

Research Project Abstract

Against the backdrop of global developments such as climate change, excessive consumption of resources, increasing urbanization and rising demand for food in urban areas, there is a need to rethink the current way of doing business and living. Such social and fundamental restructuring processes are also referred to as transitions. One concept that is increasingly being discussed in politics and science in this context is the bioeconomy, the normative objective of which is to switch from fossil raw materials to a bio-based economy. Therefore, numerous countries and regions now have bioeconomy strategies, particularly in Europe. As the bioeconomy requires biologically valuable land, which is becoming scarcer, competition for land is expected to intensify in the future. However, both in transition research in general and in the bioeconomy, the spatial perspective is neglected. Conversely, spatial planning has so far neglected one area of the bioeconomy, namely the food system and, more specifically, urban food production.

Accordingly, the presentation will demonstrate a theoretical and conceptual investigation into the transition to a sustainable bioeconomy using the example of urban food production. For a better structure, a two-stage approach will be chosen. First, the potential influences and implications of this transition on urban space are described using the multi-level perspective. On the one hand, these result at the superordinate level from the concept of the bioeconomy and, on the other, from the new forms of urban food production, so-called niche innovations. Eight implications for urban areas are thus identified that characterize the transition dynamics. Building on this, the work follows the understanding of so-called transition management, according to which this transition can be influenced in principle. Accordingly, relevant political-normative ideas in this regard are summarized as management requirements. In accordance with the transition management cycle applied, the latter form the strategic, long-term vision for the transition and contain elements at the tactical level that concretize the path towards this goal. Five selected case studies of urban food production in Germany are then presented and evaluated based on the previously identified management requirements. The evaluation results, together with the implications derived at the beginning, are used to formulate well-founded adaptation proposals for the current strategic and tactical orientation of the transition. Finally, a critical discussion is presented and concluded with a conclusion and outlook.

In accordance with the theoretical-conceptual orientation, the results presented are based on a systematic literature research of 38 scientific reviews on the bioeconomy and urban food production to describe the transition dynamics using the multi-level perspective. Following on from this, 11 political-normative documents at global, European and national level were evaluated as a strategic and tactical framework in terms of the transition management cycle. The case studies on the five transition experiments were each based on a corresponding literature and internet research, a (site) visit and expert interviews. The examples each take a different approach to urban food production and are taken from the German cities of Berlin (2x), Dortmund, Oberhausen and Dinslaken.