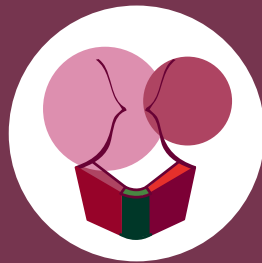


FEAST.

Guidance on Stakeholder mapping

Milestone Document



M7.1



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Food systems that support transitions to hEalthy And Sustainable dieTs

Milestone Name	Guidance on Stakeholder mapping
Milestone Number	M7.1
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HISTORY OF CHANGES

Table 1 Document history of changes

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
Version	Publication Date	Changes
1.0	28.08.2023	First version See first document version here: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8272810
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Recap of Task 7.2

Task 7.2 Conduct participatory and inclusive analysis of policy barriers and facilitators to innovation and change. Lead: RUC; Partners: EHNet, ScS, SSA, UCC, ICL, UKH, UL, EAT (M12-M36) – In collaboration with WPs 2 to 5, we will analyse barriers and facilitators identified as being relevant for the transition to healthier and more sustainable diets and innovation to overcome barriers or augment facilitators from a food systems perspective. It will involve two sub-tasks:

- **Sub-task 7.2.1 Mapping and analysis of key policy stakeholders across food systems.**
Lead: EHNet; Partners: RUC, ScS, UCC, SSA, ICL, UKH (M12-M24)
- **Sub-task 7.2.2 Preparatory semi-structured interviews and interactive consultations.**
Lead: EHNet; Partners: RUC, EAT, ICL (M18-M36)

1 Task 7.2. An analysis of power in the food system

Task 7.2. aims to analyse policy barriers and facilitators regarding innovation and change as well as identifying the main stakeholders involved in this food system framework. When the WP7 team started to discuss how to best approach task 7.2, the first issue debated was that WP3 was already doing very similar work. In task 3.2, WP3 is mapping government policies for healthy diets from sustainable food systems at local, national and EU levels. WP3 is also conducting semi-structured interviews with policymakers at different levels of jurisdiction (national and local), to assess barriers and facilitators to implementation of healthy diets from sustainable food systems. This work, together with the work on food companies (3.1) and vulnerable communities (3.2), will eventually feed into the policy labs organized in WP7.

Given this work in WP3, the WP7 team reached an agreement on the fact that it would be beneficial to structure task 7.2 around the concept of power and how it affects policymaking in the food system. The aim is to analyse how decisions at different levels of governance - European, national and regional levels - are influenced by power dynamics between actors involved in the food system. If we are to identify the actors influencing the food system, we first need to determine who has the power to do so, and if there are inequalities across stakeholders concerning who is more likely to influence which decisions are eventually taken in the food system.

As a result, the WP7 team decided to devote its first milestone to demonstrating how this analysis of power will be developed throughout the second and third year of this Horizon project. To investigate power, we first need to define this concept. There are, of course, several definitions of power in the social sciences, but one of the most famous and widely used was given by Max Weber, who defined power as: “The probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests.” (Weber 1978; 53).

A thorough investigation of the concept of power exceeds the goals of this document. What is essential to specify is that power is not socially exercised in a unique form, but there are instead different forms of power. All these forms concern the fact that an agent X in some way affects another agent Y in a significant manner, but this “in some way” implies that power can be expressed in several forms. According to the famous categorisation by the sociologist Lukes, it is possible to identify three main forms of power (Lukes 2021):

The first form is ‘**Decision-making power**’. This is the form of power easiest to recognise, since it is the process whereby an actor, such as an individual or a political organisation, considers its situation and acts upon a course it has determined, either coercively or non-coercively. For example, I exercise

this form of power if I put a gun to your head and I order you to give me your wallet. In this situation, you must do something you would not otherwise do if you do not wish to suffer worse consequences as compared to acting according to my demand. At the same time, this form of power does not have to be coercive. For example, voting is a way of expressing your decision-making power in a political arena.

This first form of power is the most common way of conceiving power and, since the pluralist tradition, it has long been studied in political science (Dahl 1961). However, as stressed by Lukes and numerous others (Bacharach & Baratz 1970) that cannot be exhaustively cited here, if we considered only the first dimension of power, we would neglect that there are more subtle ways to exercise power. These other ways correspond to the second and third dimensions of power, and they are particularly relevant for the goals of WP7 and for task 7.2. in particular.

The second form of power is '**Agenda setting power**', which stresses that power is not just about making decisions, but also about setting the agenda that leads to decision-making. In other words, if you can control the context within which decisions are made, then you can influence those decisions. For example, if I control the terms of the discussion, I can frame the conversation so that participants are only able to discuss topics that are to my benefit, while also making sure that controversial topics are not discussed.

What is essential about this second form of power is that it stresses that power is not only about decisions, but also about non-decisions. That is, if I find myself in a decision-making process with other people, and I make sure that a certain decision X, which is contrary to my interest, is not discussed in the first place, then I have exercised a form of power. As we shall see, this form of power is very relevant when analysing food system policymaking.

The third form of power is '**Normative power**' (Dowding 2006). Lukes describes it as the power to prevent conflict from arising in the first place, as it concerns societal practices and how these are shaped to favour certain groups over others. This is often referred to as ideological power, since a common belief is created and maintained to conceive such belief as the best and preferable option. Thus, this power is the ability of a group to shape the beliefs and preferences of another group against the real interests of the latter.¹

For example, Sen and Nussbaum stressed that in Bengal, millions were affected by the post 1944 famine, but out of all those involved, it was primarily men who reported to relief centres for aid, despite both sexes being similarly affected. This displayed a form of power that discriminated against women, since in accepting their 'place' of having limited rights in society, the women were not prepared to claim their rights to healthcare (Sen 1984).

The second and third dimensions of power are essential to understand why and how decisions are taken or not taken in a certain context, since they go beyond and shape overt decisions exerted by individuals or groups that are visibly related to explicit conflict, and how these influence further decisions as well as shape context relevant to these. On top of this, a three-dimensional view of

¹ We are aware of how problematic the concept of 'real interest' can be here, since determining from an external point of view which is the real interest of a certain group can sound mistaken and/or paternalistic. This will also need to be adapted to the food system to investigate whether we can define if groups, especially vulnerable ones, have real interests. According to Lukes (1921; 33): "What one may have here is a latent conflict, which consists in a contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the real interests of those they exclude. These latter may not express or even be conscious of their interests, but, as I shall argue, the identification of those interests ultimately always rests on empirically supportable and refutable hypotheses."

power is necessary to understand the connection between power and responsibility for the change in a specific setting.

While the first dimension is too narrowly focused on individual behaviour, the second and third dimensions stress that there are many ways in which potential issues are kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individuals' decisions. For this reason, if we are to understand how power influences decision-making in a certain context – the 'in some way' issue we started this paragraph with – we must not just focus on the decisions that were taken, but also on the context in which these decisions were taken and that could have prevented other options not only from being taken, but also from being considered in the first place.

However, both these dimensions of power are challenging to research, since they do involve direct decision-making (which is easier to identify and analyse), but they often involve measuring a 'non-decision', namely a decision that could have been taken (or at least discussed) in a context with different conditions had this power not been exercised. In the literature, several strategies have been proposed to resolve this challenge², and we will rely here on a Frame Analysis. As we explain in detail in Section 3, this methodology best matches our goal to analyse all the dimensions of power in FEAST.

2 A Frame analysis for the three dimensions of power

The concept of frame was first developed by sociologist Erving Goffman (1974) to examine how humans construct, organize, and differentiate or contest possible meanings of their lived experiences. Frames may take different meanings, and, consequently, trigger different attitudes and opinions depending on which frame actors use. The goal of frame analysis is to understand how people come to a shared understanding of what they are dealing with and their situation (Brown 2013).

The term 'frame' may thus be considered similar to 'narrative', but they should not be used interchangeably, since frames are actors' perspectives, whereas narratives are the expressed products of those perspectives. Hence, a narrative is a story that may contain one or more frames, but goes beyond the notion of frame, while a frame is not a story, but could be identified in stories, or could use/include stories, or be transmitted through stories (Aukes et al. 2020). At the same time, frames may also be general, up to the point of shaping fundamental ontological beliefs including identity, e.g., regarding national imaginaries and belonging (Benford 2013).

Focusing on frames rather than narratives can thus offer more results, as the former allows to better identify story lines, taking cues from literary and media discourse analysis that are more suitable for in-depth qualitative research (Gadinger et al 2014). Furthermore, while narrative analyses have not often been done (despite the frequent use of the term 'narrative' in political discourse), frames have been amply used in policy analysis, as they allow to uncover and analyse the underlying structures, processes, and dynamics that shape power relations in society (Benford & Snow 2000). Below we outline some of the key reasons for our choice of frame analysis in FEAST.

² Other methodologies include the Advocacy Policy Framework (ACF) (Olsson 2009), Social Construction and Policy Design (Pierce et al. 2014), and the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) (Shanahan & Jones 2018). For reasons of space and time, we cannot analyse in detail all these alternatives, but we explain here below why a Frame Analysis is the one that best matches our goals.

Frame analysis allows researchers to better *understand* societal power structures. By analysing frames, researchers can identify and examine how individuals perceive and make sense of the world, thus gaining insights into the power structures that influence social interactions and decision-making processes. Having understood power dynamics, it can then be revealed how frames are *constructed, maintained, and contested*. This is central from a power perspective, since the analysis can reveal how certain groups or institutions establish and reinforce their power through framing, while also shedding light on how other groups challenge and contest dominant frames to challenge power imbalances.

As aforementioned, power has dimensions that are not immediately manifest in decision-making, so frames can help reveal the hidden assumptions dominating at societal level. Frames are never neutral, but they instead reflect underlying assumptions, values, and ideologies, thus Frame analysis can help to uncover the often implicit assumptions within frames, making visible the power interests that underpin them. In this way, it is possible to stress that power operates not only through physical force, but also through discursive practices, social norms, historical legacies, and cultural beliefs. Therefore, by considering these contextual factors, frame analysis provides a more nuanced understanding of power and its manifestations.

This is particularly relevant for the purpose of WP7 analyses because how actors construct and use frames in a specific setting — in our case it will be in the food system - is influenced by power dynamics. That is, various stakeholders use frames strategically to shape the beliefs and preferences of other groups to make sure that the option they favour will eventually be selected as the main frame to conceive the selected topic.

In the promotion of their frames, not all stakeholders have the same power, since certain groups – for example vulnerable populations in a specific area³ – are in a structurally weak position and lack resources for deliberately accommodating frames. Furthermore, not only do they act in a context where they have not contributed to developing the frame accepted as “the right one”, they also do not have the instruments necessary to appropriate existing alternative frames, for which reason such frames remain marginal to food system debates.

On top of that, frames could be deployed strategically depending on the issue at stake, the audience, context, etc. For example, in the debate on welfare and social benefits, using two different frames can lead to very different consequences. On the one side, if one frames the social transfer beneficiaries as lazy, inactive, undeserving, etc., the attitude triggered and opinion delivered will be more inclined towards punishing one individual for his/her own condition and there will be also less public willingness to offer help to those in need of receiving the social transfer. On the other side, a frame that depicts beneficiaries of social policies as poor people hit by bad luck, or hard working, unrecognized single mothers, etc., is more likely to trigger emphatic responses regarding social transfers.

The difference between these two frames is relevant also because it is closely connected to the question of who is responsible for a specific issue. In the example just presented, the first frame focuses on individual behaviour, stressing that the cause of the problem is that certain individuals have bad qualities (lazy, inactive, etc.) and miss good ones (proactive, laborious, etc.). If you then behave badly (in this case you do not have a job), it is your responsibility to resolve the issue because it is just about you changing attitude towards a positive behaviour.

³ In the food system, children can be an example of vulnerable groups who are exposed to other groups' frames, and who are unable to develop their own frames to counteract the influence of dominant frames. The focus on protecting children from advertisements of unhealthy food is one concrete example of how this frame imbalance could take shape in the food system.

On the contrary, the second frame stresses that unemployment is the externality of a poorly structured socioeconomic system. In this frame, the issue is not whether the unemployed individual has good or bad personal qualities, since it is instead more relevant that this individual may suffer due to systemic problems that are outside their control. Here, the responsibility of a change is no longer on the individual, but it is systemic, since it becomes a societal responsibility to fix the socioeconomic problems that eventually lead to higher rates of unemployment.

In summary, how we frame a debate is unavoidably linked to where we think the responsibility to find a solution lies. In settings where the dichotomous individual/systemic responsibility is of primary importance, as is the case with food system analysis, finding how different stakeholders frame the issue becomes central. In most cases, frame analysis is facilitated by the fact that, usually, one specific actor engaging in a certain political debate will promote one specific frame regarding the issue at hand. However, this should only be taken as a rule of thumb, since there may be cases where actors are promoting different frames on the same issue depending on audiences and other factors. To this end, a frame analysis for FEAST task 7.2 could provide knowledge on:

- I. Which frames are relevant for the transition to healthier and more sustainable food systems.
- II. How these frames influence FEAST activities and goals, namely how they allow to push for a certain action, or how they impede not only taking a specific action, but also to render a certain topic an issue that ought to be debated in public fora. Here, there is a direct reference to Lukes's third dimension of power, since different stakeholders compete to define which is the main frame to be used in the analysis of food systems (Knezevic 2021).
- III. How to develop counter-frames to confront frames currently hindering the transition to healthier and more sustainable food systems. By elaborating or adopting counter-frames, it could be possible to reconfigure frame landscapes so that these are more likely to support, rather than hinder, the transition to healthier and more sustainable food systems. The development of counter-frames is connected to the Gramscian notions of hegemony, sub-hegemony, and counter-hegemony (Donoghue 2018) that will be analysed in detail during the development of task 7.2.
- IV. The role played by what Gramsci called 'organic intellectuals', namely the individuals whose role is precisely to work out how frames influence the dynamics of the group of belonging. While vulnerable groups lack a sufficient amount of these 'organic intellectuals', certain actors, such as bigger food industries, can use their economic power to enrol organic intellectuals that use their capabilities to spread and reinforce those frames that are most compatible with the interests of their employers or those that they feel affiliated with (Slothuus 2021).

2.1 Frame Analysis methods that will be adopted by WP7 team

Being a conceptual device allowing to understand how power operates, frames are ideal types that in reality may hybridize or often appear in truncated forms. Usually, a frame is not expressed in toto in most political documents or other texts, but it serves as an implicit ordering device connecting different statements in view of social coordination and the enforcement of certain interests. In the simplest version, frames can be analysed by deductive coding, using inductive sub-codes for distinguishing relevant categories within major frame dimensions. To do so, it is necessary to go through a three-step procedure:

1. **The diagnostical dimension constructing the issue at hand:** the issue that shall be investigated has to be defined and relevant texts have to be collected in a systematic way;

2. **The prognostic dimension referring to the solution of the problem:** relevant text has to be coded according to diagnostic, prognostic and motivational components;
3. **The motivational dimension** indicating benefits of the solution and further reasons to engage politically have to be clustered.

For what concerns the material that will be analysed, the WP7 research team will investigate websites, press releases, policy documents, etc. that speak about a certain issue to identify how frames are being produced. Afterwards, this information will be supplemented by:

- I. **Interviews:** to understand how various actors enact and perform frames in interview situations and how these frames operate in concrete situations of conversation (requiring smart interview guiding questions). As per sub-task 7.2.2 we will need to conduct semi-structured interviews and interactive consultations, which will need to be coordinated with the work carried out in WP3 for task 3.2. By means of these interviews, WP7 can:
 - a. Test counter-frames in praxis or to prepare their development through better knowledge of how frames are enacted in real life situations of talk.
 - b. Provide information to compare the frames used by various stakeholders, thus allowing to find similarities and discrepancies on what factors are believed to slow down – or, on the contrary, foster – policy implementation.
- II. **Media analysis:** to understand how frames enter public discourse; media documents (textual and visual) would have to be analysed for frames.
- III. **Analyse situations of conflict:** these are particularly interesting, since in this situation, it emerges more clearly what is most relevant and most at stake for actors involved, which are the discursive frontlines and strategies deployed and finally, what the conflict is actually about (Giménez & Shattuck 2011).

3 Application of Frame Analysis to task 7.2

If frames are strategically used to slow down or prevent change towards healthier and more sustainable food systems, then they represent a significant hindrance to better food system policies. By applying the frame analysis to all the dimensions of power, we can thus analyse the frames affecting European, National and regional food systems, and how these are favouring certain positions and demands, and related actors (as well as policy processes) over others.

Given limited time and resources, the main challenge will be to precisely define the target and level of the analysis, which can be used to fine-tune methods accordingly. For what concerns the *'what'* that will be analysed, the policy fields to be studied will build on the work done by WP3, where six policy priority areas have been identified:

1. Fiscal policies to increase consumption of sustainable healthy foods and decrease consumption of unhealthy unsustainable foods.
2. Marketing restrictions of less healthy and less sustainable foods across all media.
3. Healthy and sustainable food procurement in public sector settings.
4. Zoning laws for food outlets selling unhealthy and unsustainable foods (around schools or more broadly).
5. Subsidies for sustainable healthy crops/livestock/fish.
6. Food loss and waste reduction.

On top of this, we will also rely on the results achieved in task 3.1, where the WP3 team will analyse food company practices and commitments related to the sustainability and health of the food system. By doing so, it will be possible to compare companies' commitments to how they then effectively frame the debate in their policy practices. Note that these activities are ongoing in WP3, so we will keep a constant communication between the two working groups, thus ensuring that each WP will complement the activities done by the other.

The final goal of the frame analysis will be to produce a toolbox that policymakers and stakeholders can use to not only understand in more detail the different frames affecting food system policies, but also how hindering frames could be counteracted. The table below – note that this table is only preliminary and its main goal is to illustrate the kind of result we aim to produce – represents how the toolbox summarising relevant frames could look. In more detail, the table will mainly concern:

- I. **Dimension:** the aforementioned six policy priority areas;
- II. **Issue:** for each of the dimensions, we will analyse the most contentious issue from a policy perspective, and we will also include the commitments by the companies studied in task 3.1.
- III. **Stakeholder frame:** the frame used by different stakeholders concerning the issue investigated. For the analysis, we will identify four main stakeholders⁴:
 - a. **Governmental Institutions:** frames used by the European institutions, Member States and/or Regional institutions;
 - b. **Food Industries:** these will concern either the single specific company, or the organisation representing a specific sector;
 - c. **Civil Society Organisations:** these include non-governmental organizations at different levels of governance;
 - d. **Academic Institutions:** universities and public research centres.
- IV. **Analysis of hindering and fostering frames:** the different frames will be analysed and compared with one another. The goal of the analysis will be to rely on scientific standards to define which frames are hindering the transitions to healthier and more sustainable food systems, and which are favouring such a transition. Of particular importance will be the comparison between the 'official' frame used by governmental institutions and those of the other stakeholders, since the more a frame corresponds to the official version, the more it means that this frame has managed to be accepted as the primary one in the food system setting, and vice versa.
- V. **Counter-Frame**⁵: having identified which are the hindering frames, we will provide a set of counter-frames (following Gramscian theorization mentioned above) to deconstruct the problematic frame and provide concrete alternatives to replace such frames. To (over)simplify this concept, a counter-frame can be conceived as a 'how to respond to the frame' manual.

⁴ Note that these four may change if in the first phases of the research we believe that it is necessary to divide differently the stakeholders.

⁵ Examples of arguments and counter arguments can be found in the STOP policy briefs here: <https://www.stopchildobesity.eu/policy-briefs/>.

- VI. **Benefits of adopting counter-frames⁶:** for what concerns the ‘benefits column’, there is potential to connect this table with the modelling performed in FEAST WP6. In this way, policymakers would be aware of the benefits that could be achieved by replacing existing frames with counter-frames proposed by FEAST.

In the table below, we offer a general overview of how such an analysis could be organised. Note that specific issues and criteria for the analysis will be the focus of the first part of the research, so what is presented in the table below is intended to offer an idea of the project and the final topics that will be selected may differ from what is explained here:

Table 2 Frame and counter-frame output foreseen

DIMENSION	ISSUE ⁷	STAKEHOLDER FRAME	ANALYSIS OF HINDERING AND FOSTERING FRAMES	COUNTER-FRAME	BENEFITS FROM ADOPTING THE COUNTER-FRAME
FISCAL POLICIES	Taxation of unhealthy food and subsidies to favour access to healthier ones (example)	Government	Scientific analysis of the benefits and issues related to fiscal policies and comparison of stakeholders’ frames with scientific literature used	Development of counter frames to respond to the frames evaluated an hindering in the analysis	Benefits that could be achieved by using counter-frames, in terms of health and social impact
		Industries			
		CSOs			
		Academia			
FOOD LOSS AND WASTE PRODUCTION	Production of plastic and environmental impact of packaging	Government	Scientific analysis of the benefits and issues related to fiscal policies and comparison of stakeholders’ frames with scientific literature used	Development of counter frames to respond to the frames evaluated an hindering in the analysis	Benefits that could be achieved by using counter-frames, in terms of health and social impact
		Industries			
		CSOs			
		Academia			
MARKETING OF UNHEALTHY FOOD	Limits to marketing in traditional media and digital settings	Government	Scientific analysis of the benefits and issues related to fiscal policies and comparison of stakeholders’ frames with scientific literature used	Development of counter frames to respond to the frames evaluated an hindering in the analysis	Benefits that could be achieved by using counter-frames, in terms of health and social impact
		Industries			
		CSOs			
		Academia			
		Government			

⁶ As aforementioned, some points may not be thoroughly developed due to lack of time and resources. This column is such an example, since it would be nice to develop, but at the same time it may not be possible to properly schedule the work with other deliverables of WP6.

⁷ Note that these issue will need to be defined in the first stages of the research, so what is presented in this table is just an example of what we could focus on, and will thus differ from the final issues that will be studied.

SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT	Criteria used to buy food in public settings	Industries	Scientific analysis of the benefits and issues related to fiscal policies and comparison of stakeholders’ frames with scientific literature used	Development of counter frames to respond to the frames evaluated an hindering in the analysis	Benefits that could be achieved by using counter-frames, in terms of health and social impact
		CSOs			
		Academia			
ZONING LAWS	Regulations on limiting HFSS foods selling in certain areas (Schools, poorer suburbs, etc.)	Government	Scientific analysis of the benefits and issues related to fiscal policies and comparison of stakeholders’ frames with scientific literature used	Development of counter frames to respond to the frames evaluated an hindering in the analysis	Benefits that could be achieved by using counter-frames, in terms of health and social impact
		Industries			
		CSOs			
		Academia			
SUBSIDIES FOR SUSTAINABLE HEALTHY CROPS	Debate on pesticide reduction and alternatives	Government	Scientific analysis of the benefits and issues related to fiscal policies and comparison of stakeholders’ frames with scientific literature used	Development of counter frames to respond to the frames evaluated an hindering in the analysis	Benefits that could be achieved by using counter-frames, in terms of health and social impact
		Industries			
		CSOs			
		Academia			

4 Conclusion

Food systems are extremely complex, and it is too often neglected that topics and concepts involved may not be conceived in the same way by all actors involved. Different stakeholders use different definitions of even the most fundamental concepts (because they are crucial for how frames are constructed that relate to more narrowly defined issues) – e.g., sustainability, food security, health, etc. – and these differences may slow down policy implementation and may impede policy formulation. On top of this, how frames are used are unavoidably connected to stakeholders’ interests, which of course differ from one another, so each group will try to use their power to make sure that their preferred frame becomes the dominant one in the setting considered (food system policies in our case). For this reason, the development of the frame analysis will be essential to understand how power shapes food system debates at different governance levels.

Furthermore, since power and prominence of frames correspond with each other, it is important to understand how actors that have been so far marginalised – small producers, local farmers,

certain groups of citizens, and in particular vulnerable groups – can propose counter-frames to the conceptualizations that have so far managed to dominate food system debates and have often not been conducive to sustainability and public health. A policy toolbox could provide those citizens and policymakers that are willing to transition to healthier and more sustainable food systems with the means to counteract those frames that are currently slowing down this process, and to replace them with alternative counter-frames more compatible with FEAST’s goal to shift them in this direction.

Finally, but very importantly, the FEAST WP7 structure can offer a platform to test the efficacy of counter-frames proposed or identified, since some of the policy dialogues could be used as trainings where policymakers learn to identify hindering frames and to respond with the counter-frames provided by the task 7.2. analysis. In this way, task 7.2. can contribute to the work carried out by all FEAST WPs, while also inspiring future EU funded projects to analyse how the more subtle dynamics of power influence the debate around food system sustainability.

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