Food sharing, grassroots innovation, and food governance in New York and Berlin

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June 28, 2018
3rd International SCORAI conference
Copenhagen Business School
Overview

• Introduction
• Background
• Food Sharing & Food Policy
• Disruption & Contestation in Berlin
• Experimentation & Learning in NYC
• Conclusions
A community economy is a space of interdependence and ethical negotiation around:

- what is necessary to personal and social survival;
- how social surplus is appropriated and distributed;
- whether and how social surplus is to be produced and consumed; and
- how a commons is produced and sustained (Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy 2013)
Introduction

• How do we get here?
• What role does food sharing play?
• What role does food policy play?

Food sharing in Berlin and New York

- Ethnographic research with
  - Initiatives from across the food sharing spectrum
    - Food Rescue & Redistribution
    - Cooking and Eating together
    - Composting and Growing together
  - Food sharing practitioners
  - Policy makers and regulators
Food Sharing & Food Policy

• Food Sharing is shaped by policy
  • E.g. Food safety, food donation, and land use laws operating at multiple scales

• Food sharing as site for policy (un)making
  – Disruption & Contestation
  – Experimentation & Learning
Food sharing is shaped by policy

• Community Gardening
  – Policy: Public Trust Doctrine + Community Stewardship Agreements via Greenthumb (NYC)

• Food rescue and redistribution
  – Policy: Bill Emerson Good Samaritans Law + state and federal tax incentives for donors (U.S.)
  – Policy: EU 178 Total traceability + Individual liability. Governing food safety through risk and liability (E.U.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Berlin</th>
<th>New York</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ernährungsrat : Citizen led food policy</td>
<td>• Mayor’s Office of Food Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>council</td>
<td>• Priority: Public Health and Food Security</td>
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<td>• Priority: Food Sovereignty</td>
<td>• NYC Parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Food Safety Authority</td>
<td>• Priority: Env. Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Department of Justice and Consumer</td>
<td>• Department of Sanitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>• Priority: Zero waste</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Priority: Food Safety</td>
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Berlin

- EU 178
  - Every food initiative is a food business
  - Demand for total traceability

- Berlin Fair Teiler Ruling
  - Risk governance through personal liability + EU178

New York

- Bill Emerson Good Samaritan’s Act
  - Protecting food donors from liability

- NYC Local law 176
  - To develop and maintain a food donation web portal
Disruption & Contestation in Berlin

- Non-profit E.v with grassroots network of ambassadors, store managers, food savers, food sharers.
- Rescuing and redistributing food via online platform, personal networks, and *fair-teiler* (public fridges).
Disruption & Contestation in Berlin
Governing Food Sharing

Ratgeber

Einleitung

Da Lebensmittel uns am Leben erhalten, sollte man mit ihnen auch respektvoll umgehen. Gegen die Lebensmittelverschwendung etwas zu tun, ist eine Möglichkeit Respekt zu zeigen. Um den Lebensmittelverschwendung oder die Lebensmittelabgabe für alle Teilnehmer so sicher wie möglich zu gestalten, haben wir die wichtigsten Voraussetzungen im folgenden Leitfaden zusammengefasst. Lebensmittel an andere weiterzugeben ist eine sehr menschliche aber auch verantwortungsvolle Situation. Grundsätzlich gilt wohl immer: „Nichts an andere weitergeben, was man selbst nicht mehr essen würde.“ Die nun aufgeführten Punkte, sollen die Entscheidung erleichtern.

Beachte die Regeln! Nicht gestattet ist das Anbieten und Teilen hygienisch riskanter Lebensmittel. Dazu gehören alle Lebensmittel, die ein Verbrauchsdatum tragen („zu verbrauchen bis...“), wie auch rohe Fleisch, Geflügel und anderes Fleisch, insbesondere Hackfleisch, rohe Eierspeisen und zubereitete Lebensmittel, die Fleisch oder Fisch enthalten, es sei denn es kann leicht erkennbar sein, dass es hausgemacht ist.

Senatsverwaltung für Justiz, Verbraucherschutz und Antidiskriminierung
Bereich Verbraucherschutz

Initiativen gegen Lebensmittelverschwendung
Food-Sharing, Lebensmittelretter, Fair-Teiler & Co

Fair-Teiler
Food sharing as contestation

It’s collective ownership. And the German law has a real problem with that, because we’re not defined... We don’t have anyone in charge. And in this kind of community model where you have 800 people who co-own a hair dryer there’s no legal framework for that (FS2, Berlin)
Food sharing as contestation

Our public fridge is a new social phenomenon. An innovative phenomenon. It cannot be pressed into existing screens and stencils, and that’s exactly what they’re trying to do. Both the policy and the authorities. In existing legislation, which provides only private or commercial and nothing in between, it has simply not been thought of when formulating these regulations… That there might something else, out there, out of the ordinary. And that is why the framework has to adapt to our reality and not reality to the frame (FS4, Berlin)
Food sharing as contestation

- Exposes tensions in governing food as a public good and a private commodity
- Commoning food while privatizing risk; Commons based approach to risk governance is needed.
- Community based sharing economies demand require liability structures
Food sharing as site for experimentation

But what we can do is stay out of everyone’s way.....There are some ways in which Government creates incentives for innovation and there are some ways in which Government stays out in order to enable innovation (FP2, NYC)
Experimentation & Learning in NYC

donate NYC

give goods. find goods. do good.
Experimentation & Learning in NYC

• Non-Profits with Municipal backing
• Community composting capacity building via Master Composter Program
• Stewarding food scraps, plants, and urban soil
• Prototyping neighbourhood scale circular food economies
## Experimentation & Learning in NYC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Techniques</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NYC Compost Project Hosted by Brooklyn Botanical Gardens (Brooklyn)</td>
<td>Windrows, Aerated Static Pile</td>
<td>Food Scrap Containers, Shovels, Brooms, Wheel Barrows, Screen, Solar and Wind Powered Air flower, Solar Panels, Wind Turbine.</td>
<td>225+ Tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYC Compost Project Hosted by BIG Reuse (Queens)</td>
<td>Aerated Static Pile, Windrows</td>
<td>Food Scrap Containers, Gore cover, Temperature and Oxygen Probes, Blower, Skidsteer, Jay-Lor Mixer, Toter-Tipper, Screen, Thermometers</td>
<td>650+ Tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYC Compost Project hosted by Earth Matter Compost Learning Center (Governors Island)</td>
<td>Aerated Static Pile, Windrows, Tumblers, In-Vessel systems, 3 bin systems, Bokashi Composting, Chicken assisted Deep Litter, worm bins, and much more.</td>
<td>Food Scrap Containers, Skidsteer, Jay-Lor Mixer, Blowers, Thermometers, Shovels, numerous compost devices</td>
<td>480+ Tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYC Compost Project hosted by the Lower East Side Ecology Center (Manhattan)</td>
<td>In-Vessel system, Windrows</td>
<td>Food Scrap Containers, Compost Containers, Skidsteer, truck, Thermometer</td>
<td>250+ Tons</td>
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Experimentation & Learning in NYC

- Simply “adding compost” to an unsustainable and environmentally unjust waste management system does not lead to sustainable or just urban transformations

- Opportunity to cultivate a different relationship with waste beyond dominant ethos of disposability, distance and denial

- Embedding community waste in community food systems captures benefits locally with potential to remediate environmental injustices

NYC Learning from food sharing

• Sharing as key part of waste diversion strategy

• Learning new ways of living with and relating to organic waste via Community Composting → Education and buy in for new Local Composting Laws

• Taking inspiration from food sharing platform economies → Local Law 176
CHAPTER 4-G FOOD DONATION WEB PORTAL § 16-497 Food donation web portal.....the department or another agency or office designated by the mayor, shall, in conjunction with the department of information technology and telecommunications, create or modify and maintain a web portal that will allow prospective food donors and recipients, including but not limited to restaurants, grocery stores, produce markets, dining facilities and food rescue organizations, to post notifications concerning the availability of food, including food that would otherwise go to waste, and to arrange for the transportation or retrieval of such food.

Such portal shall, at a minimum, allow (i) a prospective food donor to describe the type and amount of food available, including any information necessary to keep the food safe for human consumption, such as refrigeration requirements, as well as other information necessary to facilitate its donation, (ii) a prospective food recipient to specify the type and amount of food donations it will accept and the areas of the city from which it will accept donations and to receive prompt notification concerning the availability of food satisfying such specifications, and (iii) a prospective food donor and a prospective food recipient to communicate directly through a messaging system within such portal. § 2. This local law takes effect immediately.
Food Strategy for food sharing?

Growing
- Community Land Access
- Stewardship Policies
- Urban Ag. Zoning

Eating
- Food Safety
- Public health & nutrition
- Food Risk & Liability

Wasting
- Municipal Waste Mgmt Policy
- Zero Waste
- Incentives for Food Donation
- Diverse composting economies

Lots of energy & investment!
Conclusions: Surplus Possibilities

- Waste as a moment where food can be disentangled from capitalist relations and re-embedded in commons relationships.

- Need to question technocratic circular economy “waste to resource” rhetoric to ask how waste becomes a resource, for whom, in what kinds of economies.

- Waste as resource for social and solidarity food economies, which can be supported via food safety regulations and municipal solid waste management policy.

- Other food (waste) economies are possible.

- But perhaps a distraction from further upstream solutions....??
Questions?

Thank you

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