



Mikkelsen, BE, Fisker AM & Clausen; KS
Aalborg University, Copenhagen
Denmark



EATING CITIES – HOW PUBLIC FOOD PROCUREMENT IN THE CITY OF AALBORG CAN CONTRIBUTE TO MORE SUSTAINABLE DIETS

Food on the public plate is an important part of welfare systems in the Nordics with over six million meals served per day. Public food is accounting for 25 % of the food consumed across the Nordic countries. Public procurement is believed to hold the power to influence the future development of the food system towards desired social and economic outcomes (Stefani et al., 2015, McCrudden 2004). In addition, there seems to be “modelling” role of public procurement initiatives in relation to citizen behaviour. In Norden Public Organic Procurement Policies (POPPs) has been one of the most prominent examples of Green procurement (Mikkelsen & Lundø, 2016). In Denmark, over the past decades, POPPs have come to play an important part of organic food & farming policies, contributing to fulfilling the EU target of 60% usage of organic products by 2020 (European Commission 2014). However, the POPP wave has mainly been looking “organicness” and less at origin. This has changed during the past decade and food has changed from being placeless to being “placed”. Food has become part of place and place has become part of food. This development has increasingly led public food initiatives to an embeddedness in local food economies and cities has to a large extent paved the way for such initiatives. Toronto, London, Milan and Malmö has been some of the significant urban food initiatives that has attempted to make the urban- rural food link.

However, city based initiatives marks a significant shift in the way in which food are sourced since food procurement has traditionally been driven by lowest price in order to comply with the EU procurement directive. In addition, buying of public food is not decided by cities but by different levels of local government. In Denmark public food is the responsibility of municipalities only for nursing homes, schools and kindergartens whereas the food responsibility of hospitals is in the hands of the regions. Also the state is responsible for food in prisons, workplaces, universities and defense and therefore. The idea of cities driving food policies and thereby impacting the food economies in the region needs therefore a practical implementation and cooperation across governmental levels.

This paper analyzed the development of a city based sustainable food strategy for the city of Aalborg. It's based on 3 cases of food service: food for the elderly as operated by the Municipality, food the hospital patients as operated by the region and food for defense staff as operated by the state.

The cases were analyzed through document analysis, observations and interview. The following five themes were identified as being important to address in the development of city based food procurement initiatives. 1. *Pre competitive partnership working.* 2. *Workforce development.* 3. *Loosely coupled systems governance.* 4. *Multilayer food procurement alignment.* 5. *Politicizing food services.*