

**Eating cities –
How public food procurement in the city of
Aalborg can contribute to more sustainable diets**

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Food on the public plate is an important part of public welfare systems in the Nordic countries and the public procurement of this service, with over six million meals served per day. Changing the practices of the public food services in a more sustainable way is sending a signal to citizens about its ambitions on the future directions of the food system. Public Organic Procurement Policies (POPPs) has been one of the most prominent examples of sustainable and Green procurement in the Nordic countries (Mikkelsen & Lundø, 2016). In Denmark, over the past decades, POPPs have increasingly come to play an important part of organic food and 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 at the mode of food and farming and less at the origin. This has changed during the past decade and the interest in the “places of food” is growing. 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 and regional 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. In the Nordic countries procurement policies have been moving towards supporting place based food culture initiatives, such as the New Nordic Diet which promotes Nordic foods. However, city based initiatives marks a significant shift in the way in which food are sourced for the public plate 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. 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. This paper analyses the development of a city based sustainable food strategy for the city of Aalborg and is based on three cases of food service all taking place in and around the city limits of Aalborg: 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*. Shortening of supply changes does not necessarily take place as a result of new call for tenders but are often a result of long term pre-contractual process. 2. *Workforce development*. New sustainable food procurement practices in many cases result in change of food composition modes requiring news knowledge, skills and competencies among food workers. 3. *Loosely coupled systems governance*. The fact that modern food service in many cases is outsourced to 3rd parties introduces inertia and resistance towards changing procurement practices. 4. *Multilayer food procurement alignment*. Synchronizing demands across governmental boundaries is a challenging process and requires new procedures of cooperation. 5. *Politicizing food services*. Public food traditionally was regarded as a mundane routines task and lifting the issue up at a strategic level is not done overnight but requires persistent effort.

Speaker bios:

Bent Egberg Mikkelsen holds a M.Sc. of Food Science from the Royal Agricultural University, Copenhagen and a PhD in Social Science, from Roskilde University. He is the author of a large number of publications on public health nutrition and sustainable public food systems. Bent has acted as the principal investigator on several research projects and his work include several assignments on nutrition at schools and hospitals for the Council of Europe, food and nutrition at work for the Nordic Council of Ministers, healthy eating at school for the European WHO regional office and the EU platform for Health, Diet and Physical activity. He is a Professor of Nutrition and Public Food Systems at Aalborg University. He is the past president of EU expert committee for the school fruit scheme (SFS). He is the member of advisory boards of ProMeal, Glamur and VeggieEat and FoodLinks EU projects. Member of scientific panel in the Sapere Taste Education network. He is the Member of the Management committee of COST action IS1210 and the Richfields consortium on Big Food Data. He is the principal investigator on the SoL Multi-Level Multi-Component community intervention on healthier eating.

Anna Marie Fisker graduated from Aarhus School of Architecture in 1984, followed by studies at Kolding School of Design. After holding a number of positions, both as a practitioner of architecture and later as part of academic circles, she completed her PhD thesis “Food and Architecture” in 2003. Anna Marie Fisker currently holds the position as director of the Center for Food Science, Design and Experience at the Department of Civil Engineering, Aalborg University. This research is primarily engaged in a multi-disciplinary understanding of how our physical surroundings affect meal-experience and how architecture and design related tools can be applied deliberately in the development of better food experiences. Anna Marie Fisker is the author of more than 125 scientific articles.

Katja Seerup Clausen has a bachelor's degree in Food Science from Copenhagen University and a master's degree in Integrated Food Studies from Aalborg University in Copenhagen. She graduated from Aalborg University in 2016 after completing her master thesis “The Art of Popping Up – an interdisciplinary study on planning and creating food events”. Katja Seerup Clausen currently holds the position as research assistant at Captive Foodscape Studies Research group. This position is primarily related to research and projects aiming to explore how communication, physical surroundings and designed situations (events) can change the way we eat. Katja Seerup Clausen is the author of several historical essays and scientific articles related to food(s) and events.