

Negotiating food systems experiments

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About me



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#socio-ecological transformation #digital transformation #public sector #co-design

PhD: Design as continuous repair: experimentation, negotiation and expertise in DIY spaces

PhD at NODUS research group, DoD, Aalto university
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Structure of the lecture

Experimentation	Examples	Exercise
Background	Smart City Strategy	Actor Mapping
	Open Workshops	
	Foodsharing.de	

Experimentation

Experimentation!?

- What do you understand as experimentation personally?
- What have you learned from the paper by Fabrizio Ceschin?

Experimentation - Background

- Test beds for alternative practices welcoming failure and irritation as part of learning. (Schneidewind and Scheck, 2013)
→ see niches in Ceschin 2014
- Situated in the wild, real life laboratories / living labs (good term to search for literature on sustainability experiments) explore cases and technology development locally. (Jalas et al 2017)
- History: Experiments are central to science, but complex to reproduce. Some experiments are demonstrations (Laurent 2011) (Check STS for further info)

Open ended experimentations vs. demonstrations

- Experiments can also be understood as playful open-ended tinkering where the outcome must not be clear
- Experiments can be seen as a safe space for pre-defined change of practices
- Experiments help to get support and investment in experiments (Heiskanen et al.2018)
 - promising mode of governance

Examples

Example 1: Smart City Strategie Berlin

Strategie für eine smarte Stadt - von und für Berlin

Juli 2022

GEMEINSAM DIGITAL

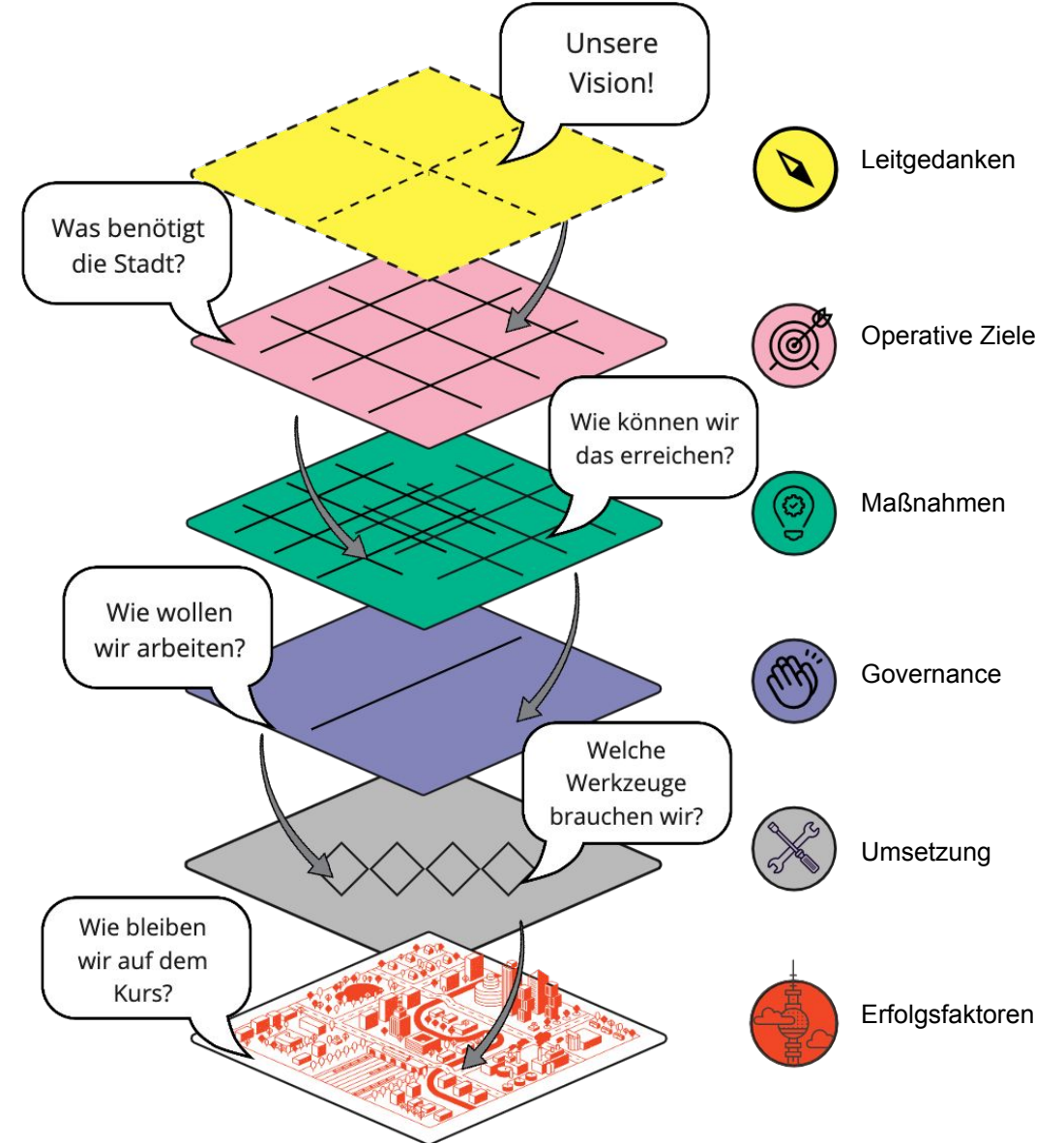
BERLIN



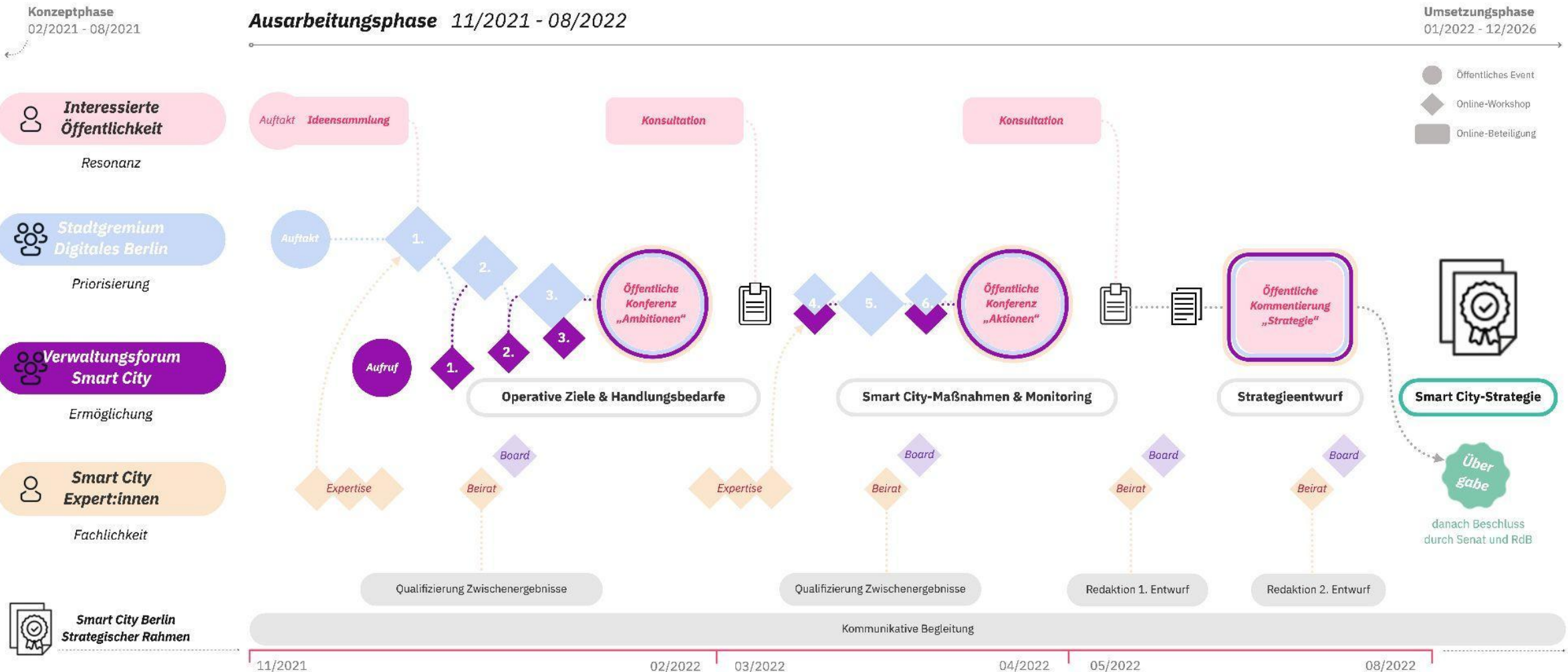
SC Strategy overview

The strategy “**Gemeinsam Digital: Berlin**” is based on the needs of the citizens and takes into account existing demands from various experts (e.g. Commerce Chamber, Network Smart City, Infralab)

6x Citizen assembly drawn by lot
5x Administrative workers assembly
3x Commented by the general public
4x Smart City advisory board



SC Co-creative decision-making & learning process



SC Needs in the city

"Often only the adults are asked when it comes to the future. But in the town council I was able to participate in the exchange as a student - that is important and moves us forward."



"Far too often, "major" decisions are made without any involvement of those affected. This endangers the acceptance of the incumbent senate and thus the coexistence of all citizens!"



"At its best, a smart city contributes to good collaboration to address challenges such as climate justice, access to space and good coexistence in a coordinated way."



"The cross-cutting topic of Smart City requires central management, coordination and implementation from within the Senate Chancellery. This is the only way to ensure the strategic connection of department-specific activities".



SC Selection of concrete measures and targets

Accessible language



Improve accessibility of administrative forms - especially with regard to understandable language

2023: The first "Comprehensible language for digital services" forms are available, developed and tested with citizens and administrative staff.

Life-situation concept



Align administrative services with the life situations of citizens, e.g. birth, career entry, etc.

2023: The first prototype has been developed in the context of the implementation of the Online Access Act and is being tested with citizens and administrative staff.

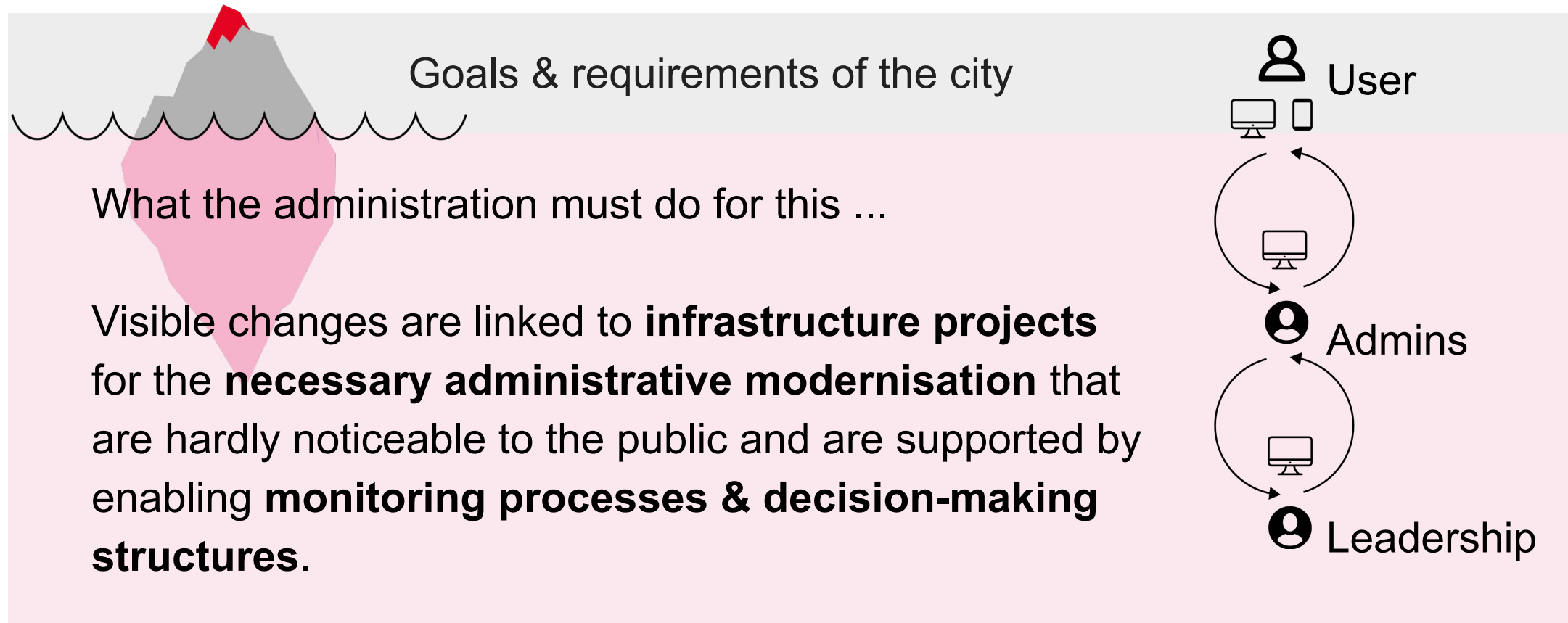
Berlin App



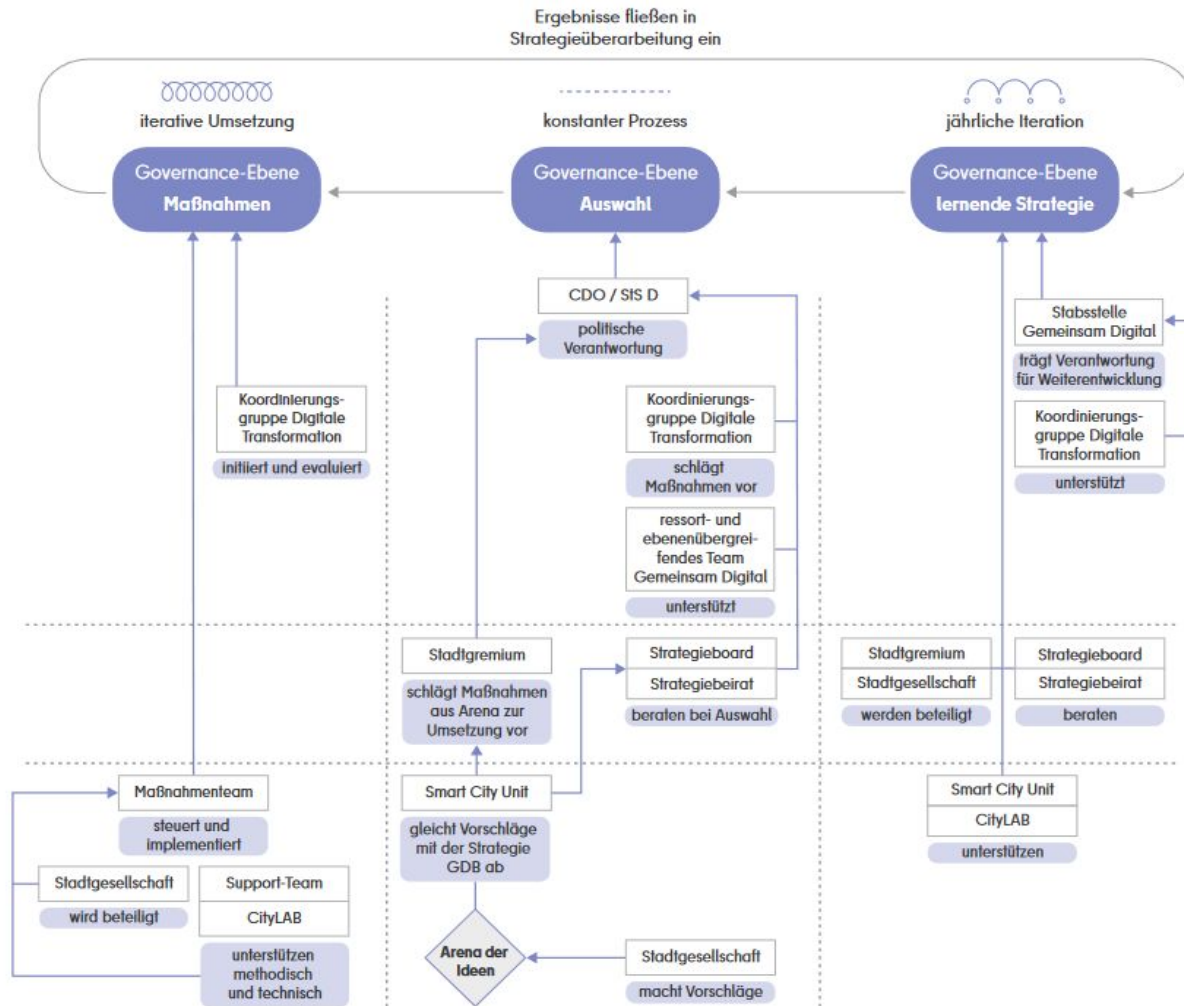
Making access to public services on berlin.de & mein.berlin.de simple and clear - also mobile

2023: Existing online services have been revised in a user-friendly way (current state of usability). Campaign for broader publicity of online services has been launched.

SC Implementation through experimentation



SC Governance Map of Actors



Grafik 6: Governance der Strategie GD:B

Example 2: Open Workshops, Repair Cafés, DIY

- Activities of making, fixing and experimenting are accompanied by a host of dedicated spaces including strong institutional connections and civic collectives.
- New modalities of innovation, needs based consumption (Lange and Bürkner 2018), but possibly also simply social infrastructures.
- One example are open workshops (Lange 2017); the association “Offene Werkstätten” was founded in 2009 and lists more than 240 initiatives (some of which do not have any machines). Providing insurance, tools, and credibility to one another → building infrastructures for others.

Example 2: Open Workshops, Repair Cafés, DIY

- One key element in approaching something as an infrastructure is to ask what supports the work/practice of other and who keeps these relationships in place (Ribes and Lee 2009)
- Infrastructuring as a non-linear process of designing something which is continuously in the making (Karasti et al 2018)
- Originating from large technical systems as well as workplace studies, it is increasingly applied at studies on grassroots communities, e.g. Repair Cafés, Urban Gardening etc (see Botero 2019)

Example 3: Fair-Teiler

- Fair-Teiler: (community fridge)—The web platform *foodsharing.de* was formally launched in 2012, when a grassroots collective of dumpster divers led by Raphael Fellmer “Lebensmittelretten” (food saving) joined forces with food waste activist and documentary filmmaker Valentin Thurn (Morrow 2019)
- Has been taken up throughout Europe by food-sharing groups in Austria and Switzerland, by the UK community fridge network, and by the solidarity fridge network in Spain and Sweden.
- One important finding of research on urban food sharing is that urban infrastructures—such as ICT tools, community fridges, and community centers—can play a vital role in making urban food commons more inclusive and accessible. (Morrow 2019)

Example 3: Food Experiments

- Research on grassroots view innovation as “not just as a technical matter, but as deeply value-laden” and emphasize grassroots innovations as “especially well positioned to contribute to more democratic, inclusive and empowering sociotechnical configurations that might otherwise be suppressed. (Morrow 2019)
- Challenging legitimacy: current discussions in Germany on dumpster diving not being punished anymore

Negotiating Expertise

- Expertise based on experience: Routinised learning in the sense of a craftsman or woman (See Sennett 2008 or Pye 1968)
- Are you important enough? Amateurs are those whose possible excelling at doing something specific is 'unimportant' for it is done in their leisure time vs. professionals are those we actually listen to,
- '[e]xpertise is always about something that is relevant for an audience: the courts, policy makers, decision makers more generally' (Rip 2003)
- → Interesting for activism: Who is watching your experiment or demonstration?
To whom is it useful and relevant? → What capabilities can be developed?

Extra: Experimentation Discussion (15min)

- What are small sustainability experiments worth?
- Who gets to have a say what sustainability means?
- Do grassroots experiments or co-designed interventions need to be continued or can they just phase out?
- What happens to the knowledge generated?

Exercise

Actor mapping and timeline

- **Actor mapping**

1 What are the relevant actors in your field? (~10min)

2 Who is connected /which new collaboration would be beneficial? (~10min)

3 How could you engage them in your project? What issues might emerge when trying to engage them? (~10min)

4 What capabilities would be beneficial in the piloting phase?(~10min)

<https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVPIHLOw=?moveToWidget=3458764544696650453&cot=14>

See also kuru.io for mapping exercises