

24. Conceptualisations of justice in the food system transition in the North of the Netherlands

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In the North of the Netherlands many food system actors support a transition towards a just and sustainable food system. However, different views exist on what a just food system entails because people have experienced different (food related) injustices and hold different norms and values. In food system transitions it often remains implicit how people conceptualize justice, which means potentially conflicting conceptualizations are not discussed. As a result, current injustices may be reproduced, such as inaccessibility of healthy food for marginalized communities and limited influence of farmers in decision-making processes. To discuss potentially conflicting justice conceptualizations in the North of the Netherlands we interviewed 27 actors from across the food system. We asked them whether they thought the food system in this region was becoming more just or unjust, leaving it up to them to define justice. We analyzed the data using a conceptual framework which includes recognition, distributive and procedural justice aspects that are relevant in food system transitions. Participants had conflicting views on whether the food system was becoming more just and for whom. We identified several recognition and distributive conceptualizations that had also emerged from the literature, including the need for viable livelihoods of farmers and improved wellbeing of non-humans. Procedural justice conceptualizations however, were hardly mentioned. At a workshop we presented initial results to participants and challenged them to consider additional conceptualizations from the literature. The discussion that followed showed the importance of making justice conceptualizations in food system transitions explicit as participants navigated conflicting views.