

# Multistakeholder governance as a way to promote sustainable food & farming strategies – case of Public Organic Procurement Policies (POPPs) in Denmark.

Spyridon Fragkos<sup>1</sup>  
Bent Egberg Mikkelsen<sup>2</sup>

*Abstract* – A case study was conducted with qualitative methods and content/document analysis to examine the policy implementation of POPPs in Denmark over the past decades. Taking a multi stakeholder governance approach, Danish organic model for organic procurement was found to be useful in achieving organic food & farming policy goals. The model is an appropriate tool to achieve sustainable food goals and a useful mechanism for national and local governments to creating stable demands for organic products. The core of the models success is the political decision for supporting and targeted financing from government, training and teaching of all involved food and procurement professionals with proper emphasis on cooking skills, craftsmanship, motivation and inspiration about organic food.

Keywords: POPPs, Organic food, case study, Denmark.

## INTRODUCTION

Organic food and farming policies help to maintain soil quality and biodiversity and with recycling of animal and vegetable by-products and residues reduce the cost and contributes to saving the planet's water and fuel resources and in addition help the public health and can positively contribute to the development of local food economies (Morgan & Sonnino, 2008:5). In a number of countries policies are applied, known as Organic Procurement Policies – POPPs that reinforce stable consumption of organic products (Mikkelsen BE, 2015). The POPPs in Denmark have been used as a policy model since the previous decade and were included in the 2012 governmental program by the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries (The Organic Action Plan 2020). In this paper, the POPPs are examined as a case study, in order to assess to what extent they contribute to achieving the above goals. The aim of this research is to investigate the model of Public Organic Procurement Policies (POPPs) as a mean of policy implementation. The case study was conducted

with qualitative methods and content/document analysis. A hall mark of the POPP approach has been the inclusion of the full range of powers of society in the governance. Therefore the goals of this research were to uncover the drivers and motivations among these. In addition the goal was to analyze the characteristics of the model, pinpoint its advantages as well as the weaknesses in the implementation of the policy until now, but also to investigate the prospects of extending this type of governance in other European countries. In this case study, the organizational model POPPs with many parameters (Yin, 1994: 1&3) was examined within a short period of time in order to record and imprint advantages and disadvantages of this model, in Denmark.

## METHODS AND SOURCES

The case study was conducted with qualitative methods and content/document analysis. Five interviews were conducted via Skype during the period of 15-10-2015 to 24-12-2015. The interviewees, who have been chosen, are directly related to the promotion of organic products in public kitchens. Also, they participate in educational programmes of individuals and stakeholders in the whole chain from the purchase of the product to the dish (working in, diet and nutrition Association, ministry, research institution-University, private food company, and main organic kitchens in Copenhagen). A questionnaire with six themes was created whose main point is to investigate: the Danish consumers' confidence in the quality of organic products in public kitchens, the procedures of participation - bottom up or top down-, the rate of POPPs growth, which problems appeared and how these can be overcome and if this model can be used as an example model to other countries. Finally, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and the following model for thematic analysis was conducted, after the material is coded in categories and was ready for deep interpretation. (Marrying, 2014). The data were analyzed and identification of important themes was carried out. After extensive review of the responses, based on the intensity and the frequency of the answers, topics were chosen and were presented in two tables.

## THEORETICAL FRAME AND ORGANISING CONCEPTS

Over the past decades governments have turned to more inclusive multiple modes of governance where a broad range of stakeholders of society are invited to participate in the solution of societal challenges. A multi stakeholder governance approach suggests that a broader range of policy and strategy tools – a policy implementation mix can be applied with success, in contradiction to single mode government driven policies that have been shown to be less effective when dealing with complex and "wicked" issues. Introduction of organic foods on the public plates as part of

<sup>1</sup> Panteion University, Greece, PhD Candidate, [spirosfragos1@gmail.com](mailto:spirosfragos1@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Aalborg University Copenhagen, Denmark, Professor, [bemi@dcm.aau.dk](mailto:bemi@dcm.aau.dk)

*Challenges for the New Rurality in a Changing World*  
7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Localized Agri-food Systems

sustainable food and farming policies in diverse and complex settings such as school, kindergartens, hospitals etc can be assumed to be a good example of "wickedness". Multi-mode policy implementation strategies have been applied in the industry field in the United States during the 1980's in order to face global competition; It was organized as a collaborative plan and consensus among industry, engineering societies, the Federal Government, and even the schools themselves (Nicolai, 1998). The implementation of Danish organic food and farming policies have over the past decades is an illustration of such multi-mode policy implementation and governance. It has come to involve a broad range of the important actors of society: civil society, market and public actors. The paper takes this multi stakeholder governance approach as its point of departure in its attempt to unravel the views and attitudes of important representatives from the three powers of society in the implementation of POPPs in the case of Denmark and in order to give recommendations on implementation of sustainable food consumption strategies in the public based on this multi mode governance approach.

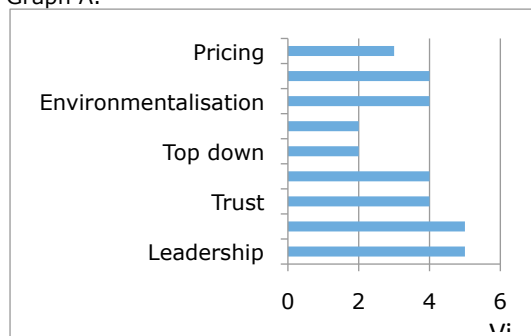
#### RESULTS

The themes were categorized in two Tables A and B: frequently mentioned themes in Table A and less frequently mentioned themes in Table B, as well. This process ended up in 8 important themes.

Table A.

<i>Important themes</i>	<i>Vi</i>
Leadership	5
Danish model	5
Trust	4
Capacity Building	4
Top down	2
Bottom up	2
Environmentalisation	4
Cooking skills	4
Pricing	3

Graph A.



(Vi:represents the frequencies of important themes in the Table A, with max(Vi)=5. Also, the Top down & Bottom up are answers for the same question-Dual Governance). In general, the analysis of the interviews suggest that according to

a broad category of stakeholders the Danish organic model for the greening of the public kitchens (the POPP approach) is perceived as a good model and as an example for other countries to follow. Some kitchens have reached the goal 60% of organic, with a ten-year preparation. People from other countries come to Copenhagen public kitchens to get inspiration. This model is appropriate for the organic food conversion project. Big attention has to be given in changing behavior of the personnel of the kitchen by training.

#### CONCLUSIONS

According to the study it was found that POPPs play an important and dynamic role in using organic food in public kitchens, some of them reaching the goal of 60% after ten years of preparation. The core of POPP's success is the political decision for supporting and a strong financing from government, the innovative methods of training and teaching of all stakeholders and the special focus on personnel in public kitchens, craftsmanship and inspiration about organic food and the implementation of a mix model strategy of participation. We estimate that there is a fair chance that Denmark can reach the goal of 60% before 2020 if it reinforces the POPP's. We conclude that the model with necessary cultural adaptations can be used by other countries that aims to promote organic food and farming and that want to use the potential power of public food procurement.

#### REFERENCES

1. MAYRING, P. (2014). QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION, BASIC PROCEDURES AND SOFTWARE SOLUTION. KLAGENFURT, 2014. URN: [HTTP://NBN-RESOLVING.DE/URN:NBN:DE:0168-SSOAR-395173](http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-SSOAR-395173).
2. Mikkelsen, B. E. (2015). WG24 – Revaluing institutional food procurement Organic food on the public plate in Denmark – top down or bottom up?. Agriculture in Urbanising Societies, August 14-17, Rome 2015.
3. Morgan, K. J., Sonnino, R. (2008). The School Food Revolution: Public Food and the Challenge of Sustainable Development. Earthscan, Oxford.
4. Nicolai, M. L. (1998). Viewpoint: An Industry View of Engineering Design Education. Int. J. Engng Ed, No. 1, Vol 14:7-13. Printed in Great Britain. TEMPUS Publications, 1998.
5. Yin K. R. (1994). CASE STUDY RESEARCH. Design and Methods. Second Edition. SAGE Publications, 1994.