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Public food Procurement: A Systematic Literature Review

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Public Food Procurement (PFP) is an example of how a policy instrument pursuing multiple objectives contravenes the golden rule “one objective, one instrument”. As a result, contradictions and trade off have arisen creating a fertile arena for many fields’ studies. The purpose of this paper is to undertake a first systematic review of the scientific literature dealing with PFP and its implications. In that aim we, firstly, conducted an overview of the legislative context in both the EU and the USA, in order to assess differences and similarities. Then we started the research on Metalib. We limited searches to peer-reviewed journals. We selected articles in which at least two of the selected words “public”, “food” and “procurement” occur in title, abstract or keywords. The body of the literature comprises about 70 papers from 2000 onward. Each paper was classified in a first round on the basis of descriptive dimension (year of publication, geographical coverage, pertinent social science discipline and methodology). Subsequently content analysis techniques were applied. In this phase we established a set of criteria either referring to previous systematic review (first round). Each paper was assigned to a maximum of 5 topics of a total of 17 topics initially retained, three of them were grouped in the category “other “ because of their low occurrence and the remaining 15 were aggregated in 6 broad areas. The first striking result of the peer-reviewed literature on PFP is the almost exponential growth in the number of papers published per year in the last decade. Although a relatively recent, the

literature embraces different disciplinary approaches as well as research methods. Moreover the studied cases are evenly split between Europe and the USA being influenced by the specific legislative environment. The literature on PFP is cantered on the concept of structured demand and its impacts on food chain actors as well as citizen-consumers and on sustainability at large.