

Sustainability in the City and Beyond

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Sustainability and Food in the City: the Role of Local Organizations, Communities, and Municipal Food Councils in Transforming Urban Food Systems

Anna-Liisa Aunio

This talk addresses the role of the complex array of municipal actors invested in addressing sustainability and justice in urban food systems. Using Montreal and two municipal boroughs as a case study, this talk first explores the role of neighborhood food security tables, their history, and their local networks as a function of the rise of charitable giving for food security and local social movement mobilization across North America. It then addresses the increasing role of cities and municipal authorities as they have become significant actors in setting sustainability policy in both national and global ecopolitics.

With differing priorities and perspectives within neighborhood food networks as well as the need to balance food sovereignty and justice issues, local priorities can significantly differ from and come into conflict with newly arranged and consolidated municipal governance efforts. Taking into account both local participation and governance as well as municipal food policy councils in the context of provincial and national priorities places municipal authorities at the centre of both collaboration and conflict in transforming urban food systems. Their capacity to achieve more sustainable policy and action relies on their ability to both navigate and mitigate these pressures. By comparing the networks and priorities of two local food security tables within Montreal in the context of the now established and consolidating food policy council, this talk ends with an assessment of the city and local policy in current efforts to transform urban food systems.



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