

Policy instruments for urban circular food systems: a systematic literature review

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Breaking the linear produce, consume, dispose chain is often mentioned an important element for sustainable local food systems. Therefore, circularity is an increasingly popular concept when thinking about the future of food systems. Creating more circular food systems (CFS) is a major challenge, for which an increasing amount of cities has invested in developing policy instruments to make food systems more circular and sustainable. As food systems are very context dependent, different cities will use different sets of tools and mechanisms through which governmental authorities attempt to steer actors in the food system to make it more circular. However, there is limited systematic knowledge on how different policies contribute to more circular food systems, as well as the wide range of instruments that is already being implemented. Therefore, we conduct a systematic literature review of academic publications to describe how policy instruments can contribute to more circular urban food systems. The literature review follows the protocol for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), and coding of policy instruments is done using the software Atlas.ti. Following this review, we first provide an overview of the academic field, by looking at the number of publications, the distribution across academic fields, and geographies. Second, we synthesize which types of CFS policy instruments are proposed or implemented; what their policy goals are; which aspects of food systems are prioritized; and how circularity in relation to these different instruments is appraised or evaluated. The findings outline our current understanding about CFS policy instruments and governance tools, providing lessons and insights about how different CFS policy instruments work at the local level, and how they are embedded or related to other policies, either at the local, regional, national or international level. Moreover, we conclude by discussing the wider trends that emerge from the current developments in CFS policies. Thereby offering a systematic overview for both practitioners and scholars working toward more circular food system.