Food risks and culture
Experiences with risks from BSE and nutritional habits from community cooking in Ferrara and Vienna

Abstract....................................................................................................................... 2

1 Introduction............................................................................................................. 2

2 Risk assessment in the context of sustainability ..................................................... 3

3 Two risk issues....................................................................................................... 4
   3.1 BSE...................................................................................................................... 4
   3.2 Nutritional Habits.............................................................................................. 5

4 Stories from two municipalities............................................................................... 5
   4.1 Ferrara (Italy).................................................................................................... 6
      4.1.1 The sustainable food project ......................................................................... 6
      4.1.2 The local situation.......................................................................................... 6
      4.1.3 BSE: The local perception and local solutions ................................................ 6
      4.1.4 BSE: The national and regional cultural discourse and its influence on the local solution........ 7
      4.1.5 Nutritional habits: The local perception and local solutions............................ 7
      4.1.6 Nutritional habits: The national and regional cultural discourse and its influence on the local solution ................................................................. 7
   4.2 Vienna (Austria)................................................................................................. 8
      4.2.1 The sustainable food project ......................................................................... 8
      4.2.2 The local situation.......................................................................................... 8
      4.2.3 BSE: The local perception and local solutions ................................................ 8
      4.2.4 BSE: The national and regional cultural discourse and its influence on the local solutions ....9
      4.2.5 Nutritional habits: The local perception and local solutions............................ 9
      4.2.6 Nutritional habits: The regional and the national cultural discourse and its influence on the local solution ................................................................. 10

5 Tackling risks at the local level............................................................................. 10
   5.1 Conclusions: Risk assessment about BSE and nutritional habits....................... 10
   5.2 Conclusions: Risk assessment in sustainability processes.................................. 11

6 Bibliography ......................................................................................................... 13

1 Paper presented at the conference “Interfaces between Risk, Regulation and Culture”, IWT, University of Bielefeld (Germany), January 27-28 2005
Abstract

Who defines what risks are and how they are tackled? The kind of risk itself, or the political system, or the coincidental political situation in which a risk comes up and is perceived as such, or the general cultural setting, or ...?

This paper analyses risks in the sphere of food with a double focus:

a) How are different risk topics assessed?
b) Which actors and which kinds of political processes play crucial roles in defining how these risks are tackled in local communities?

The paper deals with the topics “risks from BSE” and “risks from unhealthy nutritional habits”. These two topics are described regarding their differing structures of risk perception and assessment, their possible management solutions and the different manners of implementing the chosen options. Data from empirical case studies on sustainable community cooking are used to analyze processes of risk management in two European cities regarding both risk topics.

The case studies show that BSE risks were tackled similarly, though the manners of risk communication were very different: Local politicians reacted to the BSE crisis and created short-term specific local solutions. This can be explained a) by the BSE risks themselves, as they directly threaten individual consumers and counter-measures are well known, and b) by the fact that in these two cities local solutions were easy to find, because both already had implemented well-working sustainable food policies in which the solutions could be integrated easily. The results concerning risks from nutritional habits, on the contrary, are very different in the two cities. They show that long term risk management processes, which are needed in the context of risks from nutritional habits, are rather dominated by cultural discourses and linked to national and/or regional political programmes and legislation, than left over to local disposition.

As the empirical research is based on a well-defined sustainability approach from the social sciences, in concluding remarks the results are reflected on in the light of sustainability.

1 Introduction

This paper is about risks from the BSE crisis and from unhealthy nutritional habits. Empirical data are taken from a study about cafeterias and canteens (i.e. community cooking in hospitals, kindergartens, homes for the elderly, schools etc.) that successfully executed a sustainability process with the active involvement of local authorities. The success of a sustainability policy is defined as changing menus and preparation manners by using organic, seasonal and/or regional food, in changing knowledge and conscience about nutrition and in changing responsibilities for food policies, involvement of producers, processors, distributors and consumers in the sustainable development of community cooking etc. The projects chosen are pioneer projects; from the mid-1990s on, food was put on the political agenda in Ferrara and Vienna. Therefore the local handling of risks from BSE and nutrition habits in these two municipalities is expected to differ significantly from other European cities.
The paper examines which actors dealt with the risk issues, how risks were perceived and tackled and how national and regional cultural discourses about these risk issues influenced the local projects.

Community cooking means meals are taken outside of private homes, and with a limited individual choice (not e.g. in a restaurant or snack bar, but in canteens or cafeterias). Community cooking is a pivotal form of food consumption, because large quantities of food are used (considerable relevance for production and especially for processing and distribution) and consumed by a large number of persons. Community cooking is becoming more and more economically, socially and environmentally important; it is a trend in modern societies (Eberle Fritsche Hayn et al. 2004, 34-46). In 1999 one third of the food in Western Europe was consumed outside of private households; the current trend is towards 50%.

2 Risk assessment in the context of sustainability

Sustainable development of food policies is, according to the Agenda 21 (UNCED 1992a), defined as economically, socially and ecologically accountable and congruent with cultural and political contexts; educational and democratic aspects of sustainability are included.

This means that sustainability includes, on the one hand, normative ideas about how society and environment have to be changed in a material way. Regarding food, the environmental and economic aspects of sustainable development mean availability of a sufficient quantity and quality of food for all human beings (all over the world) and for future generations, thus limited use of resources (guarantee for inter- and intragenerational justice) and consequently a tendency towards organic, regional and seasonal production manners. The cultural and social aspects lead to the aim that food production and consumption should match different social and cultural needs and daily life requirements, and be favourable to health. This means that not only ingredients but also manners of nutrition, nutritional habits and possibilities are concerned. Sustainable food can be defined broadly as fitting different social needs and daily life requirements, healthy, low-risk and environmentally sound (Eberle Fritsche Hayn et al. 2004, 1).

On the other hand sustainability is congruent with sustainable development; changes over time have to occur in order to make ideas and their implementation fit with developments in economic, social, environmental and political spheres. In this context political processes, that shall assure sustainability, gain importance; the Agenda 21 focuses on the involvement of society and different actors in decision making processes; mainly those actors concerned by a decision should at least be consulted, if not included in the decision making processes. Decision making demands transparency when new or complementary procedures are introduced. In this context, the Local Agenda 21, one procedural idea of sustainability, has become very famous. Sustainability encourages the importance of decision making at the regional and local levels.

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2 This principle is also called the sustainability triangle, the three pillars or triple bottom line concept.
In the context of risk assessment the sustainability discourse emphasizes a precautionary approach (UNCED 1992b, Principle 15). As uncertainty and ignorance of future risks make it difficult to assure food safety, new institutions and procedures have to be developed (e.g. EU-Kommission 2000). It is widely discussed how to use the precautionary principle while scientific assessment of health and environmental problems are uncertain or still being debated. Thus not only institutional but also individual responsibilities gain importance; research and education are needed.

But how can these socially differing ideals be implemented politically? Differentiated needs require differentiated procedures in order to leave space for choices and development to individuals and organizations. Political procedures should provide those actors with adequate knowledge about private consumption patterns who have to decide on the conditions of consumption. Knowledge about private consumption patterns is still quite small; and mechanisms of production and public procurement cannot be transferred easily to private consumption because of its complexity (Weller 2001, 17).

What does this mean for food risk management processes? Sustainability emphasizes the precautionary principle, a long term perspective (inter- and intra-generational justice) and a further democratisation of societies. How risks are perceived and evaluated depends on procedures and the involvement of different groups of actors, for example scientific expertise, involvement of administration and stakeholders, participation of the public, formal and informal consultation etc.

To sum up, I consider risk management in the context of sustainability in two dimensions, (a) issue-related; and (b) process-related. The empirical data therefore have to show:

a) whether the two chosen food risk issues are treated differently,

b) if risk assessment is accomplished with the involvement of different individual actors and organizations and through differing processes and institutions.

3 Two risk issues

This paper examines two risk issues concerning food: the BSE crisis and unhealthy nutritional habits. By using the terms “tackling” risks and “risk assessment” (Krücken Weyer 1999) I include all steps from risk perception via risk communication to risk management, i.e. everything can be done to and happens with food risks in local communities and at the local level.3

3.1 BSE

The European BSE crisis reached its peak in 2000/2001. In most European countries during the 1990s BSE was regarded as a British problem – until BSE cases occurred in nearly all member states of the European Union.

Risks from BSE occur because it is an animal disease and are well-understood by now. Precautionary measures are well known nowadays, but to implement them means to change beef production practices substantially. That is one of the reasons

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3 As regulation at the local level is limited to sub-law-regulation, the local responsibility differs strongly among different policies.
why countermeasures were taken so slowly (for other reasons see e.g. Luhmann 2001).
The BSE crisis led to a loss of credibility of science and policy making (Dressel 2002). That is why local coping with this crisis had (and has) to do with credibility, also with the credibility of local actors: Politicians and political leaders, administration, science, kitchens, distributors, producers, consumers, media. The case studies show how specific local solutions for community cooking were discussed and which of them were implemented during the BSE crisis.

3.2 Nutritional Habits
Risks from nutritional habits do not only occur from addictive substances, environmental risks, under-nutrition or other diet-related risk factors, but also from habits in the field of physical activity or combined with lack of physical activity (WHO 2002). Many of those risks emerge and can be tackled only over a long time period. The new diseases adiposity and anorexia, for example, are spreading not only in industrialized countries.

United Nations programmes, European and national regulation are on a broad scale in favour of long term precautionary action for healthy nutritional habits, but, as there is a lack of funding for those actions and little flexibility in food safety regulations, innovations in community cooking and education on nutrition are left to private or local and regional activities. Societal and political responsibilities are currently being discussed (Müller 2001) and institutionalisation of nutritional education and information systems are developing (e.g. European Food Authority). Still, there is need for research and for risk assessment. Perception and communication about risks from nutritional habits differ strongly between countries and regions; responsibility is very often left to individuals or to those who organize food consumption in private households. In order to prevent risks, long term educational and informational measures are needed.

Community cooking can contribute to the management of nutritional risks and can influence nutrition habits by the choice of ingredients and methods of preparation, but also through educational and informational projects.

4 Stories from two municipalities
My empirical research was conducted with regard to sustainability processes⁴. The two municipalities presented here decided during the 1990s to introduce organic food and food of regional origin in local canteens. I tell “stories” from these two pilot towns, Ferrara and Vienna, describing how they reacted to the BSE crisis and implemented local nutrition policies. I analyse interferences of national and regional cultural discourses with the local tackling of risks during these processes.

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⁴ Biermann (forthcoming)
4.1 Ferrara (Italy)

4.1.1 The sustainable food project

In Ferrara, Italy, the food issue got on the political agenda after parents, concerned about the health of their children in nursery schools and kindergartens, had protested against the poor quality of food served in these institutions (communal canteens). It took years of step-by-step processes; and in 2004 nearly 80% of the food served in nursery schools, kindergartens and schools in Ferrara is certified organic.

4.1.2 The local situation

Ferrara, situated in the region Emilia Romagna, is famous for local environmental projects as its car free city centre, bicycle lanes and ecological energy production. The city representatives consider themselves “doers” and Ferrara the town where environmental policies are implemented - and not only discussed or talked about. Local administration plays an important role in the development and implementation of ecological projects. In addition, in the region The people in Emilia Romagna commonly agree that political representation of public ideas works quite well. Educational programmes, especially in the field of health and nutrition, are well-developed and widely implemented in the Emilia Romagna and get a secure financial basis from regional funds. Regulation in the region Emilia Romagna foresees the use of organic food in school and kindergarten canteens, as well as education on nutritional habits (Guerra 2003).

In Italy, there is a national law which says that cafeterias held by local communities should use organic food (legge finanziaria 2000, art. 59). There are no sanctions for non-compliance and not very many local communities adopted this law (Lunati Bertino 2003).

4.1.3 BSE: The local perception and local solutions

When the BSE-crisis reached its peak in 2000, the local administration of Ferrara, which is responsible for the school and kindergarten canteens, assigned a group of experts (mainly nutritional, health and agricultural scientists) to examine and form risk perception and especially to investigate how to deal with the meat in the children’s meals. The specific local solution taken by the administration, based on the experts’ statement, was to keep veal in the menus, because of its nutritional value especially for small children, and because no other meat could substitute veal adequately. Risky material was taken out and severe controls were executed with support of the regional health authorities. (Only for children younger than 8 months organic beef was served.) As only Italian beef and veal were used, the risk was considered tolerable. Italian beef was commonly perceived as safe in Italy (Travaglio 2001).

In the same period (November 29, 2000), the local city council discussed the BSE crisis and assessed the risks from beef as high. The majority of the city council members voted for raising the subsidies for school and kindergarten canteens in order to make the procurement of organic meat possible.

Due to this decision, however, the solution developed by the administration was not implemented: As the city council’s resolution clearly foresaw the use of organic meat, the kitchens tried to use organic beef and veal. But organic beef and veal could not be found in the needed quantity and quality. Therefore the kitchens substituted beef and veal with poultry and pork.

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5 For measures taken by the Italian government see Ministero delle Politiche Agricole e Forestali 2003
Around one year later (December 2001), administration and kitchens, cooperating in meat procurement, stated that the market had developed and organic meat, usable in community cooking, was available, though at high costs. The administration asked the city council to raise the subsidies again. It took more than another year until in 2003 organic beef was included in the call for tenders for all the school and kindergarten meals.

4.1.4 BSE: The national and regional cultural discourse and its influence on the local solution

The solution developed by the local administration of Ferrara had to be revised because of a broader discourse which was introduced into Ferrara by the members of the local parliament. Although national legal framing did not play a decisive role, the choice for organic meat (instead of, for example, the substitution of beef by other meat) was influenced by national and regional legislation, which developed parallel to other European countries.

4.1.5 Nutritional habits: The local perception and local solutions

Politicians and administrations put food and nutrition on the political agenda back in the 1990s. Nutrition is considered a) an important issue concerning health and b) a field that mirrors social problems (e.g. anorexia). National and international discourses on risks from unhealthy nutrition habits are transferred into debates inside the Ferrara city council and inside the administration.

The local authorities of Ferrara developed a special action plan because education on nutrition was regarded as very important for the prevention of nutritional risks. Cross-sectoral cooperation within the regional and local administration was established in order to institute efficient and up-to-date health education. The cooperation with local and regional scientists led to a change in the national diet (proposed for all school and kindergarten children by the national government) into a diet fitting regional habits and regional nutritional requirements. As the local community is regarded as responsible for education in the field of nutrition, financial and personal resources are used in order to provide all teaching institutions (including nursery schools) with means to conduct nutritional education. Representatives from administration and political parties talk openly about their political choice for an active nutrition policy. There is continuing communication in Ferrara about how to optimise nutritional education, especially between members of green and social-democratic parties. Risks from bad nutrition are discussed. Education is not limited to children, but is provided also for kitchen staff, parents etc.

4.1.6 Nutritional habits: The national and regional cultural discourse and its influence on the local solution

National and especially regional legislation on nutrition education and on the introduction of organic food in school and kindergarten canteens, which is the responsibility and a duty of the local communities, sustain the political choices of Ferrara; and even more is done at the local level.
4.2 Vienna (Austria)

4.2.1 The sustainable food project

In Vienna, Austria, politicians decided to create an extensive programme for climate protection. At the same time, scientists worked on healthy food inside research institutes and local hospitals. They agreed with the climate programme and inserted regional and organic food production into the action plan as a field of carbon dioxide reduction. After a study about the climate impact of organic and non-organic food production was conducted, organic and regional food was introduced in community cooking in hospitals, elderly homes, kindergartens and some schools in Vienna. So the big climate protection network became the framework for green public procurement. Persons responsible in the kitchens for the choice of food, who used organic food for moral and health reasons, got support by the climate protection programme, which was supported by a large network of different groups of actors inside the municipality and inside the administration. So the food project is founded on the commitment of scientists (inside the administration and in local institutes), of administration staff and leaders, of politicians, and the involvement of kitchen personnel from the beginning on. Actually, the proportion of organic food in all institutions mentioned above is between 20 and 40%.

4.2.2 The local situation

Meat was the first product the kitchens used in organic quality. Reasons for this choice were

- morality: Responsible persons in the kitchens were committed to animal protection.
- market development: In the starting period of the project (1995), a big supermarket chain had just started to sell organic vegetables and fruit so that it wasn’t possible to get big quantities of organic vegetables and fruit from regional nor even national production.
- quality: Organic meat does not shrink as much during preparation as conventionally produced meat. Smaller portions (due to higher prices of conventionally produced meat) were already common for the consumers and thus with the organic quality not even recognized. The higher quality of organic meat can easily be recognized by smell and taste.

4.2.3 BSE: The local perception and local solutions

With the beginning of the BSE crisis responsible persons in the hospital kitchens decided to use as much organic beef as there was on the market. They did this with precautionary intention, they decided and acted before patients of the hospitals would ask them to do so. Organic meat, in the view of participating scientists, cooks and administrative personell, guaranteed freedom from BSE risks. In addition European and Austrian BSE risk prevention legislation was followed (also with conventionally produced meat).

At the peak of the BSE crisis, Vienna’s mayor announced: Vienna’s children get healthy food at any cost. He did not speak about risks; he just said: healthy food. This was during the local election campaign in 2001. Politicians as well as directly with food involved actors in the kitchens and administration used this public promise for political pressure: They succeeded in gaining more local subsidies for the kindergar-
ten canteens in the following year. The BSE crisis thus was a trigger for politicians to fund the big Vienna sustainable food project.

4.2.4 BSE: The national and regional cultural discourse and its influence on the local solutions

The typical “Austrian” risk perception relates food risks with large scale economy (e.g. European Union market, globalisation), and defines that safety and trust in food is achieved through regional food production. As “food from the Alps” is considered to be pure and “organic”, there is no ideological opposition against organic food. Although the climate protection programme provides the framework of the food campaign and therefore, theoretically, also logistics or regional origin could have become the focus, organic food became the centre of the climate saving contribution in the field of food production. The eco-procurement in Vienna, also part of the climate protection programme, is called “Öko-Kauf” (“buy eco”) which clearly indicates the focus on green and environmental aspects.

The high approval of pure foodstuff in Austria sustained the sustainable food project. The BSE crisis7 gave even more support to those actors who already pushed the project. There was nearly no opposition against the project; meat is appreciated very much as an healthy and regional product. In the risk communication and assessment safety aspects were combined with quality (health, taste) arguments.

4.2.5 Nutritional habits: The local perception and local solutions

The Vienna local perception is that regional and organic food is healthy and of high quality. The regional origin of food is important. Special diets and non-traditional habits (“Körndlessen”, vegetarian food, etc.) are not favoured by the project leaders; they focus on arguments for convincing the consumers such as that habits won’t have to be changed, that organic food tastes better and is healthier for consumers, farmers and for the environment. The communication is about a win-win solution for agriculture, environment, climate, kitchens and eaters. Economically it is argued that the large buyer (local community of Vienna) fosters regional and organic agriculture.

Some social aspects play a role: organic food especially in kindergartens and schools is seen as very important for working parents who are eased in their responsibility for the health of their children through high quality meals from community cooking. Social democratic and green politicians emphasize the social argument that the parents do not have to pay more for the better food.

Knowledge about organic food is fostered. Its quality, its contribution to health of human beings and animals and its environmental soundness are communicated especially with the community cooking consumers. A film has been produced in private public partnership for kindergartens, in which the advantages of organic farming are shown. Cooks, kitchen personnel and other staff get information through leaflets, seminars and excursions to farms of producers and to distributors.

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6 Certification is not commonly considered as important. But as community cooking needs certified organic products because of necessary guaranties for controls, during the initialising phase of the project the kitchens got in conflict with producers who could not provide the necessary documents.

7 In December 2001 there was the first BSE case in Austria; in June 2002 an agency for health and food safety was founded in order to bundle the Austrian competence of ca. 1000 experts from health and agriculture organisations (Mlnarik Ogris Rehling et al. 2002, also for legislative acts and market development during the BSE crisis in Austria).

8 There is an initiative in some of the local hospitals to make people getting used to drinking water from the tap instead of mineral water from bottles, because the local water is of a very high quality.
Risk communication does not play a role in Vienna. The term risk is avoided; a moral and traditional discourse dominates the food project.

4.2.6 Nutritional habits: The regional and the national cultural discourse and its influence on the local solution

While national and regional regulation do not seem to play a role in the non-risk communication in Vienna, the cultural discourse with the emphasis on tradition, health and pureness of food (instead of price, innovation and functionality) dominates the communication in Vienna. This discourse is an Austrian speciality; the same discourse is also locally based in the town of Vienna.

5 Tackling risks at the local level

5.1 Conclusions: Risk assessment about BSE and nutritional habits

In both cities, during the BSE crises, politicians dominated the risk discourse. While in Ferrara the solution developed by the local administration, based on the consultation of scientists, had to be revised because of the resolution passed by the local city council, in Vienna the intervention of the mayor determined the risk discourse and its consequences. In both towns producers and consumers do not seem to play a decisive role in both risk issues.9

Risks were discussed and assessed differently: While detailed assessing between nutritional values and the replacement of beef through other kinds of meat and the risks of using unsafe beef occured in Ferrara, in Vienna safety was the main public issue and detailed discussions about risks were avoided. As the use of organic food was already established in both of the cities, the proportion of organic meat used in the communal canteens was raised because of the discourse on food safety which had come up during the BSE crisis.

Table 1. The BSE crisis: Comparison of the pilot cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ferrara</th>
<th>Vienna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific local solution: keep veal in menus (administrative solution supported by scientists).</td>
<td>Politician promises the healthy nutrition of Vienna’s children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City council concerned about risks.</td>
<td>Food project pushers take their advantage from this promise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration’s solution revised (without regard of feasibility).</td>
<td>Administration, scientists and kitchens gained support and money for organic meat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=&gt; Proportion of organic meat raised.</td>
<td>=&gt; Proportion of organic meat raised.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 As only few consumers and producers were interviewed in the empirical study, their views, behaviour and influence are filtered through the views of other actors, media and documents. Further empirical research could change the clear result a bit; the tendency is expected to be the same, because with the same empirical data it is stated that for the introduction of organic food and food of regional origin in both towns consumers and producers played important roles.
Also in the treating of risky nutritional habits a parallel concept in both cases was found: The dominant cultural discourse affects decisions about nutritional habits and the assessment of the need for nutritional education. While in Ferrara political leaders, sustained especially by the regional parliament and regional and local administrations and experts, decided to put nutritional education on the political agenda, to fund programmes and to evaluate and develop them further, in Vienna nutritional habits were not discussed. The dominating Austrian concept, sustained by political leaders and scientists, focuses mainly on healthy and environmentally sound food ingredients and traditional menus.

Table 2. Nutritional education: Comparison of the pilot cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ferrara</th>
<th>Vienna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risks from nutritional habits are openly communicated. The choice for organic food is just a part of the local food policy.</td>
<td>Nutritional habits are not discussed. Traditional and high quality food is fostered by scientists and politicians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political choice for sustaining education</td>
<td>Knowledge on regional and organic production and products is spread.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far reaching educational programmes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National and regional legislation and culture sustain local choice of measures.</td>
<td>National and regional culture sustains local choice of measures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Conclusions: Risk assessment in sustainability processes

The dominating actors in the city of Ferrara chose not for low cost solutions but for taking up actively a broad responsibility for healthy community cooking. They acted step by step in changing the food policy, which is, according to all interviewees, typical for Ferrara’s sustainability policies. Scientists and food technicians from local and regional administrations work closely together. The actors dealing with nutrition do this, if possible, with an holistic approach: health aspects (ingredients and composition of single meals and the whole diet of different groups of consumers - that is why the national diet plans are altered) are in the centre of their concern, but also practicability, costs and also acceptance by consumers always play an important role.

With the BSE crisis the step by step- dealing in Ferrara is interrupted, because the broader discourse about risks from beef gets more power than regional and local knowledge and typical risk assessment procedures. The result of the process stabilizes the Ferrara food policy: the share of organic meat can be raised more quickly, because subsidies are put up in order to avoid BSE risks. The nutritional policy requires the involvement of different actors; regional and local conditions and political culture are in favour of a broad nutritional education policy. Subsidies in the field of nutrition are discussed and deliberately placed in concurrence with other policies. That means that the political decision for a broad educational approach is taken actively and openly.

In Vienna organic food is used because of its ecological and health impact. Communication concerning food is mostly about ecology and regional origin. This mirrors that
the categories tradition and geography are central in the political and cultural discourse in Vienna.

The food policy processes in Vienna and Ferrara, and in this frame the experienced risk assessment procedures and outcomes, are now interpreted in the context of the normative concept of sustainability, and also the differences in the risk issues BSE and nutritional habits are described in the light of the sustainability processes:

In both cases, when it is agreed on a broad public scale that national and regional origin do not guarantee beef to be free of BSE risks, politics (local city council, mayor etc.) enter the discourse actively. The result is, that measures taken before, in both cases the use of organic meat, are emphasized and supported even more.

Political leaders, reacting to this immediate and threatening risk, use for their short term proposals the existing sustainable community cooking projects. For the actors involved in the food project this is experienced as a contribution to their commitment and to the food projects themselves. On the other hand this short term reaction, and the decision making without considering local knowledge and specific local circumstances, is exactly what the sustainability concept is not aiming at.

Unfortunately, no empirical research has been carried out yet (which is known to the author) about other local communities where there was no project that could guarantee a fitting and quick solution to the BSE problem. How did other municipalities deal with the BSE-problem, did they find other projects to support? Did organic meat enter the agenda in those other towns?

Regarding policies in the field of nutritional habits, risk communication and assessment differ strongly between Ferrara and Vienna. As these risks are not immediate, political leaders do not have to react immediately. In Ferrara the political choice for a wide food policy including nutritional education is inserted in a risk discourse as well as in a precautionary and sustainability discourse. In Vienna nutrition is not placed in a risk discourse, and sustainability is inserted in the dominating cultural discourse about traditional regional food of high quality.

Hereby we get to the core of the normative sustainability approach: When risks are not immediate, reactions, too, are not immediate. So long term cultural discourses, contrarily to quick globalisation processes of science and knowledge and taste, dominate what is happening. The sustainability discourse, in the cases presented here, did not affect the cultural discourses. Only where sustainability is a) a useful concept in the view of important actors and b) fitting in broader cultural discourses, it is useful for sustaining the broad concept and the normative aims it carries.
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