht noch keine Ernährungsratsinitiative, könnten Fraktionen wie im Fall der Stadt Bielefeld die Gründung anregen und die Verwaltung beauftragen, diesen Prozess zu begleiten und organisatorisch zu unterstützen. Bereits bestehende Gründungsinitiativen könnten durch Fördergelder für Koordinationspersonen, den Aufbau von Infrastrukturen und Veranstaltungen unterstützt werden, wie zum Beispiel beim ersten Ernährungsrats Niedersachsens in Oldenburg durch Landesmittel.⁵¹ Bereits gegründete Ernährungsräte könnten z.B. durch die Einladung, ihre Anliegen in Ausschüssen vorzutragen oder in städtischen Arbeitsgruppen mitzuarbeiten, wie es im Bereich Gemeinschaftsverpflegung bereits in mehreren Städten praktiziert wird, unterstützt werden, sowie durch eine längerfristige institutionelle Förderung wie im Fall der Stadt Köln, wo der Stadtrat 2017 beschlossen hat, die Arbeit des dortigen Ernährungsrats für weitere drei Jahre finanziell zu unterstützen.⁵²

6. Fazit

Ernährungsräte greifen ein Thema auf, das viele Menschen bewegt und in den Debatten um Klimawandel zu-

49) WBAE, Stellungnahme zu „Ernährungssicherung und nachhaltige Produktivitätssteigerung“, Abrufbar unter <https://www.bmel.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/Ministerium/Beiraete/Agrarpolitik/Stellungnahme-Ern%C3%A4hrungssicherung.html>.

50) § 1 und § 2 der Verordnung des Umweltministeriums über den Landesbeirat für Natur- und Umweltschutz (BeiratsVO Natur und Umwelt) v. 5. 4. 2017, GBl. S. 241.

51) Weitere Aspekte zum Gründungsprozess des Ernährungsrats Oldenburg, der im Rahmen der Doktorarbeit von Annelie Sieveking in einer zweijährigen Fallstudie untersucht wurde, in: Sieveking, Food Policy Councils as Loci for Practising Food Democracy? Insights from the Case of Oldenburg, Germany, Politics and Governance 7 (4), 2019, S. 48–58.

52) Amt für Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit der Stadt Köln, Presseinformation 12. 7. 2017 – 1032 Zuschuss für Ernährungsrat Köln und Umgebung.

nehmend an Bedeutung gewinnt. Sie sind eine beginnende zivilgesellschaftliche Bewegung, die bisher nicht im öffentlich-rechtlichen Sinne verankert sind. Ihr derzeitiger Schwerpunkt liegt auf der städtischen/kommunalen Ebene, während die Länder- und Bundesebene, vor allem auch wegen des Graswurzel-Charakters vieler Ernährungsräte, bisher kaum eine Rolle spielen. Allerdings verbreitet sich derzeit die Idee, Ernährungsräte auch auf höheren politisch-administrativen Ebenen einzusetzen. Im kürzlich veröffentlichten Bericht des International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (iPES Food) wird die Unterstützung der Etablierung eines Ernährungsrats auf EU-Ebene als eine politische Maßnahme im Rahmen einer neuen Governance-Architektur für nachhaltige Ernährungssysteme vorgeschlagen.⁵³

Möglicherweise kann eine stärkere rechtliche Einbindung von Ernährungsräten zu einer besseren Durchsetzung der Belange im Hinblick auf eine Ernährungswende führen und z. B. zur Verringerung von Lebensmittelabfällen beitragen. Auf der anderen Seite sollte eine solche Bewegung von unten nicht durch zu viele formale Anforderungen abgewürgt werden. Wünschenswert wäre, wenn öffentliche Entscheidungsträger zumindest Bereitschaft zeigen würden, die Belange von Ernährungsräten anzuhören und das zivilgesellschaftliche Engagement im Rahmen ihrer Möglichkeiten zu unterstützen. Dies gilt z. B. für die Förderung von Projekten, ggf. durch Abordnung von Mitarbeitern aus der Verwaltung zur Mitarbeit in den Räten, für die Bereitstellung von Räumlichkeiten und Koordinationsstellen etc. Ein wichtiges Signal kann weiter darin bestehen, wenn Kommunen dem Mailänder Abkommen über städtische Ernährungspolitik (*Milan Urban Food Policy Pact*) vom 15.10.2015 als politischem Bezugspunkt für proaktives Handeln beitreten. Hierin anerkennen die Mitgliedstädte unter anderem deren zentrale Rolle bei der Entwicklung nachhaltiger Ernährungssysteme, und sie erklären, dass sie ihre kommunale Ernährungspolitik in ihre sozialen, ökonomischen und Umweltpolitiken sowie -programme integrieren.⁵⁴ Bisher haben 197 Städte den Pakt unterzeichnet, darunter allerdings nur drei deutsche: Frankfurt, Köln und Berlin (2015). Ernährungsräte können dazu beitragen, ihre

jeweiligen Kommunen zur Teilnahme an diesem Pakt zu bewegen und im Hinblick auf eine Ernährungswende aktiv zu werden.

Insgesamt bieten Ernährungsräte die Chance, in der gesamten Kette, von der Erzeugung über die Verarbeitung und den Transport bis zum Verbrauch und zur Vermeidung und Entsorgung von Lebensmittelabfällen, eine Wende in Richtung auf eine nachhaltigere Ernährung zu fördern. Dazu bedarf es zivilgesellschaftlichen Engagements und der Aufgeschlossenheit und Bereitschaft privater und öffentlicher Stellen, die Bildung und Arbeit von Ernährungsräten zu unterstützen – nicht zuletzt auch durch die Schaffung geeigneter rechtlicher Rahmenbedingungen.

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53) De Schutter/Jacobs/Clément/Ajena, Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union, 2019, Stand 16.8.2020, abrufbar unter <http://www.ipes-food.org/pages/CommonFoodPolicy>, S. 36–37.

54) Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, Stand 5.7.2019, abrufbar unter <http://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/signatory-cities/>.

URTEILSANMERKUNGEN

Europäisierung des Individualrechtsschutzes im Umweltrecht

Anmerkung zum Urteil des Europäischen Gerichtshofs v. 3.10.2019 – C-197/18

Dominik Römling

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Während die Fortentwicklung des Verbandsklagerechts nach Art. 9 Abs. 3 der Aarhus-Konvention mit der Protect-Entscheidung des Europäischen Gerichtshofs ihren vorläufigen Schlusspunkt erreicht hat, besteht die Diskussion um die Klagerechte Einzelner aus der

Konvention fort. Sie erfährt jüngst durch das Urteil des EuGH in der Rs. C-197/18 neue Impulse. Der Beitrag analysiert die Reichweite der dort entwickelten Maßstäbe und legt die Konsequenzen für das Verständnis des Individualrechtsschutzes im deutschen Umweltrecht dar.

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1. Einführung

Art. 9 Abs. 3 der Aarhus-Konvention (AK) hat die Klagerechte von Verbänden in erheblichem Maße erwei-

Declarations

I hereby declare that I have neither undertaken nor applied to undertake any other doctoral assessment.

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “Food Policy Councils: Levers for Sustainability Transformation?” has not been submitted to any other academic, that I have submitted the thesis only as part of this and of no other doctoral assessment, and that I have not previously failed any other doctoral assessments.

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Place: Lüneburg

Date of submission: 30.10.2019

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Annette Fiedler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping tail.