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Where is urban food policy in Switzerland? A frame analysis

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ABSTRACT

Food is increasingly included on the urban agenda in many countries, and comprehensive food policies have been developed in several cities, but the development of articulate urban food policies is still in its infancy in Switzerland. The goal of this paper is to explore the ways in which food is framed in official policies in Switzerland and thereby gain a better understanding of the potential for the development of urban food policies. The analysis is based on a case study approach focusing on the formal frames of food: reconstructed from official policy documents on agriculture, food, health, environment, and planning, at the federal and the local level. The results show that ‘urban food’ is not a major topic in most policy documents and that the dominant frame of food is economic. There is a clear distinction between the rural and the urban, and there were no frames integrating (rural) food production and (urban) consumption, across the city’s departments, or between the local and the federal level. We can conclude that there is not yet a comprehensive urban food policy in Switzerland. The analysis further allows the nomination of two possible pathways to guide the development of coherent and integrative urban food policies.

KEYWORDS

Urban food policy; frame analysis; policy integration; urban food system; policy; policy frames; city; Switzerland

Introduction: the rise of a multi-faceted urban food policy

Food is rising in importance on the urban agenda in several countries of the global South and North (Morgan 2009; Morgan and Sonnino 2010; Moragues-Faus and Morgan 2015), and comprehensive urban food policies have been developed in some cities, such as Belo Horizonte, Toronto, London, or New York (Mansfield and Mendes 2013; Cohen and Ilieva 2015). However, integration of food into urban policy is a challenge for other governments, and many seem to be without a clear understanding of how to proceed. Mansfield and Mendes (2013) identified procedural and structural factors that affect the capacity of local governments in the global North to deal with urban food policies. In terms of procedures, collaboration between a city’s administration, non-profit organizations, community groups, and academia were identified as being beneficial, with a further recommendation that they should include processes to enable citizen participation. In terms of structures, inter-departmental staff teams and clearly articulated responsibilities were found to be relevant, along with the presence of a formal policy mandate to deal with food issues in a municipality (Mansfield and Mendes 2013).

A number of scientists, policy-makers, and planners have developed a new conceptualization of food production and consumption, which is known as the ‘new food geography’ (Wiskerke 2009). Emphasizing the need for a re-territorialization of food (as opposed to a global approach), the

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new food geography conceives of food as ‘a product and a process’ that links environmental concerns, transport, social (in)equality, public health, employment, and education (Wiskerke and Viljoen 2012). This multi-thematic conceptualization of food requires a shift from a sectoral to an integrated approach to food planning (Morgan 2009, 2015; Wiskerke and Viljoen 2012; Mansfield and Mendes 2013; Sonnino 2016). Such an integrated approach requires spanning across different disciplines, and involving science, policy, and civil society at the same time (Sonnino 2009; Wiskerke and Viljoen 2012). Each of the diverse actors have their specific ways of thinking, talking, and modes of acting (Moragues et al. 2013), and in this sense, food policy becomes a social construct: its meanings are negotiated within a web of social relations, actors, and institutions with each following their specific interests (Lang, Barling, and Caraher 2009). Analysing discourse and finding holistic frames can (re)connect and enable an inclusive debate between involved actors and societal initiatives, and thus can identify spaces for transformative actions (Moragues-Faus and Morgan 2015; Sonnino 2016).

An integrated urban food policy is thus challenged by the multitude of meanings given to food, which may or may not be stated explicitly in interaction between actors and which underlie potential actions that are seen as relevant and important. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) recognizes the multi-faceted characteristics of food, thus reflecting the multitude of food-related problems that have become increasingly apparent in the past years and acknowledges that food production is linked to a variety of environmental (such as soil degradation, water pollution, and loss of biodiversity), social (such as the precarious situation of farm workers and public health concerns due to malnutrition), and economic (such as economic pressure on farmers and price hikes) challenges (Milan Urban Food Policy Pact 2015). The pact was signed by representatives of over 100 signatory cities who agreed to ‘work to develop sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe, and diverse’ (Milan Urban Food Policy Pact 2015, 2).

Although 28% of all its farms are situated in agglomeration zones (Federal Statistical Office 2012), Switzerland is one of the countries in which articulate urban food policies are, at most, in their infancy, which is at least partly due to the lack of a political mandate for action (Portmann 2013). In October 2015, however, the three largest Swiss cities (Zurich, Geneva, and Basel) signed the MUFPP, which therefore could become an overarching framework for developing food policies in those cities. Against this background, this paper aims to explore in which ways food is framed in official Swiss policies, which will enable a better understanding of the potential for the development of integrated urban food policies in Switzerland. However, a conceptual framework is needed to address and understand the challenges of integrating policies across different policy fields and to allow conclusions that could guide possible future activities with regard to urban food policy. These requirements suggested the development of a conceptual framework that builds on theories of policy integration and frame analysis.

Conceptual framework: policy integration and policy frames

Policy integration

In view of the challenges and ambitious goals of sustainable development, the need for coherent policies has become increasingly apparent. Nilsson et al. (2012, 396) define policy coherence as ‘an attribute of policy that systematically reduces conflicts and promotes synergies between and within different policy areas to achieve the outcomes associated with jointly agreed policy objectives’. There are two modes in which policy coherence is relevant. Vertical coherence refers to policy alignment between different tiers of government, such as the national and local levels. Horizontal coherence spans across different policy fields within the same tier of government. An example of horizontal coherence is ensuring that strategic goals of one branch of government do not contradict the goals of another, but rather that there is agreement that both policies work in the same direction (Rogge and Reichardt 2016). In this way, policy integration enhances coherence by enabling more

holistic thinking across policy sectors. Such an integration requires alignment of tasks and efforts of the public sector through adequate structures that coordinate policies, such as departments dedicated to policy integration (Rogge and Reichardt 2016). The underlying assumptions of these authors are that a coherent policy will increase policy performance because policy goals are achieved more effectively and the policy mix is more consistent (Nilsson et al. 2012; Rogge and Reichardt 2016).

However, the strong focus of the policy integration perspective on the effectiveness of policy blurs a more nuanced analysis of what and how policy is integrated, i.e. on the processes of policy integration (Bornemann 2016). Bornemann (2016) defines policy integration as ‘combination of policies to form more encompassing and integrated policy arrangements’, and looks at *what* is integrated. Specifically, Bornemann (2016) refers to the substantive dimension, which refers to the material and symbolic fundament of a policy; a social dimension that addresses actor constellations and interactions; a temporal dimension in which temporal parameters are redefined; and a spatial dimension, which addresses multi-level governance systems as well as different policy areas. Political actors then employ different strategies to achieve policy integration and engage in boundary work (Star and Griesemer 1989), to integrate across the substantial, social, temporal, or spatial boundaries of policy (Bornemann 2016).

Remembering that the aim of this paper is to understand the *potential* for development of an integrated urban food policy, rather than evaluating already established policy, the focus on the potential of integration processes to lead to policy integration is highly relevant. In particular, the concept of boundary work including practices of reframing of problems and meanings (Bornemann 2016) appears to form a suitable conceptual basis for our analysis. However, the conceptual basis for analysis must also consider the construction of political objects and interactions and how these are represented and communicated.

Frame analysis

Understanding (political) interaction requires an examination of the representations of the world that are communicated in this interaction (Chilton 2004). These representations of the world rest on frames, defined as ‘underlying structures of belief, perception, and appreciation’ (Schön and Rein 1994, 23). While frames are usually tacit, they generate meaning and action (Keller 2011) and thus become powerful elements in understanding the political debate. As Hajer (1995, 2) puts it: ‘developments in environmental politics critically depend on the specific social construction of environmental problems’. Donald Schön and Martin Rein stress that controversy is central to policy-making, and such controversies are indeed conflicts over frames that underlie the design of political objects, such as laws, regulations, and programmes (Schön and Rein 1994; Rein and Schön 1996). Institutions play a significant role in accepting particular ways of framing problems and, in this way, enable certain actions while constraining others. Institutions function on the basis of specific, structured, and cognitive commitments. Arguments in any problem area need to fit these underlying structures because otherwise the argument is against the institution and thus risks failure (Hajer 1995). Castell (2016) uses the term ‘institutional frames’ to describe all (formal and informal) frames that an institution applies or builds on to organize its operations. While informal frames refer to the cultural meanings on which an institution’s actions build, formal frames can be seen as the policy frames expressed in any formal written document. Those formal institutional frames are supported and constructed by social structures of institutions, and can, therefore, be reconstructed by analysing policy documents (Mah et al. 2014).

Several authors have analysed how frames influence the way political problems are defined and which policy instruments are chosen. Feindt and Oels (2005) argue that it is the articulation of problems, which involves struggles about meanings, concepts, and knowledge, that influences whether and how a specific societal problem is dealt with and whether solutions can be found. Thus, frames can influence policy-making at different stages of the policy cycle: from problem definition to agenda-setting and policy formation, and thereby include particular policy choices while excluding

others (Kirwan and Maye 2013; Candel et al. 2014; Mah et al. 2014; Banzo et al. 2016). Analysing the different, and sometimes contradictory, frames can accordingly help to understand the limitations for finding policy solutions for particular problems. In their study on the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Candel et al. (2014) identified six distinct frames of food security, which they called productionist, environmental, development, free trade, regional, and food sovereignty. They showed how those frames were far apart; building on different causal analyses of the problem, and that this led to different calls for actions to be taken. For example, those applying a productionist frame called for increasing productivity and revenue support while those applying an environmental frame suggested promotion of sustainable farming and consumption patterns (Candel et al. 2014). Smith et al. (2016) went further when critically discussing the whole European food policy, and highlighted that the lack of a coherent policy frame has led to non-integrative food policies that differentiate strongly between mainstream (global) agriculture and local food systems. The major agrifood system is framed by the idea of global competitiveness and is included within the CAP's mainstream policy, while alternative local food systems are framed as marginal and connected to culture and territory, so are dealt with in the Rural Development Programmes.

However, frame analysis can also be applied to identify possibilities to enlarge the scope of decision-making. In this context, Kirwan and Maye (2013) argued that the framing of food security in the UK as an issue that can mainly be solved via an effectively functioning global food market has led to a narrow choice of strategies and neglected the potential of more holistic visions of food security, such as including local food. The interest in policy integration goes beyond understanding the differences and limitations in finding policy solutions, by considering the potential for integrating across different meanings and interpretations of policy problems and solutions. There are two slightly different ways in which the relationship between frames and policy integration is discussed in the literature. Both include a normative component that stipulates that an overarching, encompassing frame is required to achieve policy integration across different policy sectors and actors.

One perspective starts from an existing overarching frame, and discusses how this frame could be used to integrate diverse actors in the political debate. Hajer et al. (2015) maintain that different (sub)frames included in an overarching frame speak to different agents, and applying these frames increases the inclusiveness of the debates about the required policy change. For example, they call for a reframing of 'sustainable development' to align with different actors, including business, civil society, and cities, and conclude that understanding the different subframes within 'sustainable development' contributes to better understanding the synergies and tensions of those groups, while maintaining opportunities for a comprehensive solution. Similarly, Moragues-Faus and Morgan (2015) argue that holistic frames can create 'inclusive narratives' that reshape and connect various existing initiatives (Moragues-Faus and Morgan 2015, 1570). In that way, new social realities can be created that make new and creative interventions possible. However, this perspective of relating frames and policy integration to an existing overarching frame (Hajer et al. 2015), relies on the existence of an all-encompassing frame. Therefore, this approach can only play a minor role in the present study because of the lack of an urban food policy in Switzerland.

The second perspective starts from sectoral policies, and looks into ways of integrating the varying underlying frames into one encompassing frame of the (new) integrated policy. Söderberg (2008) and Candel et al. (2014) conclude that processes of reframing sectoral policies in an overarching frame can achieve the involvement of a variety of actors in policy formation, which subsequently can lead to the institutionalization of a policy and the achievement of the primary goal (in their case, sustainable development). Related to this is the observation that particular policy interests can successfully only become part of the public policy discourse when they are attached to either the currently dominant political discourse or to higher level policy frames, and in this way gain attention of influential agents and policy-makers (Lang, Barling, and Caraher 2009; Morgan 2009; Raja et al. 2014). This second perspective of examining how the varying underlying frames of sectoral policies could be integrated into an encompassing frame of a (new) integrated urban food policy can readily be applied in the case of Switzerland.

A conceptual framework in which frames are analysed helps policy integration studies in two ways. First, it provides an analytical tool to understand the different policy choices, as underlying meanings and interpretations of policy problems are elicited. Second, on this basis, the potential for integrating policies across sectors and scales can be assessed, and integration processes better understood. A combination of the concepts of policy integration and frame analysis, therefore, appears to provide an appropriate conceptual framework to guide the analysis.

Methods

This paper analyses the formal frames of food in Switzerland reconstructed from official documents on agriculture, food, health, environment, planning, and urban areas at the federal and the local level. A case study approach was applied, using the example of the city of Basel, in the German-speaking Northwest of Switzerland. Both local and federal policy documents were included in the analyses, as many policies, such as the agricultural policy are designed and decided upon at the federal level. The local level, in this case, refers to the canton Basel-Stadt and the municipal level, because of the overlap between city and canton. The majority of the data collection was carried out in 2015, but two additional documents were analysed in autumn 2016: the Swiss sustainability strategy 2016–2019,¹ and the cantonal-level indicator report on sustainable development 2016² to take account of recent policy developments.

The identification of relevant documents started at the local level by searching the publicly accessible online archive of laws, directives, and other legal regulations for keywords, such as ‘food’, ‘agriculture’, and ‘nutrition’. This led to an extensive overview of city departments involved in one way or the other in shaping the food system (Moschitz et al. 2015). In a second step, the websites of these departments were searched for any political and strategic document that could potentially discuss food, and in particular, food related to the city. The websites of the analogous departments at the federal level were searched for similar documents. Additional documents were included when they were referred to in any of the documents that had already identified. This led to the identification of five strategic political documents from the local level and seven from the federal level that were relevant to analyse for reconstructing the formal institutional frames of food. The documents were then searched for any mentions of the term ‘food’, including different translations of this term into German, which all include slightly different connotations.

Referring to the conceptual framework, the documents were searched for frames that explain policy choices: specifically frames that relate to the themes set out in the alternative food geography, which broadly covers economy, environment, social, and governance issues, with a particular focus on the role(s) of cities in food policy. Table 1 gives an overview of the documents analysed.

Frames of food and the role of cities in food in Swiss policy documents

The results of the document analysis are structured according to the overarching frames that were identified: economy and production; environment; and health.³ We also look at the degree to which food is framed as being embedded in a wider context, and what roles are assigned to cities in food policy. Table 2 gives an overview of which frames were employed in which document. In general, there were few instances in which food and agriculture were explicitly and extensively mentioned. However, it was possible to reconstruct a number of frames that were employed in different documents.

Food as issue of economy and production

In many documents, food is framed predominantly as an economic activity in which efficiency and entrepreneurship play a dominant role. This economic frame comprises a productionist perspective and includes the issue of food security.

In the Guiding Document on Spatial Planning (GDSP), food is exclusively discussed in terms of food production and food security. While both rural and urban areas are listed as contributing to

Table 1. Overview of documents included in the analysis.

Federal level	
Federal Office for Spatial Development ARE	
Guiding Document on Spatial Planning (GDSP) (Schweizerischer Bundesrat, KdK, BPUK, SSV, & SGV 2012)	The GDSP is not a binding policy instrument, but is jointly developed by the three governance levels (municipal – cantonal – federal) as orientation framework and decision support. It outlines common strategies for a more sustainable spatial development
Sustainable Development Strategy 2016–2019 (SDS) (Schweizerischer Bundesrat 2016)	The SDS is a framework document that outlines the focus areas of the Swiss government for its sustainable development strategy for four years. It is essentially an action plan containing nine fields of action, four of which mention food: ‘consumption and production’; ‘urban development, mobility, and infrastructure’; ‘natural resources’; and ‘health’
Federal Office for Agriculture FOAG	
Message on the further development of the Agricultural Policy 2014–2017 (MAP 2014–2017) (Schweizerischer Bundesrat, 2012)	In this document the Swiss government explains its rationale behind the new agricultural policy put in place for the years 2014–2017; it is geared towards the legislative bodies and the public
Discussion Paper Agriculture 2025 (DPA 2025) (Bundesamt für Landwirtschaft 2010)	The DPA 2025 serves as a basis for discussions about the strategic development of the Swiss Agricultural policy. It is targeted at political decision-makers and further actors of the food and agricultural sector
Federal Office of Public Health FOPH	
Swiss Nutrition Report (SNR) (Keller et al. 2012)	The focus of the SNR is the relationship between diets and public health of Switzerland’s population, as basis for the development of targeted nutrition recommendations
Swiss Nutrition Strategy (SNS) (Bundesamt für Gesundheit 2012)	The SNS builds on the SNR to develop concrete strategies and actions for achieving the goals in the field of nutrition
Federal Office for the Environment FOEN	
Swiss Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) (Bundesamt für Umwelt 2012)	The main goal of the SBS is an analysis of the current situation and outline of possible actions to maintain and improve biodiversity in Switzerland
Local level	
Cantonal plan directing spatial planning 2014 (CPDSP) (Regierungsrat des Kantons Basel-Stadt 2014)	The CPDSP is a binding strategic planning instrument aiming at coordinating all activities of the cantonal administration that relate to the management of space
Agglomeration Programme – 2nd Generation, Main Report (Geschäftsstelle Agglomerationsprogramm Basel 2012)	The cantonal agglomeration programme is a superordinate and integrated planning document addressing the fields of landscape, settlements, and traffic in the tri-national agglomeration of Basel
Sustainability Indicators Report 2016 (Statistisches Amt des Kantons Basel-Stadt 2016)	The sustainability indicators report 2016 contains 67 indicators to regularly monitor the level of sustainable development of Basel
Concept on the use of public space 2012 (Präsidialdepartement des Kantons Basel-Stadt 2012)	The concept on the use of public space 2012 functions as a governmental concept that should give orientation for the administration for further detailed concepts, plans, and strategies on the use of public space in Basel
Report on the consequences of climate change (Kanton Basel-Stadt 2011)	The report on the consequences of climate change analyses possible consequences of climate change on 12 sectors, among others: agriculture, drinking water, and health

‘strengthening competitiveness’ of the country, the rural areas are identified as the places of ‘food production, landscape preservation, and energy production’ (Schweizerischer Bundesrat et al. 2012, 25). The same federal office published the Swiss sustainability strategy (SDS), with a few mentions of food. A clearly productionist frame is applied in the section of Switzerland’s contributions to reaching the sustainable development goals at a global level. Adaptation to climate change is raised as an issue, as well as food security and food safety, with an emphasis on ‘strengthening institutions, increasing sustainable food production of small scale farms, and securing land rights’ (Schweizerischer Bundesrat

Table 2. Documents and the frames they employ.

	Economy	Environment	Health	Wider context	Role of cities
Federal level					
Guiding Document on Spatial Planning	++				Marginal
Sustainable Development Strategy 2016–2019	+	++	+		
Message on the further development of the Agricultural Policy 2014–2017	++			(+)	Land use conflicts
Discussion Paper Agriculture 2025	++			+	
Swiss Nutrition Report	+		++	+	Promotion of public health
Swiss Nutrition Strategy	+		++	+	
Swiss Biodiversity Strategy		+			
Local level					
Cantonal plan directing spatial planning 2014		(+)			(Land use conflicts)
Agglomeration Programme – 2nd Generation, Main Report					
Sustainability Indicators Report 2016			(+)		
Concept on the use of public space 2012			(+)		
Report on the Consequences of Climate Change	(+)	+			

Note: ++: dominant frame, +: secondary frame, (+): marginally mentioned.

2016, 46). In other sections of the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS), we observe a combination of an environmental frame with the economic framing. For example, the sustainable development goal formulated for the food and agroindustry is to be ‘competitive, resilient, environmentally sound and resource efficient, along the whole supply chain’ (Schweizerischer Bundesrat 2016, 28). Similarly, in the Message on the further development of the Agricultural Policy 2014–2017 (MAP 2014–2017), the agriculture and food industry is predominantly connected to economic efficiency, entrepreneurship, high-quality production, and food safety. The main goal of the new agricultural policy is to ‘create beneficial framework conditions so that the agriculture and food industry can make best use of the market potentials’ (Schweizerischer Bundesrat 2012, 4). The focus on economic efficiency and entrepreneurship is even more pronounced in the Discussion Paper Agriculture 2025 (DPA 2025). The terminology used to describe the vision, need for action, and strategies includes, among others: ‘competitiveness’; ‘optimal use of productive potential’; ‘use of cost reduction potentials’; and ‘efficiency’. Diversification of farms and networking with regional actors should be undertaken to ‘maintain high added value in rural areas’, and cultural landscape is framed as an ‘important resource of rural areas’; innovation is needed to increase ‘entrepreneurial opportunities’ (Bundesamt für Landwirtschaft 2010, 4–5). Entrepreneurship is strongly emphasized in the strategic goals: ‘Due to increased competitiveness, the agriculture and food business’ support by and therefore dependency from, agricultural policy can be further reduced’ (Bundesamt für Landwirtschaft 2010, 5). The health policy documents in the analysis: the Swiss Nutrition Report (SNR) and Swiss Nutrition Strategy (SNS) employ an economic frame in their argumentation – in addition to the naturally dominant health frame (see below). However, the focus here is more on the importance of markets: in the SNR, agricultural policy is assigned an important function in steering food supply and prices, as a way to significantly influencing nutrition and public health. In the SNS, the first out of six fields of action: ‘sustainably produced and safe food and sufficient food supply’ identifies economic players along the whole supply chain (food industry, retail, gastronomy) as potential actors for implementing the strategy (Bundesamt für Gesundheit 2012, 19).

Food as environmental issue

Not surprisingly, the environmental frame is particularly visible in documents from the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) and thematizes foremost the environmental impact of

agricultural production and the whole food system, whereas the impacts of urban sprawl and climate change on agricultural production are mentioned less.

In the action field ‘consumption and production’ of the SDS, food is mentioned as one of four challenges for sustainable development, with an emphasis on minimizing the environmental impact of food: ‘One third of Switzerland’s domestic and global environmental impact is related to food. Producing environmentally friendly with a careful use of resources and avoiding food waste is thus highly important’ (Schweizerischer Bundesrat 2016, 17). Yet, while consumption shares of organic products are presented for illustration (18), we did not find specific objectives for environmentally sound food production. The goals in this field of action only become explicit about the need to reduce food waste (19), including data collection for monitoring and educating about food waste. Similarly, at the local level, in the Cantonal plan directing spatial planning 2014 (CPDSP), food is mentioned in the context of technical use of food waste in the form of providing fuel for the local biogas plant, which is part of a strategy to make waste management more sustainable, including closing cycles (Regierungsrat des Kantons Basel-Stadt 2014, 165). The negative impact of food production on biodiversity is thematized in the Swiss Biodiversity Strategy (SBS): ‘Maintaining and increasing biodiversity in agricultural areas [needs to be] harmonised with food production’ (Bundesamt für Umwelt 2012, 40). In a contrasting perspective, the challenges of environmental changes *for* food production are raised in the SDS’ action field: ‘urban development, mobility, and infrastructure’. It points to the tensions between different forms of land use, and the continuous loss of productive agricultural land to cities and other built environment, leading to a ‘loss for soil-dependent food production’ (Schweizerischer Bundesrat 2016, 19). Soil protection is also emphasized in the action field: ‘natural resources’, thus supporting the environmental frame, however linked to the economic and production frame: soil protection is presented as functional for food production, provision of water, and source of energy and raw products. This combination of environment and economics is reinforced in the SDS’ goal for a competitive and resource efficient agroindustry (see above) (Schweizerischer Bundesrat 2016, 28). Similar links are created at the local level. In an overall environmental framing, the report on the consequences of climate change thematizes food in the chapters on agriculture (potential loss of soil fertility due to erosion) and drinking water (stating a priority for the food producing industry in drinking water supply) (Kanton Basel-Stadt 2011) in a productionist way.

Food as issue of health

The SNR stresses, in several places, the need for a multi-sectoral approach in public health policy, including agricultural policy. Dietary guidelines therefore should ‘not only form the basis of public health policy, but should also guide other policy fields, such as agriculture’. It is argued that the ‘preventative potential of a balanced diet’ for the whole population can only be used in this way (Keller et al. 2012, 41). Similarly, the action field: ‘health’ of the SDS, pictures food as part of a holistic understanding of health facing the challenge of a ‘comprehensive health policy that thematises the relationships between health status on the one hand and health determinants (such as education, environmental situation, and *eating habits*, [...]), on the other’ (Schweizerischer Bundesrat 2016, 40; emphasis by the author). Part of addressing this challenge is strengthening personal responsibility. At the local level, the indicator report 2016 – sustainable development (Statistisches Amt des Kantons Basel-Stadt 2016), only implicitly includes food in one of the indicators for basic needs and well-being: namely the obesity rate of school children (Statistisches Amt des Kantons Basel-Stadt 2016, 16). Indeed, the only frame observed for food in the context of local sustainable development is health. Furthermore, in the ‘Concept on the Use of Public Space’, food habits are problematized as potentially detrimental to one’s health (Präsidialdepartement des Kantons Basel-Stadt 2012, 4, 7).

Food framed as embedded in a wider context

While we have already seen that a few documents implicitly connect different frames (in particular environment and economy) when talking about food, some explicitly embed food and agriculture in a wider context, which could potentially help policy integration.

One example for a more holistic understanding of food is the DPA 2025, which – notwithstanding the strong emphasis on economics – positions the agriculture and food industry in a wider context:

In order to achieve sustainable improvements, agricultural policy cannot remain focussed on agriculture alone, but needs to consider how agriculture is embedded in the food supply chain (up- and downstream, including consumers), environment (biodiversity, soil, water, air, climate, energy, animal welfare), rural areas (landscape, forestry, tourism, spatial planning, regional development) and the agricultural knowledge system (research, education, extension). (Bundesamt für Landwirtschaft 2010, 4)

The paper also mentions the role of consumers and the need to sensitize them for the link between individual food consumption behaviour and its ‘economic, social and ecological effects’ (Bundesamt für Landwirtschaft 2010, 44). Similarly, in the MAP 2014–2017, several policy fields are listed as having an influence on agriculture, such as spatial planning and environment, or climate and energy policy. Interestingly, health is not found here. By contrast, the health policy document SNR explicitly refers to the impact of the Agricultural Policy 2014–2017 on food-related health issues. At the local level, the CPDSP mentions food as *one* function of agriculture: the objectives of which are defined broader as ‘production of food, maintenance of the natural basis of life, caretaking of cultural landscape, ecological networking and – while ensuring the productive functions – recreation in open landscape [...]’ (Regierungsrat des Kantons Basel-Stadt 2014, 95).

The roles of cities in food policy

The analysis focused on the role(s) assigned to cities in food and agricultural policy in Switzerland, as well as on potential links between different governance levels. Generally speaking, food production and urban areas are widely framed as separate spheres.

The GDSP, as the basic document for guiding policies at different governance levels and spatial spheres, expresses a strong framing of urban and rural areas. While both urban and rural areas are listed as contributing to ‘strengthening competitiveness’ of the country, a clear distinction is made between their specific roles. Urban areas are conceived of as ‘productive and dynamic places of economic development, innovation and culture’ whereas rural areas are the places of ‘food production, landscape preservation, and energy production’ (Schweizerischer Bundesrat et al. 2012, 25). Accordingly, there is no role for cities in food production or consumption. With regard to the three governance levels in Switzerland (federal, cantonal, municipal), the GDSP assigns different responsibilities for different policies related to food and agriculture. Under the sub-strategy: ‘maintaining cultural landscape’, the federal level is assigned the responsibility for maintaining agricultural land and for securing healthy food provisioning. Cantons and municipalities are solely responsible for maintaining their agricultural land and solving potential land use conflicts, while apparently playing no role in (healthy) food provisioning (or consumption). The theme of land use conflicts is reinforced in another place of the GDSP, where action is sought in suburban areas to ‘plan settlements with their recreational areas and in-between agricultural areas as integral landscapes’ (Schweizerischer Bundesrat et al. 2012, 45). The possibility of food production on those agricultural areas (and potential implications with regard to an integral landscape) is not explicitly mentioned. So, again, there is no explicit role assigned to cities in what regards food policy. The same result was found for the DPA 2025, in which city–countryside partnerships are named as possibilities for a new approach to maintain cultural landscapes, but an explicit role for cities in shaping future agriculture is not assigned. Furthermore, one of the SBS’s goals is to increase biodiversity in settled areas by creating free space and connecting structures, including the ‘way in which gardens, parks, and rooftops etc. are managed’ (Bundesamt für Umwelt 2012, 65), but food production areas are not mentioned.

Almost the only way in which Swiss cities are connected by policy to agriculture and food is in the discussion about contentious land use. In the MAP 2014–2017, cities are implicitly included as part of spatial planning policies, which impact on productive agricultural areas. In this context, the relationship between urban areas and agriculture is framed as contentious: both at the global and at the national level. Similar to the SDS' action field: 'urban development, mobility, and infrastructure' (see above), the document thematizes the problematic of population growth and growing cities that sprawl into fertile agricultural lands. The cantonal-level CPDSP also focuses on land use and land use conflicts. Food-related spaces are discussed as part of urban green spaces, but without a clear role assigned to the city on dealing with food production. The only time cities are assigned a positive or active role related to food is in the SNR. In this document, cities and municipalities are mentioned in the context of programmes promoting public health (among others, in terms of diets), in particular, because they can influence nutrition of children and youth via school food programmes (Keller et al. 2012, 238).

After having shown the various ways in which food and cities are presented in federal and local level policy documents, these findings are now discussed in the light of the conceptual framework linking the frames to policy integration.

Discussion

The results show that food is not a major topic in most of the potentially relevant policy documents, in particular, it is hardly mentioned at all in the documents of the canton. In addition, there are few cross-references between the different policy documents. The policy fields remain focused on their core (institutional) interest, with few signs of policy integration. The most comprehensive discussion of food can be found in the SDS, which can be explained by its nature as an encompassing, multi-dimensional document on sustainable development. Overall, food is largely assigned to agricultural policy (and rural areas), which is why we find more mention of it in documents at the federal level (the level responsible for agricultural policy) than at the local level. With regard to the frames underlying the representation of food in the analysed documents, we can conclude that an economic and productionist frame is dominant, and we can see an economic frame linked to an environmental frame. Furthermore, some documents employ a health frame but a purely environmental frame is employed much less frequently: not surprisingly mainly in two documents from the FOEN. In the following, the findings are discussed against the backdrop of the conceptual framework: frames as analytical tools to understand policy choices, and frames to assess the potential for (in particular horizontal) policy integration. In the conclusions, we come back to the question of the roles of cities in food policy.

Frames to understand policy choices

From the overview of the frames employed (see Table 2), we can see that most policy documents stay within one core frame, which is related to their sector of policy. For example, the documents from the Federal Office of Public Health mainly employ a health frame, whereas those from the Federal Office for Agriculture employ the productionist and economy frame. The concentration on single specific frames explains the limited focus of each of the federal offices on their core policy area. Although in the DPA 2025 there is a call for an encompassing food policy, this is not translated into concrete integrative policies. Furthermore, the overall limited number of different frames is noticeable. In other cities and countries, food is framed not only in terms of economy, environment, or health, but can include a wider diversity of social frames, as well as references to energy and climate change (City of Malmö 2010; Bristol Food Policy Council 2013). These potential frames of food are not referred to in Swiss policy documents. Accordingly, the number of food-related policy documents is fairly small. In a similar vein, there is a visible lack of framing of food at the local level. Moreover, the overall dominance of the economy and productions frame translates into a food policy, which is

dominated by agricultural policy, which focuses on market-oriented economic instruments, entrepreneurship, and efficiency.

As the articulation of problems, involving struggles of meanings, determines whether a particular policy problem is dealt with (Feindt and Oels 2005), the lack of framing of an urban food policy explains the lack of such a policy. These results are in line with Smith et al. (2016) who illustrated the link between a lacking coherent food policy frame and non-integrative food policies in Europe. In Switzerland, food is not part of the representation of the urban (Chilton 2004), nor does the urban play a role in the social construction of food (Hajer 1995), and the lack of framing explains the lack of a substantial political debate. Yet, notwithstanding the current lack of political debate, we must acknowledge that there are a number of concrete activities in the field of food in Basel, which are initiated by city departments as well as by non-governmental organizations (Kaiser 2016; Urban Agriculture Netz Basel 2016) and which can be interpreted as a practice-based form of wider societal debate (Sonnino 2009; Wiskerke and Viljoen 2012). While the civil society activities are connected through the network of the organization: 'Urban Agriculture Net Basel', public actors' activities are currently less connected, and strongly embedded in the respective city departments. All these activities operate despite the lack of an integrated urban food policy; therefore we now want to discuss the potential for developing an integrative policy across different policy fields.

Frames as potential for integration

As we have seen, only few policy documents place food and agriculture in a wider context, and when they do, the connection remains vague. While both health and agricultural policy documents agree on the need for widening the focus on food, only the SNR refers explicitly to the Agricultural Policy 2014–2017, but this reference is not reciprocated by agricultural policy. Also, no concrete policy integration could be observed that could take this connection further. Therefore, if we think of the potential of framing and reframing as a way to engage in boundary work that is required for policy integration (Bornemann 2016), the results suggest that there is currently only one frame: the predominant economy and productionist frame that would allow for such an integration. At the federal level, all but one fairly specific document (on biodiversity) involve framing of food as an economic activity that involves various supply chain actors and is embedded in an efficiency strategy.

Yet, the analysis also showed that the economic framing is not uniform across the different policy fields, but contains various subframes. Within the overarching frame, a number of policy documents from different policy fields refer to the partly conflicting relationship between food production and other forms of land use. Yet, the nature of these conflicts is described quite differently, and employs different subframes. Documents from the Federal Office for Agriculture (and partly, from Spatial Planning) frame food production as being threatened by urban sprawl, and is thus in competition for land use around cities. In contrast, in the SBS published by the FOEN, food production is framed as competing with environmental policy goals and as a potential threat to biodiversity. These different subframes of food production as something desirable and worth protecting on the one hand, and potentially hazardous, that the environment needs to be protected from, on the other, will have consequences on how food production is debated and which actions might or might not be undertaken.

Conclusion: the potential of an urban food policy

From the results presented, we can see that there is still no encompassing urban food policy in Switzerland, and no integrated urban food policy in Basel: the case study city. A limitation of this study was that resources only allowed an in-depth analysis of one case study city. However, Basel is considered to be a progressive city in Switzerland and one that is reasonably likely to have considered food within their policy deliberations. Their scarcity of such considerations can be therefore considered indicative of scarcity in other Swiss cities. City-level documents rarely mention food and federal policies do not recognize food as a policy field that cities (should) deal with. In contrast, there is a

clear distinction between the rural and the urban in the documents, and there are no frames that integrate (rural) food production and (urban) food consumption. Nor could we reconstruct a frame of 'urban food' that could integrate across the city's departments, or between the local and the federal level. Cities were not mentioned explicitly as possible actors in the food system. Paraphrasing Lang, Barling, and Caraher (2009) and Moragues et al. (2013), the development of a comprehensive urban food policy in Switzerland is not only challenged by the multitude of meanings given to food, but by the mere absence of any framing, and consequently political debate connecting food to urban areas.

In view of the paper's goal to explore the *potential* for an integrative coherent urban food policy, the analysis suggests two possible ways forward. First, the results show that the dominant frame referred to in most of the documents, and thus policy fields, is 'economy'. Accordingly, relating to this overarching frame, actors from the different sectoral policies of health, environment, and agriculture (and others) could find a common ground from which to cross their respective sectors' boundaries and enter a debate on a coherent (urban) food policy. Similarly, non-governmental civil society actors with the interest of introducing an urban food policy in Switzerland would be well advised to attach their political interest to the dominant 'economy' frame in order to gain the attention of the relevant political agents and thus become part of the political discourse (Lang, Barling, and Caraher 2009; Morgan 2009; Raja et al. 2014). The second pathway links political discourse with concrete practice at the local city level. The paper showed that food production in urban areas seems squeezed between competing frames and consequently demands and opportunities for action: Agricultural policy sees food production threatened by urban sprawl, while environmental policy frames it as threatening environmental goals (such as biodiversity). Conceiving of agriculture in such contested urban areas as genuinely *urban* agriculture could provide a negotiation space for an integrative urban food policy (Moschitz and Kueffer 2016). Involving different interests, options, and approaches in the debate on urban agriculture could address both challenges by withstanding urban sprawl while maintaining agricultural practice in a way that does not endanger environmental services. In this way, food production spaces could become part of a locally embedded negotiation process on urban food policy that seeks creative solutions and potential models for transitions towards a more sustainable (urban) food system (Hinrichs 2014; Moragues-Faus and Morgan 2015).

Finally, the newly formed 'Interdepartmental working group on the implementation of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact' (Kantons- und Stadtentwicklung 2016) could be a step towards an inclusive institutional frame on food in the city (Moragues 2013; Castell 2016). With federal level policies remaining in 'silos', and local level policies on food not strongly articulated, the MUFPP offers a master frame to integrate different perspectives and institutional frames of the city departments (Lang, Barling, and Caraher 2009; Candel et al. 2014). As such, the MUFPP could fulfil a double role: on the one hand, as a document directly addressing cities and circumventing the federal level, it could trigger political debate and action at the local level as the most suitable place for engaging in food policy (Cohen and Ilieva 2015; Moragues-Faus and Morgan 2015). On the other hand, it could help to scale up solutions found at the local level for long-lasting political support (Morgan 2009).

It remains to be seen how debate and practice develops, and how the process will be governed in future. While the openness of the ongoing discussions provides, optimistically speaking, the potential for an encompassing and inclusive governance process involving also non-state actors in building up a city-focused food frame, the process has just begun.

Remark: All quotes from the German-language policy documents have been translated into English by the author and, therefore, do not represent any official translation.

Notes

1. Initially, the sustainability strategy 2012–2015 had been analysed, but the results shown now only include the analyses of the strategy 2016–2019.

2. From autumn 2016 on, the ‘indicator report on sustainable development’ replaces the ‘sustainability report’, whose 2013 edition had been the focus of the initial analysis.
3. Although the documents were analysed for other social dimension frames, health was the only one identified here.

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