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**FEEDING CITIES. THE POTENTIAL OF SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

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To Davide

"I've been blinded, but now,

I can see what in the World has happened to me.

The prince of stories who walk right by me,

and now,

I'm set free "

Lewis Allan 'Lou' Reed - The Velvet Underground

The first and only instruction

Abstract

Food is becoming an increasingly disputed issue, and food movements have emerged in both the Global North and Global South. Food security and food sovereignty are still influencing the everyday life of almost 1 billion people in the World. Indeed, the agro-industrial food system, based on the 'Green Revolution' aim to feed the World, presents several emergencies and negative externalities which have been affecting people, the environment, and both global and local economy. The ongoing financial and economic crisis has strengthened the corporate's economic and political power and it has exacerbated inequalities. It has also reduced the citizens' perception of security and the State's policies effectiveness. To face this scenario, it appears necessary to study how global society is facing these negative externalities. Starting from the recent debate around these emergencies, the increasing industrialization of food production and the Great Recession's consequences, this dissertation will present several initiatives emerged over the last twenty years providing a sustainable alternative to this panorama.

Specifically, in the first part, through an interdisciplinary approach which overlaps the most recent international scientific contributions, food issues will be presented as the 'new' vehicle to re-embed the social within the Market and contention politics. Hence, the literature review allows to better understand the rise of Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) which can lead to a more sustainable way of living and buying food.

In the second part, the theoretical nodes opened by the international literature will be faced going beyond the findings gathered through the empirical research. Following a qualitative approach, the research has been developed in two different case-studies: a middle-sized town of Northern Italy (Bergamo), and a middle-sized town of Southern Brazil (Florianópolis).

The empirical body consists of four chapters, each focusing on a specific aspect of Alternative Food Networks and each one responds to a specific research question. The first empirical chapter focuses on the discussion of AFNs as a social movement. The attention is directed toward the AFNs as an example of what in literature is labelled as Sustainable Community Movement Organizations (SCMOs). The second chapter considers AFNs evolution during the economic, financial, and social crisis. By combining insights from AFNs literature, the contemporary economic, financial and social crisis, this chapter shows how AFNs are evolving in the Global World. The third empirical chapter displays the ongoing state of the sustainable agriculture within the two studied

contexts. It shows the AFNs farmers' profile, thus their claims, and their perspectives. The fourth chapter focuses on the processes of strengthening AFNs through a specific framework such as Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGSs). The study considers two examples of PGSs: the PGS of Lombardy (Northern Italy) and the Rede Ecovida's PGS (Southern Brazil).

This dissertation aims to collect insights on how sustainable agriculture is shaping new economic social movement organizations and alternative forms of consumption and distribution within the urban areas of both the Global North and the Global South. It focuses on how AFNs were created, who takes part in, and through which pathway they are going to. The key-question behind this work is to investigate how the nature, the organizational form, and the alliances of (and among) different actors, who promote alternative forms of food consumption and distribution, are changing along the time in the urban areas, comparing the insights gathered in both Global North and Global South. This research highlights also how people get collectively engaged in AFNs initiatives, and how these networks are shaped by the economic, social, and cultural institutions. Moreover, this research investigates how the Great Recession has been encouraged or constrained these grassroots collective networks. Finally, specific adopted tools will be considered in a comparative way to understand whether and how they are fostering and strengthening the AFNs framework.

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List of Abbreviations

AFN	Alternative Food Network
AIAB	Associazione Italiana per l'Agricoltura Biologica
AMAP	Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne
AMORA	Associação Moradores Ratores
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
CA	Civic Agriculture
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CFN	Conventional food networks
CONTAG	Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores da Agricultura
COS	Cultural Opportunity Structure
CPT	Comissão Pastoral da Terra
CREA	Consiglio per la ricerca in agricoltura e l'analisi dell'economia agraria
CSA	Community-Supported Agriculture
DES	Distretto di Economia Solidale
DM	Decreto Ministeriale
EC	European Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EOS	Economic Opportunity Structure
FAO	
FETAESC	Federação dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura do Estado de Santa Catarina
FETRAF	Federação Nacional dos Trabalhadores e Trabalhadoras da Agricultura Familiar e Reforma Agrária
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDO	Great Organized Distribution
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GJM	Global Justice Movement
GMO	Genetically modified organism
Ha	Hectares
HDI	Human Development Index
IBGE	Instituto Brasileiro de Estatística
ICS	Internal Control System
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISTAT	Istituto Italiano di Statistica
LACAF	Laboratório de Comercialização da Agricultura Familiar
LEISA	Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture
MAPA	Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento
MDB	Movimento Democrático Brasileiro
MIPAAF	Ministero delle politiche agricole alimentari forestali e del turismo
MST	Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSM	New Social Movement
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OCS	Organismo de Controle Social
OPAC	Organismo Participativo de Avaliação da Conformidade
ORGANIS	Conselho Nacional da Produção Orgânica e Sustentável
PAA	Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
PNAE	Política Nacional da Agricultura Familiar e Empreendimentos Familiares Rurais

POS	Political Opportunity Structure
PRONAF	Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar
PSOL	Partido Socialismo e Libertade
R\$	Brazilian Real
RES	Rete di Economia Solidale
SFSC	Short Food Supply Chain
SINAB	Sistema di Informazione Nazionale sull'Agricoltura Biologica
SisOrg	Sistema Brasileiro de Avaliação da Conformidade Orgânica
SCMO	Sustainable Community Movement Organization
SMO	Social Movement Organization
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SOS	State Opportunity Structure
SPG	Solidarity Purchase Group
UFSC	Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina
ULTAB	União dos Agricultores e dos Trabalhadores Agrícolas do Brasil
UN	United Nations
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank
WCC	World Coordination Committee
WFP	World Food Programm

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Introduction

Food connects human beings with Earth. Food concerns cultural meanings. Besides being the means of surviving, food is something which people identify themselves with. Food is becoming an increasingly disputed issue, and food movements have emerged both the Global North and Global South (Altieri and Toledo 2011; Jha 2009; Morgan et al. 2008; Sage 2013, 2015). The agro-industrial food system presents hefty environmental, social and economic costs that are often borne by local communities. The agricultural development called as ‘Green Revolution’, occurred between the 1960s and 1970s, was aimed to reduce food shortage and undernourishment. It has also created, together with the innovation for what concerns the development of high yielding varieties and chemical fertilizers (Griffin 1979), a series of problems and it has had a dramatic impact on Developing Countries. These newly available technologies are less suitable to resource-poor environments, small farmers have benefited less than larger holdings, intensive monocropping has made production more susceptible to the environmental stresses and shocks (Conway 2012; Conway and Barbier 2013).

Starting from the 1980s, the re-configuration of food markets, catalysed by critical and social contention movements, evolved toward the construction of several alternative networks. These last have engaged specific segments of producers, consumers, and socio-technical mediators (Goodman et al. 2012). Farmers’ markets, ethical and fair consumption groups, family farmers cooperatives and farmers associations, have started to constitute themselves (Niederle 2014). While activists gave new impetus in building a set of alternative forms of production and consumption, which have been labelled as AFNs, scholars developed critical analyses of industrialized food systems and began to systematize experiences of these newly-emerging forms of food provisioning, whose proliferation reached a notable proportions by the mid-1990s (Goodman et al. 2012). In this context, the emergence of ‘alternative agriculture movements’ and the alternative forms of food provisioning, the food emergencies, and the growth of the so-called ‘agroecology’ (Altieri 2002; Altieri and Nicholls 2005; Rosset and Martínez-torres 2012), have been defined the questioning about the food system which is ongoing in force (Niederle 2014). In this scenario, new stakeholders and new Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) emerged and have criticized and struggled against the mainstream, or better, conventional food system. These SMOs have been labelled and considered as part of the new ‘economic social movements’ (Gendron, Bisailon, and Rance 2009;

Picolotto 2008; Portilho 2009). As has been pointed out, these new ‘economic social movements’ have raised claims which are primarily oriented toward the Market sphere, opposite to the ‘old’ SMOs, which normally drive their claims toward the State. These groups seem to be formed by a new political culture and ethical awareness. They are characterized by equivocal boundaries. Besides the critical action toward the Market and the conventional agri-food system, they develop actions oriented to redefine relationships between consumers and producers, for what concerns the re-valorisation of the aesthetics and ethical values and food attribute (Niederle 2014). Indeed, as Appadurai stated (2008), the Market left to be the enormous impersonal machine. It became the arena which gives to the goods and services the role of the commodity under specific moments of its social trajectory.

Over the last years, many scholars from different academic fields such as sociology, political science, anthropology, geography, urban planning, rural development, and agroecology, have focused the attention on the mechanism through which values and qualities are socially constructed within the Market, or, in other words, are built among the relational universes, as well as how such ‘alternative networks’ could answer to the negative externalities created by the agro-industrial food system. Specifically, several studies have been done on SMOs capacity, thus consumers organizations, to re-spatialized (Sage 2003) and re-conceptualize food (Friedman 2002; Stolle, Hooghe, and Micheletti 2005). This phenomenon called as ‘political consumerism’ has featured the social movement organizations during the ‘millennial turn’, contextually to the emergence of the so-called Global Justice Movement (GJM), arose during the demonstration against WTO meeting in Seattle, between November and December 1999. SMOs have developed several initiatives anti-consumeristic and alter-consumeristic, such as boycotts and buy-cotts (Forno and Ceccarini 2006; Micheletti and Stolle 2007; della Porta 2007). Due to their global extensions, SMOs oriented their protests and strategies toward the Global Market. However, GJM was short-lived. The failure of this international mobilization against the Iraq War discouraged the contention. Although, these practices, endured within these organizations. Indeed, most of them have become locally-oriented. SMOs have started to create strong ties with local actors moved by ethical and environmental claims. Forno and Graziano (2014) have called these emerging initiatives such as Sustainable Community Movement Organizations (SCMOs) which embrace a set of initiatives like eco-villages, collective purchase groups, Slow Food, Fair Trade, farmers market, community-supported agriculture, and much more. As

it has been often highlighted (Stolle and Micheletti 2013), in several initiatives that sprang out after the end of the alter-globalization stream of protest, political consumerism moved beyond the idea of ‘individual responsibility-taking’, to be used as a tool to encourage to get collective groups together. It has helped these initiatives to implement common strategies of territorial and economic intervention, chasing the idea of common good and sustainability (Cembalo, Migliore, and Schifani 2012; Gibson-Graham 2006; Graziano and Forno 2012; Migliore, Forno, et al. 2014). For a considerable number of SMOs, political consumerism is used as a tool to construct and strengthen solidarity ties (Dubuisson-Quellier et al. 2011). As other SMOs (Diani 1992b), SCMOs encourage the circulation of resources (information, good, tasks, etc.), and they favour common interpretations of reality providing a framework for collective action (Forno, Grasseni, and Signori 2015). SCMOs often criticize the individualized consumerist lifestyles, even though they could vary in terms of motivations and organizational structures from a context to another one. An example of such experiences is the increasing number of alternative forms of food provisioning which strictly connect producers and consumers, mostly embedded in the same territory, and which have been labelled in literature as AFNs (Goodman et al. 2012; Goodman and Goodman 2009; Renting et al. 2012). Following the conceptualization of SCMOs, AFNs have been considered as a form of alter-consumerist initiatives which mainly acts at the local scale. As often argued, AFNs represent a grassroots answer to the crisis which has been affecting the global food system, intrinsic to the historical development of the organic agriculture movement (Forno 2018). More specifically, AFNs are non-conventional channels of food distribution, which connect producers and consumers, promote a new concept of ‘food quality’ that respects local economy productions and eating traditions, sustain social development and business relations based on trust and community engagement (Venn et al. 2006). AFNs are usually based on smaller and environmentally-aware producers and retailers who place their products in local markets with the support of their consumers (Goodman et al. 2013; Goodman and Goodman 2009; Morgan 2009). Within these networks, trust relationships among different actors are built around the food quality and sometimes a ‘moral economy perspective’ (Morgan et al. 2008). Within AFNs, both producers and consumers discursively construct their cooperative efforts as alternative forms of resistance to the traditional marketplace (Dixon 1999, 2010). Organizations such as solidarity purchase groups (SPGs), AMAPs, Community-Supported Agriculture (CSAs), Slow Food Movement, urban agriculture, and new consumer-producer

cooperatives properly aim to produce a process of re-localization and re-socialization of food production-distribution-consumption practices, as it has previously noted, in the sense of building of a more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable local food system (Brunori et al. 2011; Dubuisson-Quellier and Lamine 2008; Sonnino 2009).

These experiences, during the financial and economic crisis, blew in 2008, are increasing and spreading in both Northern and Southern Countries of the Global World (Castells, Caraça, and Cardoso 2012). Several are the possible explanations: the lack of possibilities and opportunities within the labour market (Bauman 2004), the Austerity policies of European and South American Countries (Guidi and Andretta 2015), the impoverishment of the middle class (Maurano and Forno 2017), and the increasing consumers awareness toward food safety and the environmental risks (Young 2006).

This dissertation places itself within the debate which has been developed over the past few years around ‘alternative practices’ emerged as a possible answer to the conventional (or mainstream) food system. Moreover, it builds upon this call for a shift in academic attention – away from ethical consumers, and towards an embedded understanding of farmers perspective and attitude toward collective action – and applies it to the case of AFNs. Moreover, it extends this shift, considering AFNs as part of SCMOs, so they will be treated as a SMOs. By combining insights from social movement theories, AFNs literature, among the contemporary economic, financial, and social crisis, this research will focus on the mechanisms through which individuals get collectively organized in AFNs and how these networks are shaped by the economic, social, and cultural institutions. The key-question behind this work is to investigate how the nature, the organizational form, and the alliances of (and among) different actors, who promote alternative forms of food consumption and distribution, are changing along the time in the urban areas, comparing the insights gathered in both Global North and Global South.

The attention has been addressed toward AFNs because they offer an alternative perspective and an answer to the conventional agri-food system emergencies. As it has been previously pointed out, AFNs are intrinsically linked to the organic agriculture movements. AFNs seem to represent a concrete alternative to the phenomenon called as ‘conventionalization’ of organic agriculture, characterized by the ‘organic industry’ (or ‘big organic’), by corporatist control, large-scale operations, global markets, and loss of core values (Buck, Getz, and Guthman 1997; Guthman 2004; Pollan 2006, 2009). Thus, AFNs reflect a possible answer to this trend, due to their inclination to celebrate artisan production, local markets, and deeply held environmental, philosophical, and

political values (Goldberger 2011).

AFNs seem to respond to two different aspects: on one hand, for example in Northern Countries, these experiences emerged in consequence of the increasing consumers' environmental and ethical awareness; on the other hand, for example in Southern Countries, such experiences emerged to strengthen small farmers, as well as to re-appropriate such values which have been co-opted by the Market. Moreover, these initiatives, which provide a new form of commercial relationship between consumers and producers, facing the increasing conventional food system, have been developing even more along the Great Recession. Due to all these preconditions, the conceptual framework adopted overlap a set of different streams of studies and theories which include collective action, the socialization of markets, and the embeddedness of alternative forms of food distribution. Specifically, AFNs will be treated as part of SCMOs, due to their tendency to act as an economic social movement which has been framing in both Global North and Global South.

Following this conceptualization, the contribution of this dissertation is firstly to study AFNs as an example of SCMO which get collectively engaged producers and consumers who try to spread shared values and actions. Due to the increasing growth of sustainable agriculture, thus the political consumerism, in both the Global North and Global South (Willer and Kilcher 2011), it has been chosen to focus on two different contexts located in Europe and South America, to better understand dynamics, motivations, and the profile of those citizens who are engaged in these experiences.

Two middle-sized cities located in Northern Italy (Bergamo) and Southern Brazil (Florianópolis) has been selected for their similar extension and dimension. The presence of AFNs initiatives in both contexts stimulated the will to compare them. Finally, the role of local Universities was a key-factor as concerns the development of a more sustainable local food system.

This study builds upon a variety of qualitative methods, ranging from in-depth interviews with AFNs and local stakeholders belonging to some food movement organizations or institutions which are interested in this development; semi-structured interviews with local farmers engaged in AFNs initiatives, both organic and non-organic; participant observation in some meetings and briefings of specific farmers' groups or organizations, such as solidarity economy networks; ethnography and field-notes, for what concerns the preliminary study made in Brazil, aimed to collect environmental data.

At the analytical point, often, these phenomena, especially related to consumption

studies, have been analysed following theories of practice approach to consumption (Warde 2005) and in institutional and evolutionary economics (Dosi and Nelson 1994). Another paradigm related to the consumer's behaviour is the so-called 'convention theory' (Goodman et al. 2012; Goodman and Goodman 2009; Murdoch, Marsden, and Bank 2000; Truninger 2008). As Goodman et al. stated (2012), convention theory has been used to conceptualize the 'quality turn' to alternative food provisioning networks as a contested process of transition between the 'industrial' world, and its related norms of quality, and the 'domestic' worlds and its conventions of trust, tradition, and place (Murdoch et al. 2000; Murdoch and Miele 1999). All of these approaches have been chosen because of the market-oriented action of the AFNs. In this dissertation, it has been chosen to consider the most used social movement theories (Diani 1992b; della Porta and Diani 2006). This idea of considering alternative forms of food distribution as SCMOs is supported by a large contribution in political sociology literature emerged over the last years. However, the contribution of this dissertation is mostly related to the choice of focusing the attention on the production side, especially to better understand the farmers' will and their meanings. Moreover, a diachronic approach for the evolution of Alternative Food Network during the economic and financial crisis will be applied. In addition, a qualitative and descriptive approach will be used to study farmers' profiles, motivations, and their relational network. This last will also be treated following the Social Network Analysis (SNA). Furthermore, a comparative approach will be adopted to highlight the differences and similarities between the two considered normative contexts, for what concerns organic agriculture regulations.

Finally, it is necessary to explicit some considerations. Firstly, the heterogeneous assemblages described in this dissertation are dynamic and can be expected to change over time, making findings bound to the time of data gathering, especially for what concerns political and economic structures of each considered case-study. Secondly, this dissertation cannot and does not pretend to have captured all actors and all initiatives developed among the selected territories: the emphasis is put upon the AFNs which have been possible to map and reach. Moreover, the focus could be interpreted as 'too' broad and 'too' narrow. Too broad because the studied phenomena are linked to a wide range of claims and issues featuring contemporary society in the Global World. By focusing upon a plethora of actors, maybe not enough in-depth descriptions are provided of all actors and all considered initiatives. It could also be too narrow. By focusing on a few AFNs, this choice inevitably left out of the picture other experiences and other variables,

which could enrich the contribution of this dissertation. I am referring to most of the farmers who are not engaged in these experiences, as well as the most important retailers and consumers. However, I do believe that the project makes an important contribution, as it provides insights into processes on the structuring and composition of AFNs selected from two different continents, during the Great Recession. It provides important knowledge about who is engaged in these experiences, especially on the supply side, which is understudied, and through which tools these social actors strengthen their action and commitment.

This dissertation aims to gain insight into how sustainable agriculture is shaping new ‘economic social movement’ organizations and alternative forms of consumption and distribution within the urban areas of both the Global North and the Global South. Specifically, it focuses on how AFNs were created, and who takes part in them, and through which pathway they are going to. Indeed, as it will be emphasized in the theoretical framework (see chapter 3.2, section I), this study builds upon a conceptual approach in which individuals are the central actor around these phenomena since consumers and producers are collectively acting to strengthen alternative forms of distribution and local development. This consideration is what has pushed to consider AFNs as a SMOs, so, to adopt the social movement perspective to better understand their collective approach. Therefore, this research highlights also how people get collectively engaged in AFNs initiatives, and how these networks are shaped by the economic, social, and cultural institutions, and in turn, how they are influencing these structures. This research will investigate how the Great Recession has been encouraged or constrained these grassroots networks. Finally, specific adopted tools will be considered in a comparative way to understand whether and how they are fuelling AFNs framing.

This dissertation was divided into two parts with two different orders of goals. In the **first part**, a state of art of the existing literature on the topic of contention around food will be presented. The introductory chapters will help to understand the contribution of this dissertation which places itself within the international debate on AFNs, social movements, and the crises which have been featuring the agri-food system.

Specifically, in the **first introductory chapter**, the crisis of the agri-food system will be contextualized in the Great Recession frame. The **second introductory chapter** retraces the international literature on collective action, and food movements, to introduce and analyse the scientific contributions around AFNs. The **last introductory chapter** will present the general conceptual framework of the entire work, which will be followed

by the description of the methodological approach of this dissertation, including approaches, data, and considered adopted methods, as well as the description of the considered case-study.

In the **second part**, the theoretical nodes opened by the international literature will be faced going beyond the findings gathered through the empirical research. The empirical body of this dissertation consists of four chapters, each focusing on a specific aspect of AFNs and each one responds to a specific research question.

The **first empirical chapter** focuses on the discussion of AFNs as a social movement. The attention is directed toward the AFNs as an example of what in literature is labelled as SCMOs. This chapter places itself within the debate that has developed over the past few years around alternative food systems. By combining insights from social movement theories and AFNs literature, this chapter will focus on the mechanism through which the political, economic, and cultural contexts, as well as the social structures of the considered cities, have been influencing AFNs' practices and their framing process. To reach these goals, several findings carried out from in-depth interviews made with producers and local stakeholders involved or engaged in AFNs initiatives will be presented. Following a qualitative approach, the research has been developed within the above-mentioned case-studies. Finally, the results will be discussed following the Political Opportunity Structure (POS) framework enlarged to both Economic Opportunity Structure (EOS) and Cultural Opportunity Structure (COS).

The **second chapter** considers AFNs' evolution during the economic and financial social crisis. Specifically, by combining insights from AFNs literature, the contemporary economic, financial and social crisis, this chapter shows how AFNs are evolving in the Global World. It will be displayed how – and in which way – the economic crisis has been shaping AFNs initiatives, which seem to be more developed after the 2008-crisis, in both the Global North and Global South. Thus, data collected regarding the crisis impact and perception will be compared as follows: firstly, it will be presented the diachronic evolution of AFNs initiatives for each case-study; then, following a qualitative approach, it will be analysed the crisis' impact and perception as the interviewees reported.

The **third empirical chapter** displays the ongoing state of the sustainable agriculture within the two considered contexts, showing the AFNs engaged farmers' profile, thus their issues and their perspective which are engaged in these initiatives. The attention is specifically given to the general phenomenon of sustainable agriculture.

Within this part, indeed, the results collected through semi-structured interviews, conducted with Italian and Brazilian local farmers engaged in urban AFNs initiatives, will be presented. It will be shown who these farmers are, their motivations and reasons behind their actions. It will be also analysed the degree of their network engagement. The main goal is to highlight if there are any connections between Italian and Brazilian farmers, or, on the contrary, which are the differences behind their action.

The **fourth chapter** focuses specifically on the processes of strengthening AFNs through a specific framework such as Participatory Guarantee Systems. The study considers two examples of PGSs: the PGS of Lombardy (Northern Italy) and the Rede Ecovida's PGS (Southern Brazil). This chapter places itself within the academic debate on organic food production, distribution and consumption, especially regarding the certification's systems. Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGSs) represent an example of 'alternative' form of guarantee which has been spreading in several Countries in the Global World. Starting from the most recent studies around the so-called 'civic agriculture' (CA), this chapter describes Participatory Guarantee Systems in comparison to other forms of guarantee organic production. Then, considering the selected case-studies, the normative context and the "*modus operandi*" of both initiatives will be compared to find out differences and similarities, opportunities for development and limits of such experiences, considering also the consumers' and producers' commitment in the process.

FIRST PART: INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS

1. Contextualizing the Crisis of Agri-Food System within the Great Recession

1.1 Introduction

The European Countries, as well as Latin America, have gone through various periods of the economic downturn since at least the mid-1970s. The crisis of the late 2000s became an unprecedentedly severe global economic crisis, hence the terminology of the Great Recession (Giugni and Grasso 2018). The new conditions had a profound influence on people's perception of reality and economy, whether personal or related to their Country's health (Temple et al. 2016). Globally, most of us have experienced, directly or indirectly, the Great Recession. It has emphasized inequalities, it has pushed Countries to adopt Austerity policies, it has caused an employment decrease, as well as the consumption, or simply, it has impoverished working and middle class. The Great Recession has also strengthened the equilibrium of power which dominates the Global World, whether within the financial markets or the real economy. For instance, referring to the agri-food system, the Great Recession has made more evident the emergencies which characterise it.

Therefore, this chapter, starting from the literature review on the agri-food system problems, and suddenly the crises which sprang out under the umbrella of the Great Recession, it will be shown how the financial and economic crisis has emphasized the disconnection of people toward the society and the de-socialization of Market.

1.2 Emergencies of the agri-food system

Nowadays, the agri-food system presents several orders of problems. It has considered the three main problems that society should face: food security, environmental sustainability, and the growth of foodstuffs prices. Below, starting from the analysis of the contemporary scientific contribution around these emergencies, the question about food provisioning will be preliminarily considered.

1.2.1 Food security

The lack of food security and food sovereignty has been affecting most of the Southern Countries in the World (Jha 2009), especially in the context of contemporary crisis (Castells et al. 2012; Castells and Cardoso 2012). Northern and Southern Countries, seem to be involved in this process, especially as concerns urbanized areas, that even

more tend to a low-quality and more standardized food provisioning. As the FAO report¹ has shown (2009), the number of people who are not able to get access to food security is increasing. FAO² (1996) defined food security as:

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO, 1996)

Almost 1 billion people are suffering from this kind of problems, while almost 1 billion people are suffering from obesity (FAO 2017). The persistence of obesity and undernutrition are often interpreted as an evidence that the agri-food system has clear malfunctions. As Peterson stated (Peterson 2009), even whether the agri-food systems had been successful in producing an enormous amount of foodstuffs, it had been less successful in terms of guaranteeing a healthy diet for anyone. The state of food security is characterized by these contradictory trends (Bozzini 2017). The last FAO³ report on food security affirmed that the esteemed percentage of people in food insecurity is 10,9%, almost 800 million people, 200 million people less compared to data collected until 1990. However, this progress has happened in some countries, like China, India, Latin America, while the African situation remains almost the same. Summarily, available data show lights and shadows. Moreover, the impact of the crisis on food security is not so clear. In some countries, the crisis has decreased the number of people in food insecurity, while in other areas the opposite. The crisis of foodstuffs prices of 2007-08 has broken the decline of the number of people in food insecurity, but it has not decreased the bearing of hunger in the world (Bozzini 2017).

On the other hand, obesity has been affecting an increasing number of people in the world. Today, more than 500 million people are classified as obese, and 1 billion people are overweight⁴. Obesity has been affecting both developed and developing countries. What it has been attending is a shift toward an increasing consumption of fat and sweet products (Popkin and Ng 2007). Mexico is a clear example of this trend. As De Schutter⁵ showed, Mexico is a country where 19 million people suffer from food

¹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0876e/i0876e00.htm> last accessed 24 May 2017.

² The 'Rome Declaration on World Food Security' is a document adopted at the World Food Summit taking place in Rome, November 13-17, 1996.

³ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4910e.pdf> last accessed 24 May 2017.

⁴ <http://www.who.int/gho/en/> last accessed 25 May 2017.

⁵ <http://www.srfood.org/en/mexico-a-state-of-emergency-to-battle-food-poverty-and-obesity> last accessed 25 May 2017.

insecurity, and in the meantime is one of the most affected countries by obesity (De Schutter 2010, 2012).

1.2.2 Growth of foodstuffs prices

Measuring the crisis' effect on food insecurity is complex and hard, being the available data undefined. The global number of undernourished people has decreased over the last 25 years (FAO 2017; FAO 2015). In the public debate, the growth of foodstuffs prices is often interpreted as a growing number of people in hunger. However, this trend should be related to the degree through which each country is integrated within the global market. This means that as much as a country is integrated, most probably it will be affected by the global tendency of foodstuffs prices. For instance, poor and developing countries, being importers, are more exposed to the risk, instead of self-sufficient countries or exporters that can benefit from global market integration. Just to mention a few examples, countries like Algeria, Egypt, Namibia, Bolivia, Haiti and so on, import an amount of 30/60% of their grain needs. These countries have suffered the crisis' effects more than the others (FAO 2011). Even the exporter countries, not being developed, could be affected by the global tendency of foodstuffs prices. What they could do to solve the volatility was to adopt some protectionist policies (e.g. China, India, and Indonesia). The prices' volatility contributes to decrease agricultural production, especially for small producers because higher prices mean fewer possibilities for consumers and fewer profits for small producers (Deason et al. 2015). It is easy to understand that poorer countries are more probably exposed to the risk. The lack of food in the internal market, linked to the growth of food prices, could have disastrous effects since, in these countries, people spend around 60/70% of their income to buy food. As Sachs and McArthur stated (Sachs 2012; Sachs and McArthur 2005), when individuals are living in extreme poverty, and their income is just enough to satisfy basic needs, a single episode of dryness, epidemy, or whatever that could destroy the crop, could make the difference between life and death. The most affected are small peasants in poor Countries. In the World, there are more than 2 billion small producers in agriculture, and almost 500 million of them are living in insecurity. In an uncertain context of crisis, the poorest ones are not able to increase their economic activity. This phenomenon is called 'the trap of poverty'. In this situation of deprivation, starting from 2007 some episodes of food protests were registered. Especially in Africa, but also in Latin America, and South-East Asia, food riots have emerged in both rural and urbanized areas. Besides the hunger

issue, along with it, food protests have attacked the global agri-food system, and the neo-liberal policy agenda (Bush and Bush 2010). Several types of researches have linked poverty degree and food insecurity with the likelihood to rise contentions around food (Berazneva and Lee 2013). Others have effectively proved a correlation between the growth of food prices and contentions at the local scale (Bellemare 2015; Berazneva and Lee 2013). How the experience of the 20th Century suggests, when food prices increase, who mobilizes the collective action used to be urban working classes (Naylor 2014). Also, the political opportunity structure, as it will be explained, has a strong influence on contention politics, and of course on food protests.

Concerning the developed countries, the current situation is completely different. Firstly, the percentage of people who are undernourished is 1,4% (16 million people) in the richest countries⁶. Among the OECD⁷ Countries, the percentage of income per-capita invested in buying is limited. For instance, in the US is around 7%, while in Italy is around 14%. This means that the growth of food prices has a minor effect on the families' budgets. However, what has been damaging OECD countries is the 2008 financial and crisis, which will be deeply discussed in the next section. A recent report (2015) published by ISTAT (Italian Institute of Statistics) named "*Il Benessere Equo e Sostenibile in Italia*" (in English, 'The Italian Fair and Sustainable Well-Being')⁸, affirmed that more than 11% of Italian people are living in conditions of deprivation, even though it has stopped to increase, maintaining itself at the same level as 2011 (ISTAT 2015). All these data testify that food prices and food insecurity are troubling both developed and developing countries.

Before shifting to the analysis of the contemporary financial and economic crisis, the global food chain and its sustainability will be discussed.

1.2.3 Environmental sustainability of the global food system

The industrial agri-food system has been criticized for its effect on the environment and natural sources. As Brown showed (2012), the global economy has increased by seven times over the last 50 years, while natural sources available on Earth are almost the same. Human beings are exploiting the planet too much faster compared

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http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/est/Volatility/Interagency_Report_to_the_G20_on_Food_Price_Volatility.pdf last accessed 25 May 2017.

⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

⁸ This index that considers some indicators about well-being, like the possibility to warm the house, or facing unpredictable costs or go for holidays for at least one week/year.

to the natural rhythm of its regeneration. The consequences of this exploitation are the reduction of forestry areas, desertification, soil erosion, air and water pollution, and global warming. The number of people in the World has increased by 110% over the last 50 years, while the cropland just 10% (Conway 2012). This author supports the thesis that there is not significant availability to enlarge food production through new croplands on the Planet. The idea is that it has been reached the peak of efficiency in agriculture because it is hard to improve the productivity of croplands that have already intensified. After World War II, starting from Western Countries, agriculture has radically changed. The so-called 'Green Revolution' has deeply transformed agriculture, pushing it toward a more industrialised framework. Thanks to the scientific progress in chemistry, biology, and bio-technologies, it was possible to intensify and extend the production in agriculture. Today the growth rate on efficiency seems to be stagnant and some scholars affirmed that the Green Revolution is finished (Foley 2010). As FAO (2011) reported, the number of available grains decreased and domestic food prices for Developing and poor Countries increased. This proves that food production is not following the increasing demand for food and demographic changes. It would appear difficult to intensify more the agriculture. Going back to the environment, there are several reports published by OECD and FAO affirming that the main cause of exploitation of natural source (e.g. water), de-forestry, and soil erosion, is agriculture (Shortle 2012). Intensive agriculture has progressively impoverished the environment, and, in some cases, exhausted the productivity of some areas, for instance, Ecuador and Brazil. The diffusion of monoculture (especially for livestock activities) has affected biodiversity in rural areas: hectares and hectares of corn appear like a bio-desert (Bozzini 2017). Chemical products (fertilizers, pesticides, etc.) have also impoverished the capacity of the croplands to be fertile. The industrialization of agriculture has also contributed to global warming and condition of the atmosphere. The growth of the intensive livestock affects climate change for 13% of the global greenhouse emission, such as the transport's impact and the cycle of waste⁹. Just a small percentage of global croplands is used to produce food. In addition, it is necessary to consider the environmental costs of transportation. Food is often imported from far areas. Distribution presents also several negative externalities on the environment as well as local communities. Products are mostly provided through large-scale distribution that

⁹ https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg2/ar4_wg2_full_report.pdf last accessed 25 May 2017.

often presents consequences on food quality and ‘geography of food’. These trends, based almost exclusively on intensive and industrialised agriculture, tend to marginalise small producers and rural areas. Contextually, since 2006 the foodstuffs’ price has been increasing. Even if these issues are shared by a few scholars, there are some sceptical researchers that criticized this position. Lomborg and Collier, for instance, thought that it is not true that global production is decreasing. Especially Collier (2010) supports the idea that is possible to solve the problem of feeding the world. The developed countries could produce less cost, and maximizing benefits for poorer countries, selling products at lower prices. It means liberalizing more the global market. Protectionist policies break this chance. They also sustain the importance of biotechnologies, such as GMOs. On the other hand, both international institutions like the European Union and the United Nations are trying to sustain a more sustainable model of agriculture through initiatives and policies like CAP¹⁰ and SDG¹¹.

Even the grassroots social movements are spreading an opposite perspective against industrialised agriculture. Starting from the problems of the agri-food system, several initiatives of sustainable agriculture have appeared (Dansero and Puttilli 2014). Movements such as Via Campesina, Slow Food, SPGs, CSAs, are trying to spread the importance of alternative ways of productions and consumption, especially around urbanized areas. This issue will be further discussed in paragraph 1.4.

In all these paradoxes of agri-food systems, it is clear how food became one of the hottest topics within the global agenda, as well as within the academia. Before treating specifically, the initiatives of sustainable agriculture, it is necessary to contextualise these dynamics in the ongoing economic and social crisis. As was written before, the financial and economic crisis blew up in 2008 and has deeply changed societies. After almost 10 years, the current situation of the developed countries is almost the same.

1.3 The agri-food systems in times of crises

Food connects human beings to the Planet. Eating and buying food is something more than a simple rational choice. Food is culture. Food is socializing. Food is an industry. Thus, being an important sector of the global economy – and being part of our everyday life – it makes sense to question about how the Great Recession is influencing the food production, distribution, and consumption. After 2008, labour relations, the state

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-overview_en last accessed 25 May 2017.

¹¹ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> last accessed 25 May 2017.

policies effectiveness, consumers' willingness to buy secure food, citizens' solidarity, and the state of environmental health have been negatively affected by the Great Recession and the global economic system. This paragraph wants to show how the Great Recession has changed both contemporary society and the agri-food system.

1.3.1 The economic and financial crisis

The contemporary economic and social crisis has been affecting the Northern and Southern Countries of the global world (Stiglitz 2009). What it has been demonstrated is a continuous decrease of possibilities and choices for people in terms of employment, belief, and political representation. It was clear even before the spreading of the economic crisis, as Sennet stated (Sennett 2007). By describing the different faces of the new capitalism, Sennet showed how it has changed from the more 'solid' form that characterized the 19th and 20th Century, and the current more precarious one. Firstly, the long-term perspective has been substituted by a short-term one, among the economy, and politics, everything in our life is following this direction. The industrial capitalism was based on labour market and working class, while contemporary capitalism is characterized by the shareholders' centrality. Internet and information technologies helped the diffusion of a new economy and the integration of the global financial market. Information runs instantly from a specific point in the World to another one thousand kilometres far from there. Everything is fast. Everything is available within cities. The number of people that live in the cities is around 70%, and it will increase in the next years. Sennet described this shift to a more flexible society reclaiming the concept of 'liquid society', widely described by Zygmunt Bauman (Bauman 2013b), where individuals are more and more affected by uncertainty, anxiety, fears, and where inequality is the most critical cornerstone of this economy. Peripheral areas of the Global World, as well as peripheral areas of cities, are the places where poor people are pushed to live. Inequality means distance. The ones who live there are responsible for keeping up with the expected goals (e.g. fashion market). Bauman stated (2013b) that there are two main features that characterize modernity: the never-ending pathway that people/citizens are facing, and the deregulation and privatization of services and duties by the state. Bauman affirmed that 'Society does not exist anymore'. On the contrary, individuals exist, but they are not part of a collective. The "*spiritus movens*" of citizens in this contemporary society is the consumption, and consumers are moved by desires rather than needs (Bauman 2013b). But this process is rooted basically before the

spreading of contemporary society.

Since the 1970s and 1980s, in the US and UK as in other countries of the Global North, citizens' political power and their choice of possibilities, started to decrease. The *deregulation* promoted by scholars from the University of Chicago (e.g. Milton Friedman), was thought to adjust the relationship between the Market and the State (Judt 2011), in terms of giving more power to big companies and delegating the supplying services to the private citizens. The State started to reduce funds for public services (education, healthcare, market labour helps, etc..). Thus, the historical dualism between the Market and the State, which characterized the economic debate of 20th Century, left the main role to the transnational corporation, that are nowadays the main actors leading contemporary society and pushing governments to satisfy their interests (Crouch 2011; Sennett 2007).

As Castells et al. argued (2012) the Great Recession seems to be more than just economic-related: it appears structural and multidimensional. What we have witnessed is a more rooted kind of crisis. What we have witnessed is the spreading of political, social, cultural, and environmental crises. In other words, the Great Recession is affecting society more than it might be thought, and it has been damaging individuals in their every-day life yet (Bauman 2004). 'The Ideal of Neoliberalism' itself is going to change in a more conservative way, and with different consequences in different parts of the World (Bear 2015; Hart 2012; Ottone 2012). Looking at what happened to private banks' bankrupts – in the US and EU – governmental administrations followed the recommendations of the IMF, WB and FED Bank (in Europe ECB). Thus, they started to emit public debt to raise enough money to avoid the system's collapse (Stiglitz 2009). This public intervention is countertendency respect to what emerged after the 1970s crisis, proving the collapse of the *dogma* of non-intervention. These policies, along with the financial crisis, unchained a deeper industrial crisis, increasing the percentage of unemployment, affecting above Southern Europe, as well as other European Countries (e.g. Ireland, Iceland).

Referring to the agri-food system, the contemporary global provisioning framework is featured by the transnational scale of food production and distribution, characterized by a transnational class stratification of rich and poor consumers, where corporations dominate the most of the global market diversifying their supply (Friedmann 2005). The ongoing food regime called as 'corporate food regime' (McMichael 2005, 2012) is based on the global division of work which obliges poor people to feed richer people from both Southern and Northern Countries through the conventional food

provisioning system, mostly occupied by supermarkets and GDO (Great Organized Distribution) (McMichael and Friedmann 2007). This new paradigm of global food production, which has started in the early 1990s, is founded on the so-called 'empires of food' (Van der Ploeg 2009), which lead toward an economy 'dis-embedded' from the society (Polanyi 1944). As it has described in the previous paragraph, in 2008 an unprecedentedly growth of food prices, which have triggered dramatic sequences of food riots in several countries, especially in the Global South, occurred (Bellemare 2015; Berazneva and Lee 2013; Lagi, Bertrand, and Bar-Yam 2011). Before arising at the global scale, the food crisis in Europe has been identified as an internal problem related to low incomes, to negative externalities among the distribution system, and to speculation by strong players in the food chain. (Brunori and Guarino 2010). The financial crisis contextually emerged, and the related fear of economic recession at the global scale, have also encompassed the food crisis, damaging people and families in terms of economic possibilities and available resources for consumption. Food prices will remain at a higher average level than past decades (FAO and OECD 2008). As Brunori and Guarino noted (2010) the Great Recession has made more evident the people's unwillingness to get access to secure food. This phenomenon regards both lower and middle classes, impoverished by the economic downturn. Whether on one side is increasing the consumption through discounts and supermarkets, on the other side, premium quality food consumption is increasing, as previous researches demonstrated (Bostrom and Klintman 2009; Hughner et al. 2007; Lockie et al. 2004). Beyond these two dualistic dynamics related to consumption habits, mostly at the local scale, other grassroots initiatives, which the main purpose is to re-spatialize and re-embed the economy within society as a possible alternative to the emergencies explained before, have emerged and reinforced themselves (Sonnino and Marsden 2006).

1.3.2 The political crisis

As a process, the Great Recession seems to be part of a social experiment where money and markets are free to seek their path throughout the World (Hart, Laville, and Cattani 2010). The market's rules have overcome the space of action of the political institutions. This State crisis led to a definitive disaffection of the citizens about politics, along with the decline of state's decision-making power in relation to internal policies (Castells et al. 2012; Engelen 2011; Judt 2011).

Citizens are even more considered as consumers (Bauman 2013a), and for that,

scholars refer to the modernity with the widely shared concept of ‘consumers’ society’ (Baudrillard 1998). Citizens’ life is based on consumption (of goods, services, relationships, times, and so on). Historic political parties are changed, as well as society has changed. People are disaffected toward politics. Democratic parties, from moderate left and right, have converged in a common pathway (this is clear especially among the EU countries). But this disaffecting process toward politics started even before. Crouch (2004) published the book *‘Post-Democracy’*. This term refers to the crossing-over of the representative democracy model, which was considered, until a few years ago, the most desirable form of organization for the states. This new phase is characterized by a new elite of global capitalism, composed by transnational corporations and their managers (Crouch 2004, 2011; Sennett 2007). The post-democracy denies the existence of privileges and subordination. The working-class, the main actor of the social movement organizations which changed Europe during the 1960s and 1970s lost its power to influence the decision-making process. The labour market became fragmented, uncertain, precarious, and services-oriented (Bauman 2004; Sennett 1998). Industries have been relocating to developing countries. Political parties such as social-democrats, or left-oriented parties in general, did not embrace either the working-class’ needs or the social movements’ requests, failing the ambitious project of the so-called ‘third way’ proposed by Giddens (1998). In this contemporary context of the constant weakening of the lower-middle class, we are attending a progressive growth of absolute and relative poverty in the global world.

Life is getting even more precarious, not only in the labour sphere. Our existences are constantly at risk (Beck 1992) and unpredictable (Bauman 2005). It is clear how the ‘old party’s system’ could not be compatible with the organization model led by corporations and financial institutions. Crouch stated that the prototype of post-democracy will be typified by strong ties with lobbies, financial institution, by a progressive estrangement from the workers’ unions and mass movements (Crouch 2004). This astonishingly happened after some years in both the Northern and Southern countries in the Global World, especially after 2011 when Austerity policies affected several countries in Europe (Knight and Stewart 2016), where several episodes of protest arose (della Porta 2015). To specify better what is commonly known in terms of Austerity, below it is cited a quote provided by EUROMOD:

In some countries, such as Greece, explicit packages of reforms have been labelled as austerity measures. While mostly involving tax increases and cuts in social benefits and

public sector pay, they also include increases in some benefits or reductions in taxes for certain groups to compensate or alleviate the impact of other measures. In any case, the package as a whole can be easily identified. In other countries, it is not so clear how policies would have evolved in the absence of the budgetary crisis. In the UK, for example, there was a change of government in the mid-2010s and the policy changes include, alongside measures that might have been introduced by any government, cuts and restructuring of the welfare system that arguably is part of a new approach, some under the guise of austerity. In general, our approach has been to focus on changes that were explicitly introduced in order to cut the public deficit or stem its growth. Some of the changes implemented in a particular period that may be part of some other policy agenda and would have also happened in the absence of the fiscal crisis are not considered. The idea is to distinguish between changes that were part of a 'business as usual' agenda from those introduced for austerity reasons. In particular, the removal of temporary fiscal stimulus measures is not considered as part of the austerity package if those reforms were originally presented as temporary (Callan et al. 2011, p. 3)

As the Great Recession has reinforced commercial and financial institutions at global scale undermining the state's ineffectiveness to face them, at the same time it has framed the corporate regime in the global agri-food governance (Clapp and Fuchs 2009).

1.3.3 The social and cultural crisis

The contemporary global economic crisis has caused also notable changes in the everyday routine of people. For instance, what scholars such as Saskia Sassen (Sassen 2014) have stated, shows how we are moving toward a model of a structured organization on expulsions, from the State, from the society, and from the global economy. Contrary to what Bauman affirmed about the 'underclass' of non-consumers (Bauman 2004), the concept of expulsion appeal to something more related to the physical dimension. And due to this, citizens/consumers, feel isolated, alone, and abandoned, because, even if they are inside the society, they see themselves deprived of the right to consume. Sassen used the term 'expelled' to describe various conditions:

They include the growing numbers of the abjectly poor, of the displaced in poor countries who are warehoused in formal and informal refugee camps, of the minoritized and persecuted in rich countries who are warehoused in prisons, of workers whose bodies are destroyed on the job and rendered useless at far too young an age, of able-bodied 'surplus populations' warehoused in ghettos and slums. My argument is that this massive expulsion is signalling a deeper systemic transformation, one documented in bits and pieces in multiple specialized studies but not quite narrated as an overarching dynamic that is taking us into a new phase of global capitalism. It has also generated an emergent type of politics, marked by its use of the street (Sassen 2013, p. 1)

This statement is strong. What is happening around the Western boundaries, as well as slum cities in the Global South, is probably what Saskia Sassen stated. Wars and poverty in Africa and Middle-East, are forcing millions of people to leave their home. Western countries seem to be unable to welcome all of them. While Communitarian governance 'wastes' time discussing, several xenophobic movements feed this new phase of expulsion. Furthermore, Sassen continues her analysis by describing the two main dynamics that we are experiencing: firstly, «the familiar reconditioning of terrain in the direction of growing organizational and technological complexity, epitomized by the state of the art space of global cities in the North and the South», secondly «a mix of conditions often coded with the seemingly neutral term of 'a growing surplus population'» (Sassen 2013, p. 2), where a key-condition that underlies this 'surplus' is the growth of the territories devastated by poverty, disease, lack of efficient governments, wars, and corruption. All these consequences lead people to an extreme inability to meet their basic needs. Often, these people which are 'physically' expelled out of boundaries, use to be illegally employed in underqualified labour sectors like vegetables and fruits harvest and picking. It uses to happen not just in the Global South, but also in the peripheral areas of Europe and the US (Martin 2002; Perrotta 2014).

The Great Recession has been also affecting people, not only on a macro-level but also on a micro-level. Indeed, especially within countries of Southern Europe, the number of suicides is increasing, as it is alcohol addiction, depression, and mental health (Wahlbeck and McDaid 2012). This perception of uncertainty, insecurity, isolation, exclusion, expulsion, how it has been supposed (Conill et al. 2012), left people with a lack of values. This vacuum, as the researchers showed through the research developed in Catalunya (Spain) and exposed within the chapter 9 of that book (*ibid.*), seems to be fulfilled by another kind of values' system. Especially among young people, who feel deprived of the right to consume and plan their own future, there is a tendency to repossess and give other meanings to few mutualistic and cooperative practices of the past, that have been depreciated during the spreading of consumerism of last three decades. According to the paradigm of 'degrowth' (Latouche 2010), which is defined as «an equitable downscaling of production and consumption that increases human well-being and enhances ecological conditions at the local and global level, in the short and long term» (Schneider et al. 2010, p. 512), crisis seems to be considered as an opportunity for the States, both Northern and Southern, and for the individuals as well (Schneider et al. 2010). 'New' forms of alternative practices are springing, especially in the cities of the

Global North. People are re-drawing a new value system by sharing places, time, markets and working spaces. Practices like cohousing (Lietaert 2010) and squatting (Cattaneo and Marc 2010) seems to give back importance among people, especially among the youngest ones. But these alternative practices, as Castells et al. (2012) defined them, are not properly new. They come from mutualistic movements of the past (Forno and Graziano 2014). On one hand, these practices try to offer an ‘alternative’ to the system by reassessing values to the barter, second-hand market, local food production, and so on; on the other hand, these practices aim at re-socializing communities, in other words, to re-embed citizens and social network on a small-scale dimension. As will be discussed later, some of these practices seem to be also a political and pedagogical consequence among the actors and individuals involved. But, before discussing social movements, new forms of political participation and social struggles, it is necessary to consider another aspect that Global Crisis has been damaging: the environment.

1.3.4 *The environmental crisis*

Citizens' awareness about the impact of globalization on the environment is increasing. Also, the States seem to be more interested in this issue. The Paris Agreement¹² testifies that 195 countries attended the international conference in 2015 and adopted the «first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal»¹³. Before being almost universally acknowledged, the environmental issues were strongly discussed within the academic and public debate. For many years, the debate on the relationship between industrial growth and the environmental challenges was significantly intense and possibly will continue in the future. We have been hearing of *sustainability* for tens of years. But historically, the first scholars who have started to link economic growth to the limits of sustainability of the planet were the so-called “*Club di Roma*” and the Denny Meadows’s report (Bologna 2001). This report warned circa the risks of continuing gas-emission, industrial growth, and the impoverishment of the lands and biosphere (during the early 1970s), without specifying any clear or possible solutions. Since then, environmental issues have spread all around the world. The environmentalism of Northern countries and the so-called ‘Environmentalism of the Poor’ (Anguelovski and Martínez Alier 2014) has led to emerging questions and problematics linked to global industrialization and its consequences. Environmental justice movement (Kousis 1999;

¹²https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/paris_en last accessed 15 February 2017.

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/paris_en last accessed 16 July 2018.

Kousis et al. 2008; Mertig and Dunlap 2001; Schlosberg 2004) has contributed to this progressive growth of awareness. Through protests, boycotts and public information, environmentalism has pushed citizens toward the need to make important thoughts about our future. The birth of NGO's between the 1960s and 1970s such as Greenpeace, WWF, Sea Shepherd (just to mention the most known), has increased the awareness. Along with numerous researches, in the following years, environmental contentions have become strictly central among the social and political struggles.

In the recent years, scholars have demonstrated how human beings' impact has affected the environment. For instance, in 2009, the American weekly scientific journal *Nature*¹⁴, published one the most important article showing humans' ecological footprint (Ewing 2008) on our Planet state of health and how we should behave to limit human impact on the environment and toward biodiversity. The authors proposed a framework called 'planetary boundaries', where these boundaries are «the safe operating space for humanity with respect to the Earth system and are associated with the planet's biophysical subsystems or processes» (Rockström et al. 2009, p. 1). In this famous article, the researchers proposed a list of boundaries to apply to climate changes, rate of biodiversity loss, nitrogen and phosphorus cycles. They referred to the concept of 'Anthropocene', a new era «in which human actions have become the main driver of global environmental change» (Crutzen 2002; Rockström et al. 2009, p. 1).

1.4 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to trace a general frame where individuals and group of citizens are trying to develop some alternatives to the described emergencies and problems. The Great Recession brought a significant reconfiguration of the relations among the Market, the State and citizens. This consequence has interested the economy and the society in the redistribution of sources, market exchanges, and power. The 'corporate food regime', as it has been described, represents a clear proof of this dynamic. The Great Recession has mostly affected people, who used to bear the financial failure's costs and the related consequences which have been illustrated. Lower and middle classes had to increase their provision from the cheapest supply chains, mostly belonged to big retailers' groups. On the other hand, premium quality food consumption, as well as organic consumption, is increasing, even though it seems to be a prerogative of a 'niche'

¹⁴<http://www.nature.com/nature/index.html> last accessed 15 February 2017.

of consumers interested in their own health. Moreover, the mainstream market is still dominated by big retailers and standards and norms which regulate the conventional agri-food system (Fouilleux and Loconto 2017; Goldberger 2011; Luetchford and Pratt 2011; Sonnino and Marsden 2006). Beyond these two dynamics, among the agri-food sectors, starting from the mid-1990s other forms of food consumption and distribution have surfaced. These initiatives called AFNs (Delind et al. 2011; Renting, Marsden, and Banks 2003) want to re-create alliances between consumers and producers, creating an alternative to the corporate food regime which has dis-embedded the economy and has increased the distance between the consumption place to the production. These networks try to regulate the agri-food system through a combination of reciprocity and commercial exchanges (Orlando 2018). What has to be done is to understand whether these networks are springing out because of the re-emerging of solidarity economy and mutualism principles due to the Great Recession and the Austerity policies (Conill et al. 2012), or contrary, if there are any constraints to their development, such as the impoverishment of people (Brunori and Guarino 2010).

In the next chapter, starting with the purpose of the sociology of markets, the 'new' locus of contention will be discussed. The market, as some scholars argued (Forno and Ceccarini 2006; Graziano and Forno 2012; Micheletti and Stolle 2007), started to be a new arena of contention. Consumerism has acquired a new sense. Citizens/consumers, through consumption, are 'voting' with their wallet (Bossy 2014; Micheletti 2003; Micheletti and Follesdal 2007; Micheletti and Stolle 2012; Zhang 2015). New forms of political participation and socialization have been springing in the Global World. Most of them, especially after the 'Millennial turn', have been developed by SMOs which took part in the Global Justice Movements (GJM). This transnational movement, as it will be shown, was short-lived. Thus, SMOs, after GJM fade, around the mid-2000s started to improve local direct social action with the purpose of providing a more environmentally and ethically proposition to the global mainstream market, especially around food provisioning. Therefore, starting from the conflict around food in both the Global North and Global South, some of the alternatives emerged along last twenty years, which aim to face to the conventional food system, will be finally presented.

2. Making alternative food market

2.1 Introduction

Over the last three decades, in both the Global North and Global South, a wide range of grassroots initiatives have surfaced, trying to provide a possible answer to the emergencies of the global agri-food systems. Generally, the concept of Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) refers to newly emerging networks of producers, consumers, and other actors that embody alternatives to the more standardised industrial mode of food supply (Murdoch et al. 2000). Positioning themselves as an alternative proposition to the conventional food system, these experiences, structured as networks, aim to re-spatialize and re-socialize food consumption and production (Sonnino and Marsden 2006). These new forms of direct alliance between consumers and producers (Delind et al. 2011; Goodman et al. 2012; Renting et al. 2003), mostly at the local scale, wants to re-localize food. In other words, these networks connect food more with local farming practices, rural nature, landscapes, and resources (Renting et al. 2003). With the emergence of these forms of food provisioning, the contemporary agri-food system is increasingly divided into two main paradigms of production: on one hand, the industrialized and standardized food system characterizing the ‘corporate food regime’ (Campbell 2009; McMichael 2005, 2012) featured by the large-scale food production and distribution framework. On the other hand, the new paradigm of food provisioning is featured by localized, specialized food production attempting to trade on the basis of environmental, nutritional, or health quality (Murdoch and Miele 1999; Sonnino and Marsden 2006, p. 183). These new and rapidly expanding food networks are typified by the growth in sales of fair trade, organic, local, regional and speciality foods, and of retail outlets such as collective purchase groups (Grasseni 2013, 2014), community-supported agriculture (Cox et al. 2008; Flora and Bregendahl 2012), farmers’ markets (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000; Vignali et al. 2006), and box schemes (Maye and Kirwan 2010). AFNs are usually based on smaller, more environmentally aware producers and retailers who place their products in local markets with the support of their consumers (Goodman et al. 2013; Goodman and Goodman 2009; Morgan 2009). AFNs can assume different forms. They can be classified in terms of the distance through which the relation between consumers-producers uses to be established. Thus, AFNs can be divided into *face-to-face* interactions (direct sale, collective purchase groups), *spatial proximity* interactions (farmers markets, box schemes), and *spatially extended* interactions (Fair Trade) (Morgan et al. 2008).

AFNs have been studied by several strands of studies from different perspectives. Much of the initial theoretical works in this field have been dedicated to understanding the social and material construction of ‘quality food’ (Goodman 2004; Harvey, McMeekin, and Warde 2004). New approaches to food provisioning that offer a practical pathway for rural development have been studied. Murdoch et al. (Murdoch et al. 2000) conceptualized the growing consumer’s interest in food provenance observing the emerging Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) collectively build up with small-scale farmers (Maye and Kirwan 2010). Suddenly, the studies around AFNs raised issues in relation to the concept of *social embeddedness*. This propagates the idea that economic behaviour is embedded in – and mediated by – a complex and extensive web of social relations (Sage 2003; Winter 2003). Then, empirical studies have investigated several case-studies in Europe and in the US. These studies covered various works made on organics, fair trade, local and regional foods, various types of AFNs (e.g. farmers’ markets, community supported agriculture, box schemes, collective purchase groups), labelling and branding initiatives, public procurement and so on (Holloway, Kneafsey, and Maye 2007). The next body of studies has been related to the ‘quality turn’. This strand of studies has investigated, especially in Europe, the attempt to link products and places (Lamine 2015; Watts, Ilbery, and Maye 2005). Even related to the ‘quality turn’, there were studies made by van der Ploeg et al. (2000). Furthermore, another strand of publications around AFNs has been done linking political consumerism studies (Bossy 2014; Forno and Ceccarini 2006; Micheletti and Follesdal 2007; Stolle et al. 2005) to the burgeoning emergence of agri-food alliances. AFNs have been intended as ‘new’ spaces of democracy oriented to the construction of sustainable citizenships (Forno et al. 2015; Micheletti and Stolle 2012) and civic food networks (Brunori et al. 2012; Grasseni et al. 2013; Graziano and Forno 2012; Lyson 2004; Renting et al. 2012). Finally, another relevant research field has been related to sustainable agriculture and organic food. As the fair trade, organic food is considered as a strong symbol of alternative food provisioning, but it is also criticized for the commercial success and expansion within the conventional food system, and the related use of standards and labels used by the mainstream distribution actors. This tendency is better known as ‘conventionalization’ of organic food (Fouilleux and Loconto 2017; Goldberger 2011; Guthman 2004). AFNs, as well as small farmers organizations, being worried about the risk to be co-opted by the Market, or simply to distinguish themselves from this mainstream ‘occupation’ of their ‘niches’, have developed alternative forms of guarantee labelled as Participatory

Guarantee Systems (PGSs). These new forms of organic assurance, starting from the Latin America, have been spreading also in the Europe and US (Francisco and Radomsky 2009; John et al. 2005; Källander 2008; Lamine, Darolt, and Brandenburg 2012; Sacchi, Caputo, and Nayga 2015; Wilkinson et al. 2008; Zanasi et al. 2009). These tools have been adopted by AFNs to strengthen both themselves and to reconnect consumers and producers which get back their reciprocal responsibility, which use to be denied among the global mainstream market (Young 2004, 2006).

Therefore, in the next sections, starting from the analysis of the contemporary sociology of markets which sees them as culturally and socially constructed, the Market will be considered as one of the contemporary spaces of contention. The recent literature on social movements will be considered, especially the strand of studies which intend social movements as networks composed of social actors. AFNs will be analysed, unlike the above-mentioned literature, as part of the constellation of sustainability-oriented action encompassed under the definition of Sustainable Community Movement Organizations (SCMOs) (Forno and Graziano 2014). Indeed, their inclination to be social innovators, to create new spaces of political action, and to adopt specific tools to strengthen their common action, lead us to consider AFNs as part of the sustainability-oriented movement.

2.2 The sociology of markets

Referring to the sociology of markets, we know that the minimal structure of markets is composed by a buyer and two sellers (Aspers 2006). Buyers and sellers constitute the two roles which make up the market, standing in two opposite sides, with different and opposite goals: sell at the highest price and buy at the lowest one (Geertz 1978). Actors involved in the market have to face three different orders of problems: the value of what is traded, the competition, and the actors' cooperation (Beckert 2009). Sociology of markets is a branch of economic sociology (Fligstein 2002), which includes studies on consumption, studies on households and the state, and the economic life in general (Smelser and Swedberg 2010). Narrowly, the sociology of markets studies structures of social exchange under conditions of capitalism (Fligstein and Dauter 2007). Specifically, it refers to firms, products, labour market, policies, systems of meaning, cultures and the role of morality. There are three main strands of studies in the sociology of markets: networks (Granovetter 1973), institutions (Fligstein 1996), and performativity (Callon 1998). The networks' tradition intends relational ties among actors as the basis

of social structure. Institutionalism is based on how cognition and action are contextualized by market power, rules, and norms. The performativity's paradigm sees the economy as calculative processes which adopt technologies which economic actors use to employ. Relations between actors can be featured by exchange (between buyers and sellers) and/or by competition (between sellers). Competition includes cooperation. Norms regulate the market degree of competition and/or cooperation. The economic relations and the state are in a sort of dialectical relationships, where firms try to affirm their economic power within the market, and the state could react or ease the firms' action.

As it has stated before, another strand of studies faced by the sociology of markets is consumption. One of the core-questions behind consumption studies is the quality issue of traded goods. Indeed, their quality is not simply established on the acritical observation. Qualities of good are results of evaluations, tests, and trial. Thus, neoclassical theory considers consumers' choice as rationally-oriented, contrary to the premarket societies where economic behaviour is embedded within a non-economic social relationship, for this reason in literature these societies have been considered as moral economies (Polanyi 1944; Scott 1977). The moral economy is the complete opposite of the 'market economy', where the market became an autonomous and self-regulating force (Polanyi 1944). However, as Boltanski and Thévenot have demonstrated (2006) in the structures of markets, especially among specific 'niches' of consumers, people also mobilize beliefs, ethics, values views of the common good to talk about the effects of market processes. Moreover, as Granovetter has pointed out (2017), the fact that people seek simultaneously economic and non-economic goals push analysts to consider both economic analysis and sociological theories to better understand these phenomena which are related to the solidarity economy and the concept of 'moral economy' among the market (Fligstein 1996). Therefore, by their own nature, markets are the side of moral conflicts of social actors, who are committed to different principles, and the place where political struggles between various interests happen (Fligstein 1996; Schneiberg and Bartley 2001). AFNs which are mainly featured by the direct commitment of social actors – consumers and producers – seem to be a clear example of this twinned representation of markets. Social actors discursively committed create new 'nested markets' (van der Ploeg, Jingzhong, and Schneider 2012; Polman et al. 2010), as well as they try to improve collective action through the strengthening of social ties based on trust (Forno and Graziano 2014; Graziano and Forno 2012; Renting et al. 2012). Within these markets, traded goods and services are rooted among dense formal and informal

networks of ties, which are socially-constructed. The Market is socially constructed, even standards and set of norms. Thus, they could be re-constructed or re-thought. Therefore, this could be pursued through the strengthening of ties between actors, in this sense markets has been considered as fields where social actors use to create relations (Granovetter 1973, 1985). To sum, the sociology of markets fixes the coordination problems: the value of what is traded, which could be standardized or socially constructed, the organization of competition/cooperation, given by the institutional framework, actors' cooperation and their inclination to strength weak or strong ties (Aspers 2006; Beckert 2009; Granovetter 1973).

Coherently to this, in the following paragraphs of this chapter, starting from the most recent contributions on social conflicts, which considers the market as the 'new arena' of contention, the analysis will consider and describes AFNs as a new 'economic social movements' (Niederle 2014). Due to their moral economic approach, their propensity to create strong ties and to share and flow source among their socially and culturally constructed networks (Mische 2003), AFNs will be intended as a Sustainable Community Movement Organization which food as a tool/medium for building up the collective action and new (nested) markets.

2.3 New locus of conflicts: from state to markets. A social movement perspective

With the emerging interest in social movements in the 1960s, the relationship between networks and movements has been studied through two different perspectives (Diani and McAdam 2003). The most popular one has treated networks as important facilitators for individuals to become and remain committed to collective action (Kitts 2000; Olson 1965). On the other hand, scholars have looked at social movement networks as:

The structure of the links between the multiplicity of organizations and individual activists committed to a certain cause. From this perspective, movement networks have been treated as the consequence, rather than the precondition, of collective action, a specific instance of the broader processes through which actors modify social structures through agency (Diani 2013, p. 1)

This latter consideration on social movements sees them as a set of nodes, connected by relationship and delimited some specific criteria (Diani 2007, 2013). Social movement analysts have considered nodes either the individual mobilizing with a specific cause, or, subscribing to certain alternatives and/or organizations promoting collective

action on such claims sustaining and/or encouraging alternative cultural/economic practices. One of the most contested question among the social movement studies is related to how to establish boundaries of a social movement. Many scholars associate with a given moment all the organizations which mobilized around a specific contested issue. Other ones have included in the movement just those organizations or groups which connected through some kind of relations (Diani 2013).

Since the beginning, social movements scholars focused on the influence of social networks as predictors of individual engagement in collective action (McAdam 2003). Starting from the 1980s, the idea that individuals participating within a social movement are usually integrated into dense systems of social relationships became one of most established findings in social movement studies (Kitts 2000; McAdam 2003). Social movements participants use to be linked by public or private ties: personal relationships like friends, relatives, colleagues, companions, and so on, may influence the decision of a person to get engaged in social movements. Individuals could also be linked to indirect relations, generated by the participation to a specific event, not only through direct or face-to-face interaction. These relations can vary from the participation to shared social and/or political activities and/or organizations, or for being engaged in the same subculture or countermovement (Melucci 1996). Networks also provide important opportunities for action through the flow of sources, information, and for reducing practical costs related to the participation. It is still disputed whether direct or indirect relations act differently, even though social pressure more likely happens among direct relations, while socialization may originate from engagement in similar organizational settings (Diani 2013). It has also been considered the possible role of population and territory upon the collective performance and network structure, finding spatial proximity as a relevant influence (Gould 1995; Hedström 1994).

One of the most important contributions published over the last 20 years, made by della Porta and Diani (2006), collects a complete review of the main strand of studies and question behind social movement studies. Referring to the idea of collective action, as they argued, it has been defined as follows:

Collective action broadly refers to individuals sharing resources in pursuit of collective goals – e.g., goals that cannot be privatized to any of the members of the collective on behalf of which collective action has taken place (della Porta and Diani 2006, p. 19)

According to this definition, it could be possible to include, within the definition

of collective action, members of a non-profit association, a political party, or any collective membership. However, a social movement is something different. Indeed, social movements, as the network analysts have demonstrated, refer to a set of interactions/relations, mainly informal, based on shared belief and solidarity, that mobilise themselves around conflictual issues through the recurring use of diverse forms of action/protest (della Porta and Diani 1997).

As Diani has often argued (Diani 1992b, 2003, 2004), there are three main features that distinguish social movements from other examples of collective action:

- a. *conflictual collective action with clearly identified opponents*
- b. *dense informal networks*
- c. *collective identity*

a. Social movements actors engaged in political conflict mean to promote or oppose social change. By conflict, we intend an oppositional relationship between actors who seek control of the same stake – be it political, economic, or cultural power – and in the process, make negative claims on each other – e.g., demands which, if realized, would damage the interests of the other actors;

b. Dense informal networks differentiate social movement processes from the innumerable instances in which collective action takes place and are coordinated, mostly within the boundaries of specific organizations. A social movement process is in place to the measure that both individual and organized actors engage in sustained exchanges of resources in chasing of common goals while keeping their independence.

c. Social movements are not the sum of protest events. On the contrary, a social movement process exists only when collective identities develop, by going beyond specific events and initiatives (della Porta and Diani 2006, p. 21).

We attend to a social movement when a single episode or event of protest is perceived as a part of a longer-lasting action, and when people and actors involved in social movements feel connected by ties of solidarity and shared ideas with actors of others similar mobilizations (della Porta and Diani 2006, p. 23). Social movements do not have members. That term refers to a formal structure where people adhere. Individuals engaged in a social movement are participants rather than members, which means they take part in mobilization, instead of becoming merely members.

After these theoretical considerations which see social movements as networks, it is necessary to historically retrace the studies evolution upon contention politics over last

decades, which have been influenced by the emergence of new typologies of social movements, repertoires of action, claims, and arena of contention.

Since the 1970s, European social movements scholars have focused their attention on new conflicts in Western democracies: environmental movements and women's movement were the most famous objects of this stream of researches. What characterized the New Social Movements (NSMs) was the values' turn toward post-materialistic values instead of materialistic ones that had been sustained the working-class movements in the previous years (Touraine 1985). The working-class was a central actor in the conflicts of the industrial society. This was not only a question of numbers of workers that took part in the mobilizations. Most of the workers within the Fordism model of the factory did the same tasks and shared almost all their life with the other workers. They consequently shared the same conditions. They shared feelings, time and points of view. All these factors certainly eased the identification of a specific social actor and reinforced internal cohesion.

The concentration of the proletariat in large productive units and in urban areas produced dense networks in which a specific class identity developed along with a capacity for collective mass action (della Porta and Diani 2006, p. 38)

Later, the rise of the advanced industrialization changed everything, also the labour structure changed consequently. The factory was no more felt like before. Advanced industries started to expand the production offshore, or at least outside the dimension of a single hangar. Also, the closeness of workers' houses and factories reduced the solidarity between them, that characterized the industrial revolution and the expansion of Fordism. Furthermore, the economic importance of the manufacturing sector for Western countries has changed. High-skilled work in the tertiary sector has grown all around the Global North, creating a professional new middle class, which is very different from traditional clerical workers in industry or public bureaucracies. The new middle-class is something different from the homogeneous class.

In the new producer service sector precarious and low-paid forms of work are fairly widespread and constitute marked discrepancies between the cultural capital which individuals have at their disposal, and the recognition – in terms of earnings as well as of social prestige – which is obtained from these (della Porta and Diani 2006, p. 38)

Unemployment is a structural feature of the new form of capitalism, as it was stated in the previous section. In these contexts, it is no more possible to strengthen the

relationship among workers along with the economic cleavages. Changing job in this new era is easier. Horizontal mobility has been affecting the labour market at least for 20/30 years. In this way, Castells said that we can define this phenomenon as ‘individualization of labour’ (Castells 2011).

The first effect of these changes has been a weakening of the labour movement. If the decline of strike activities may be interpreted as a sign of institutionalization of the industrial relations and de-politicization of the industrial conflicts, especially in the nineties, the decline in the union membership has been quoted as an indicator of an unavoidable crisis of the labour movement (della Porta and Diani 2006, p. 40)

However, across the ‘millennial turn’, workers’ protests arose in transnational ways (e.g. transnational protests of Canadians, Americans, and Mexicans workers, against NAFTA). Social conflicts began to be not only related to the labour market. Territorial boundaries, such as the divide between urbanized centres and cities outskirts, urban areas and rural areas, led to territorial conflicts, instead of class contrasts:

Minority nationalities, groups bearing a particular cultural, historical, and/or linguistic identity, defined their strategies and their own images in reference to a central state and to the dominion which the state exercised on their territory, and they often aimed at building their own nation-states (della Porta and Diani 2006, p. 42-43)

Globalization concerns not only economic or technological improvements but also political tools used to regulate and reproduce the mode of production through the spreading of governmental and non-governmental international organizations (Beck 2015). Around the millennial turn, the international trade agreement and organization started to reinforce their power and became more and more important and crucial, in terms of international relations. International organizations have contributed to the spread of international regulations and norms. Since the 1990s, these organizations, such as WTO, G8, G20, NATO, increased their policy-making power. One of the most crucial moments of the recent history of social movement was the so-called ‘Battle of Seattle’, that arose in 1999 during the WTO Meeting in Seattle. On that occasion, different social movement organizations, associations, non-profits organizations, met each other to ask the world’s richest countries to erase the developing countries’ debt. It was the very first time that different initiatives fought against a common antagonist. Workers’ movement, environmentalists, human rights associations, NGOs, altogether fought for global justice. This was the first episode of a series of global manifestations of the movement labelled (in literature) as GJM (della Porta et al. 2015). Hence, from that moment there the Era of

Social Forum has been set in both the Global North and Global South countries. Many issues arose: deliberative democracy, heterogeneity rather than homogeneity, new repertoires of action and so on (della Porta 2005). Organizations and groups of activists, historically in contrast, such as the Catholics and the Marxists, were together for the first time, not just within the state boundaries, but in a cross-national battle for justice. The GJM has identified the market as one of its main privileged arenas for political activism (Forno and Graziano 2014; Micheletti 2003; della Porta 2003). Often, social movements are just associated with public protests, although they play a marginal role, especially within personal and cultural change. However, the street still has a relevant role in terms of pressure, but as it will be described later, in the last years, other arenas have started to be crucial for what concerns social struggles. In cities like Seattle, Genoa, Porto Alegre, and so on, where Social Forum took place, the street remained the main arena of contention. However, the GJM arose properly during the period where the phenomenon of political consumerism (Micheletti and Stolle 2007; Strømsnes 2009; Zhang 2015) began to extend to an increasingly large number of people. In fact, what scholars have written in the last two decades is that a new arena of contention is arising. The market and lifestyles began to be the place where citizens-consumers started to address their political action. Consumerism became a specific object of collective action and it has been shared as a tactic thanks to the network framework of the GJM.

Throughout the West, the recent years have seen the spread of fair-trade organizations and practices. By consuming certain products or choosing to do business only with banks committed to uphold moral and ethical standards, individuals may try to affect the balance of economic power on a broad scale (della Porta and Diani 2006, p. 4)

Political consumerism addresses a big range of products. Food, for instance, became one of the crucial issues through which groups of consumers/citizens have started to promote an alternative way to produce and distribute products in the world against big corporations. Numerous successful boycotts during these years have emerged through the Internet (e.g. against Nike, McDonald's, Nestlé, etc.). By using boycotts, transnational activists have publicized grievances and built new global awareness crossing boundaries against corporations. While globalisation has increased the distance between workers and consumers, boycotts have aided to create a wider sense of community by stimulating individuals to consider the conditions under which products are made in an increasingly global market (Collins 2009; Micheletti et al. 2004). Among newly emerging forms of citizens' political expression, socio-economic solidarity actions (fair trade, ethical

consumption, boycotts of specific products or companies, household economizing, ethical banking and ethical tourism) represent an interesting case, since they captured the processes of globalization and individualization that seem to be affecting the way citizens participate in politics (Forno and Ceccarini 2006).

The political use of consumption is not properly new (e.g. cooperative and mutualistic movements of the industrial revolution, had already used this kind of tool). However, recently these actions have achieved the explicit goal of influencing global institutions and local institutions. Talking about goods, food is one of the main vehicles through which activists have stimulated citizens' awareness of global politics and food sovereignty (local dimension). As it will be reported in the following sections, food is also crucial within the 'alternative practices' (Castells et al. 2012) and 'direct social actions' which focus on the political power of the action itself, instead of its capacity to express political claims (Bosi and Zamponi 2015). There are anthropological, social, cultural reasons behind this trend. Food became an instrument to reinforce the local communities and raise other issues, in both the Global North (Forno and Graziano 2014) and Global South (Niederle 2014). What we have been witnessing throughout the Global World is the wide diffusion of SMOs, initiatives, NGOs, associations, that are promoting the importance of keeping food sovereignty to take care health of citizens, environment, and to sustain the economic and social development of local communities (Altieri and Toledo 2011; Kousis 1999; Sage 2014). Furthermore, food riots were crucial, for instance, to blow up the French Revolution, but even before. The demands for bread prices, primary needs and so on, were a central issue in the past (Tarrow 2011). Nowadays, food riots continue to be central, especially in developing countries (Bellemare 2015; Berazneva and Lee 2013; Bush and Bush 2010; Hendrix and Haggard 2015; Lagi et al. 2011). The financial and economic crisis has affected the agricultural crop prices. Food insecurity is an emergency that has been affecting most of the southern countries in the global world. Food access is the main issue, that pushes people to rise against.

Therefore, now is necessary to deeply go through the historical framing of food conflicts. Along the next paragraph will be separately considered the European and Latin American evolutions of food conflicts, referring especially to the Italian and Brazilian cases.

2.4 The conflict around food

To better understand the contemporary dynamics which we have been witnessing along the last years is necessary to historically reconstruct the contested claims' evolutions around food production and distribution. Specifically, in this paragraph the European and Latin American contemporary agri-food system framing process, so the sustainable agriculture emergence as the alternative paradigm, will be considered, addressing the analysis toward the Italian and Brazilian cases.

According to previous studies made in Italy (Brunori, Malandrini, and Rossi 2013; Fonte and Cucco 2015), the sustainable agriculture framing process as an alternative paradigm to the conventional agri-food system, can be reconstructed considering few different historical phases. Below, it will be schematically resumed as follows: the first phase called as 'modernization'; the 'quality turn'; the 'institutionalization of organic agriculture among the communitarian normative framework, and finally the countermovement of 'post-organic' agriculture among the 'turn to politics' paradigm.

1. The 'modernization': from the end of the Second World War to the end of the 1980s. The emphasis was given to the productivity and the industrialization of the production. In the 1960s, while the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was orienting toward the modernization, some Countries, as in the Italian case, for example, were featured by the dualism between small farming and big capitalist farms (Fonte and Cucco 2015). The rapid industrialization happened along the 1960s and 1970s had also released agricultural manpower, available for the increasing industrial labour market. The modernization process was accomplished during the 1980s. This period has been featured by territorial concentration, specialization of production and adoption of mechanical and chemical innovation. The 'entrepreneurial farming' replaced the peasant farming. Farmers got a complete legitimation as entrepreneurs, even though the average farm area was relatively small and maintained an analogous approach such as capitalist firms.

2. The 'quality turn': during this phase, as the Italian case showed, it has been paid more attention to quality. It was developed the idea of 'Made in Italy', which was constructed as a quality brand (Fonte and Cucco 2015). In this phase, the attention on artisanal quality was crucial, with a specific focus on local production and cultural identities of food. As Brunori et al. stated (2013), it gains consensus among the business sector replacing the competitiveness approach typical of the industry. The emphasis has

been given to food safety, especially after some scandals appeared and became famous within the public debate, like BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy), wine adulteration (e.g. the methanol wine scandal in 1986), and so on. Scandals and the public debate around the diffusion of GMOs triggered a reflexive behaviour among European consumers, especially toward food safety and health (Fonte and Cucco 2015). These claims have brought, in the late 1990s, ‘conventional’ and ‘alternative’ forces, such as farmers’ unions and Slow Food Movement, to create a ‘coalition’ aimed to make changes among the Italian agri-food system. A ‘Made in Italy’ consensus was created, not only such a synonym of food quality but also as a marketing strategy to respond to consumer worries on food (Brunori et al. 2013). The reorganization of the European policies on food economy had to face toward the international pressures (e.g. WTO negotiations) which were pushing toward an orientation of the European Policies reducing agricultural subsidies and liberalization of the market access. Indeed, in this context, the CAP focused on productivity and improvement of safety standards. The ‘quality turn’, and the way through which it was translated into common policies brought tensions and direct actions into the public debate. For example, *Coldiretti*, the most important Italian farmers’ union, have started in the mid-2000s to spread a new campaign called “*Campagna Amica*”, aimed to directly sustain small and family farmers through farmers’ market all around the Country.

3. The ‘institutionalization’ of organic agriculture: the pioneering experiences of organic agriculture in Italy have appeared between the 1970s and early 1980s. The first groups came from different background: the radical left, the ecologist movement, and the anti-conformist or alternative movements. The first groups came from the experiences of ‘agricultural communes’, and the second one was more environmentally-oriented (Fonte and Cucco 2015). We must wait for the 1980s to properly witness toward the ‘institutionalization’ when local stakeholders started to formulate alternative rules for production, distribution, and consumption. However, the first Communitarian Regulation on Organic Agriculture came in the early-1990s at EU-level (Regulation CEE 2092/91), and later at the national level (Fonte and Salvioni 2013), when the Italian Ministry of Agriculture has recognised the first six national control agencies¹⁵ (Fonte and Cucco 2015)

¹⁵ AIAB, CCPB, Demeter, Suolo and Salute, AMAB, BioAgriCoop, followed by AgriEcoBio in 1993.

4. The ‘turn to politics’ and the ‘post-organic’ phase: starting from the mid-1990s, several consumers’ locally-based initiatives oriented toward the direct support of local and small farmers have emerged. Experiences like AFNs (AFNs), which concrete examples are SFSCs initiatives (Kneafsey et al. 2013; Marsden et al. 2000; Renting et al. 2003, 2012) such as the British CSAs (Janssen 2010; Lang 2010; Nost 2014), the French AMAPs, box schemes (Brown, Dury, and Holdsworth 2009; Neilson and McKenzie 2016), direct sale, farmers’ market (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000; Vignali et al. 2006), online organic food assemblies and collective/solidarity purchase groups (SPGs). These last might be considered the most important example of AFNs in Italy. The first experience emerged in 1994, but it was after the millennial turn when they reached and considerable ‘popularity’ within the Italian society. The aim of SPGs is to criticize the conventional agri-food system and by-pass the long food supply chains. These new grassroots initiatives in literature were initially considered as ‘local food networks’ or AFNs, being centred on the re-localization of food and a certain degree of critical position toward conventional food system (Goodman and Dupuis 2002; Goodman et al. 2012; Hinrichs 2000, 2003). Today they are mostly related to the idea of ‘civic food networks’. They emphasize more the social relations embodied in the production, which should become an expression of food citizenship, food democracy, and food sovereignty (Fonte and Cucco 2015; Renting et al. 2012). However, especially for what concerns the production side, over the last ten years in Italy have emerged other kind of food movements, which could be considered as part of a ‘post-organic’ movement. An example of them is “*Genuino Clandestino*”, an agroecological social movement organization emerged in 2010 which directly refuses to submit Communitarian legislations such as CAP and the EU organic law (Sacchi 2015), or “*Mondeggi Bene-Comune*”, an occupied farm which is developing agroecological practices with the local support of activists (Poli 2017). These initiatives support alternative forms of organizations, certifications, and grassroots forms of guarantee the production directly linked to experiences such as Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGSs), already present in other countries like France (e.g. organic farming association *Nature et Progrés*). Moreover, over last years, new forms of critical consumption like CSAs are surfacing in Italy, basically inspired by the British experiences, which entail a further effort for consumers, rather than SPGs, being central the commitment to pay in advance the entire volume of production to the farmer.

Concerning the Latin American – thus, Brazilian – agri-food system framing process and the food movements pathway which has faced it, it is strictly important to start from the peasants and workers’ mobilization of the 19th Century. As Almeida stated (Almeida 1999), the ‘land’ has ever been central to the historical formation process of the Brazilian society. The struggles for the landownership started during the colonialist era when the conflict had been characterized by the so-called ‘social banditry’. Until the mid-20th Century any organization, either workers’ unions, had collected peasants and rural workers. Just in 1953, the first rural workers confederation has been created, the “*União dos Agricultores e dos Trabalhadores Agrícolas do Brasil*” (Utab). Ten years later, the Utab and few segments of the Catholic Church, it was founded the “*Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores da Agricultura*” (Contag).

However, to better understand the evolution of food movement, it is necessary to consider two main orders of historical processes: firstly, the military dictatorship started in 1964, which had forced the agrarian industrialization, pushing rural workers, peasant, and small-farmers to abandon their land, and the countermovement of solidarity economy emerged in Southern Brazil which has begun from the constellation of non-profit associations and NGOs encouraged by the Catholic and Lutherans grassroots organizations.

To better show the evolution of food movements, also in this case it will be considered four different phases: the ‘modernization’; the grassroots mobilization; the consolidation of the organic agriculture’s paradigm, and the institutionalization, where the Federal Government have finally introduced official norms to regulate production and distribution of organic products, as well as the introduction of some specific laws oriented to sustain peasantry and small farming.

1. The ‘modernization’: Between the 1950s and the 1960s Brazil had witnessed a strong shove toward urbanization and industrialization. The agriculture at that time was featured by traditional forms of organization based on land ownership and manpower. The need to adapt agriculture respect the ongoing process of modernization seemed to be perceived by several social segments (Wanderley 2009). President Castelo Branco was one of the first promoters of the need to sustain industrialization of agriculture to feed the population. Indeed, the “*Estatuto da Terra*”, which was introduced in 1964, founded the core-centre of agrarian development the model of agro-enterprise. Big companies have been sustained directly by the Government (Wanderley 2009). They were

encouraged to buy cropland already occupied and used by peasants and small farmers, which were literally expelled from their own land. The Brazilian ‘modernization’ has been established “*de facto*” on the ownership of available croplands, and it will influence the entire history of the peasant movement (in Portuguese, “*campesinato*”). As an answer to this institutionalization of Capitalist approach toward agriculture, which had also brought Brazil to be the main agro-toxic and chemical inputs’ consumer in the World, later, during the 1970s the countermovement of alternative agriculture emerged.

2. The ‘grassroots’ mobilization: Moreover, the third congress of Contag (1979) marked an important step for farmers unionism. Contextually, the *Comissão Pastoral da Terra* (CPT), a Catholic organization aimed to organize and politically educate farmers, has been created (Almeida 1999). Land-related issues started to be more serious. Between 1979-81, in the State of the Rio Grande do Sul, the first occupation of the expropriated lands began. The first supporting groups, formed by agronomists and other farmers, emerged to sustain those people who tried to defend the occupied camps. Most of these groups started to constitute themselves as non-profit associations or NGOs composed mainly by people related to Catholic and Lutheran (especially) Church, technicians, and people belonging to the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra* (MST), which was already well structured in the Southern Region of Brazil. New experiences of production and way of life arose. All of them were featured by the centrality of the small farmers, and so, the family farmers aimed to reinforce their capacity to resist within the land and to consolidate their organization, with the aim to face the opposite economic and political forces (Almeida 1999). Contextually, the countermovement of alternative agriculture arose against the industrialization during the late-1970s in opposition to the introduction of fertilizers and agro-toxic inputs to improve efficiency. In the beginning, the agroecological movement was strictly linked to the preservation of natural production. The alternative agriculture brought a new environmental and ecological message, in which the relationship between humans and nature is completely differentiated, rather than what the industrial/conventional agriculture was reinforcing and spreading around the World.

3. The ‘consolidation’: after a decade, approximatively between the 1980s and the early 1990s, new groups and new forms of social organization of the distribution (farmers’ market and deliveries) emerged. As some scholars have stated (Schmitt 2010, 2011; Schmitt and Tygel 2009), during this period the solidarity economy has reinforced

its action, thanks to the work of Catholics and Lutherans' grassroots organizations, and thanks to the pedagogical contribution of scholars such as Paulo Freire¹⁶, especially within rural communities, cities, recovered factories, cooperatives of producers and/or consumers, financial cooperatives, and so on. This movement started to scale-up its action reaching a national perspective maintaining its local identity, and its protesting approach toward political institutions. The movement achieved a social acknowledgement thanks to the identity's reaffirmation around ecology.

4. The 'institutionalization': with the emerging social and environmental risks, people are even more aware of environmental issues, as well as the political institutions, which consequently start to be more aware. The alternative agriculture is even more recognized by consumers, as well as it has been considered in public policies. This period is dated around the second half of the 1990s and the 2000s, when some specific public policies and laws oriented toward the direct sustaining of alternative agriculture, and more generally, toward the direct support to the solidarity economy, have been introduced (e.g. the Organic Agriculture Regulation). The construction of alternative or differentiated markets for organic/agroecological products, and/or goods and services, highlighted several issues to be solved and faced, for instance the problems related to certifications, the relation between the State and the Civil Society, the relation between these 'nested markets' (van der Ploeg et al. 2012) and the mainstream market, the sustainability or unsustainability of alternative forms of consumption, and so on. To answer these open questions, later, during Lula's governments, other laws were introduced specifically to help small-owners and producers. Clear examples are the policy on Family Farming (in Portuguese, "*Política Nacional da Agricultura Familiar e Empreendimentos Familiares Rurais, Lei 11.326/2006*")¹⁷ which officially recognised what must intended as 'Family Farming' is the Law on School Canteens Provision (in Portuguese, "*Lei da Alimentação Escolar, No. 11.947/2009*")¹⁸, which obliges public school restaurants to buy the 30% of food from family farming (Schmitt 2010). However, this phase was also featured by the entrance of powerful stakeholders. Organic production and distribution started to follow the conventional market that characterized the mainstream distribution. In countermovement to this 'conventionalization' of organic food production, new

¹⁶ See, Freire, P. (2018). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA (first edition in 1970).

¹⁷ https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2004-2006/2006/Lei/L11326.htm last accessed 25 July 2018.

¹⁸ <http://www.fnde.gov.br/index.php/programas/pnae> last accessed 18 July 2018.

‘economic social movements’ have emerged (Niederle 2014), which try to develop a new political culture starting from the innovative feeding practices. Some examples are the Fair Trade, Slow Food, Urban Agriculture, CSAs and SPGs initiatives and so on. The main purpose of these actions is to fight against the food commoditization, especially over last year, the organic food commoditization, or ‘conventionalization’ (Canuto 2001; Stassart and Jamar 2009).

Thanks to this historical reconstruction, an idea about which was the path that Italian and Brazilian sustainable agriculture movements have been provided. It is also important to better understand the contemporary context. However, now is important to discuss what has been studied around the most recent trends in food production and distribution. Thus, in the next paragraph, a set of articles and streams of researches around the phenomenon labelled as Alternative Food Network (AFNs), and the agro-ecological turn that has been increasing in urban and rural areas of the cities in the global world, will be analysed. Finally, AFNs, agro-ecology, and the food movements that have been arising in the two last decades will be linked to the social movements’ interpretation as networks. These initiatives seem to be a clear example of re-connection and re-embedding of citizens within communities. All these experiences such as local food systems, sustainable agriculture, short food supply chains of production and distribution, civic agriculture, slow food movements are, according to the literature, gathered under the umbrella of the SCMOs (Forno and Graziano 2014).

2.5 Alternative Food Networks as Social Movements

Over the last 20 years, the academic debate around what is commonly known as AFNs has been stoked by a variety of contributions provided by geographers, sociologists, anthropologists, and agronomists. As it has stated in the introduction of this chapter, the AFNs’ framework refers to the recent phenomenon of emerging networks of consumers, producers, and other social actors which create alternative spaces of goods’ exchange in opposition to the more standardised food market (Murdoch et al. 2000). These networks locate themselves as a possible alternative to the conventional agri-food systems. The main purpose of this networks is to provide an answer to the emerging contested issues around global food production. Indeed, as it has been described, the current ‘corporate food regime’ has completely separated the consumption and production place from themselves, creating therefore a series of negative externalities which affect whether local communities, where food is produced, and the environment,

due the absurd distance through which use to frame the agro-industrial food system. Thus, AFNs try to provide a possible ‘way of exit’ to re-embed food within territories, so re-spatializing and re-socializing both consumption and production (Sonnino and Marsden 2006). What concerns AFNs is a wide range of initiatives that are resisting to neoliberal food policies by creating alliances among consumers and producers, mostly at local scale (Delind et al. 2011; Goodman et al. 2012; Renting et al. 2003), linking farming practices, landscapes, resources and people (Renting et al. 2003). This new paradigm of food provisioning, which counterposes the idea of local, typical, artisan, and more sustainable production to the more standardised, industrialized, and global food industry, try to strength environmental, nutritional, health quality, and ethics issues (Murdoch and Miele 1999; Sonnino and Marsden 2006, p. 183). What is commonly known as AFNs is a wide range of initiatives which differs from their composition, their dimension, their relational nature, and the distance between is realized the goods’ supply. There are several examples of AFNs like farmers’ market, farm shops, box schemes, ‘pick your own’ farms, home deliveries, mail orders, Solidarity Purchase Groups (SPGs) (in Italian, “*Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale*”) (Brunori et al. 2011; Fonte 2013; Grasseni 2013; Grasseni et al. 2013; Migliore et al. 2014) Popular Purchase Groups (in Italian, “*Gruppi di Acquisto Popolare*”), CSAs (Cox et al. 2008; Flora and Bregendahl 2012), farmers’ markets (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000; Vignali et al. 2006), regional products, roadside sales, production codes, food miles, local shops, organic catering, consumer cooperatives, labelled products, bio-districts, farm shops, e-commerce, collective supermarkets, certified productions, products of origin, traditional products, and so on (Dansero and Puttilli 2014). Before giving a wider definition of what is commonly known as AFNs, in the next section, the main studies on these emerging experiences will be presented.

2.5.1 The international debate around Alternative Food Networks

The international literature around AFNs is varied and overlaps different fields. Based on ‘quality turn’ (Goodman 2004; Harvey et al. 2004) in food geographies, the debate became increasingly focused on exploring how food practices have been changing the relations between food and territory, between producers and consumers, and between large and small retail groups, etc.

Starting from the 1990s, the debate was based on food-sustainability literature. AFNs were considered an antagonist of the large-scale food system, centred on industrial production, long food supply chains, and GDOs distribution (Mackenzie 1990). The

development of alternative food geographies (Murdoch 2000) was based on multiple issues which diversify depending on the context: food safety and quality, malnutrition, values of food, and social and environmental externalities (Harvey et al. 2004). Moreover, new approaches to food provisioning that offer a practical pathway for rural development have been studied. In this sense, Murdoch et al. (2000) conceptualized growing consumer interest in food provenance as offering small-scale producers the potential to collectively build up what they called SFSCs. Suddenly, the studies around AFNs raised issues in relation to the concept of *social embeddedness*. This propagated the idea that economic behaviour is embedded in and mediated by, a complex and extensive web of social relations (Sage 2003; Winter 2003). This concept provided a useful conceptual tool to explore the complex interplay between the economic and social dimensions (Maye and Kirwan 2010, p. 4).

From the 2000s, the literature on AFNs has improved the analysis with empirical case-studies statistics including localised and short supply chains, farmer markets, CSAs, community gardens and organic schemes (Hinrichs 2003; Jarosz 2008), as well as theoretical perspectives used to study these alternatives (Sonnino and Marsden 2006; Tregear 2011), and studies upon labelling and branding initiatives, public procurement and so on (Holloway et al. 2007).

The next body of studies has been related to the 'quality turn', especially this strand of studies has investigated, especially in Europe the attempt to link products and places (Lamine 2015; Van Der Ploeg et al. 2000; Watts et al. 2005). The dualistic perspective within AFNs was analysed, gradually leading to a vision in which AFNs can be considered as possible ways to organise the food system in a competitive coexistence together with the conventional agri-food system (Marsden et al. 2000; Sonnino and Marsden 2006).

Another relevant field of studies is related to sustainable agriculture and organic food. During the last years, there has been a gradual convergence between AFN and conventional food production, distribution, and consumption. Like fair trade, organic food indeed is considered as a strong symbol of alternative food provisioning, but it is also criticized for commercial success and expansion within the conventional food system, and the related use of standards and labels used by the mainstream distribution actors (Kearney 2010). The great distribution has intercepted consumers' needs regards quality, safety, and specificity of food products. Today big companies of distribution can offer a large variety of products. The success of large-scale retails is the just-in-time

policy. Any product is perfect, clean, fresh, and ready to be consumed (Morgan et al. 2008). But, as Dansero and Puttilli stated (Dansero and Puttilli 2014), it is not necessary to argue whether supermarkets that sell organic products should be considered or not as AFNs. This tendency is better known as ‘conventionalization’ of organic food (Fouilleux and Loconto 2017; Goldberger 2011; Guthman 2004). Worried about the risk to be co-opted by the Market, or simply to distinguish themselves from this mainstream ‘occupation’ of their ‘niches’, AFNs, as well as small farmers organizations, have developed alternative forms of guarantee labelled as Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGSs). These new forms of guarantee organic production starting from Latin America have been spreading also in the Global North (Francisco and Radomsky 2009; John et al. 2005; Källander 2008; Lamine et al. 2012; Sacchi et al. 2015; Wilkinson et al. 2008; Zanasi et al. 2009). These tools have been adopted by AFNs to strengthen both themselves and to reconnect consumers and producers which get back their reciprocal responsibility, which use to be denied among the global mainstream market (Young 2004, 2006).

Finally, another strand of publications around AFNs have been implemented linking political consumerism studies (Bossy 2014; Forno and Ceccarini 2006; Micheletti and Follesdal 2007; Stolle et al. 2005) to the burgeoning emergence of agri-food alliances, intended as ‘new’ spaces of democracy, oriented to the construction of sustainable citizenships (Forno et al. 2015; Micheletti and Stolle 2012) and civic food networks (Brunori et al. 2012; Grasseni et al. 2013; Graziano and Forno 2012; Lyson 2004; Renting et al. 2012).

2.5.2 Defining Alternative Food Networks

AFNs emerged as niches which encompassed ethical experiences defined as local, correct, profitable, sustainable and qualitative (Feenstra 1997). AFNs are usually based on smaller, more environmentally aware producers and retailers who place their products in local markets with the support of their consumers (Goodman et al. 2013; Goodman and Goodman 2009; Morgan 2009). AFNs have been used to redefine the relationship between consumers and producers within the markets. Within these networks trust relationships between different actors are built around the issue of food quality and sometimes a ‘moral economy perspective’ (Morgan et al. 2008). Within AFNs both producers and consumers discursively contract their cooperative efforts as alternative forms of resistance to the traditional marketplace (Dixon 1999, 2010).

AFNs are non-conventional channels of food distribution, which connect

producers and consumers, promote a new concept of ‘food quality’ that respects local economy productions and eating traditions, sustain social development and business relations based on trust and community engagement (Venn et al. 2006). However, what it has been witnessing in literature is continuous defining and re-defining what AFNs are or what they are not. Following another contribution from Goodman and Goodman, what emerges is the strict relationship between production and consumption, that are closely tied in some different dimension:

New and rapidly mainstreaming spaces in the food economy defined by –among other things—the explosion of organic, Fair Trade, and local, quality, and premium speciality foods. In these networks, it is claimed that the production and consumption of food are more closely tied together spatially, economically, and socially; however, the politics and practices of Alternative Food Networks have more recently come under critical scrutiny from geographers and others as a narrow and weakly politicized expression of middle and upper-class angst (Goodman and Goodman 2009, p. 1)

Moreover, referring to their relations and their differences toward the conventional food system, what scholars have noted is that the main difference between dominant supply system (or conventional food networks, CFNs) and the alternative one concerned physical and ideological meaning.

In the agricultural sector, said globalisation involved the mass standardised agro-industrial production model considered socially unjust, environmentally unsustainable and ‘risky’ from the point of view of health and food consumption (Dansero and Puttilli 2014, p. 628).

More specifically, thanks to previous contributions (Morgan et al. 2008; Sonnino and Marsden 2006), these differences between CFNs and AFNs have been schematically resumed in Figure 1.

Type of spatial relationships	DELOCALIZATION Conventional agri-food	RELOCALIZATION Alternative agri-food
Producer relations	Intensive production 'lock-in'; declining farm prices and bulk input suppliers to corporate processors/retailers.	Emphasis on 'quality'; producers finding strategies to capture value-added; new producer associations; new socio-technical spatial niches developing.
Consumer relations	Absence of spatial reference of product; no encouragement to understand food origin; space-less products.	Variable consumer knowledge of place, production, product, and the spatial conditions of production; from face-to-face to at-a-distance purchasing.
Processing and retailing	Traceable but privately regulated systems of processing and retailing; not transparent; standardized v. spatialized products.	Local/regional processing and retailing outlets; highly variable, traceable, and transparent; spatially referenced and designed qualities.
Institutional frameworks	Highly bureaucratized public and private regulation; hygienic model reinforcing standardization; national CAP support (Pillar I).	Regional development and local authority facilitation in new network and infrastructure building; local and regional CAP support (Pillar II).
Associational frameworks	Highly technocratic—at a distance—relationships; commercial/aspatial relationships; lack of trust or local knowledge.	Relational, trust-based, local, and regionally grounded; network rather than linear-based; competitive but sometimes collaborative.

CHANGING COMPETITIVE SPATIAL BOUNDARIES

Figure 1 Conventional vs Alternative Agri-Food Systems¹⁹

Through this scheme, it is easy to understand how these two different paradigms differ in their relational, institutional, and associational frameworks, as well as the opposite nature of social actors' relationships.

As has revealed before, in literature we can observe different forms of AFNs. This classification is based on the nature and spatial distance between the consumption and production places. Indeed, AFNs can be classified following three different typologies of interaction between social actors: the first typology refers to the *face-to-face* interactions, where consumers and producers share physical co-presence in the same time and space; the second typology refers to *spatial proximity* interactions, where consumption and production use to take place in the same place/region; finally, there are AFNs based on *spatially extended* interactions, where producers and consumers are based in different places (sometimes, different continents, for example) and far away from each other. Some examples regarding the face-to-face modality can be farm shops, direct sales, food miles; concerning the spatial proximity, some examples could be farmers' market, SPGs, box schemes; and for the spatially extended, one of the most important examples could be the

¹⁹ Source: Morgan et al. (2008), *Worlds of Food*. Oxford Geographical and Environmental Studies. p. 72 and Sonnino and Marsden (2006), *Beyond the divide: rethinking relationships between alternative and conventional food networks in Europe*, *Journal of Economic Geography* 6, p. 195.

Fair Trade, Regional Brands, Ethical products.

SFSCs scale	Quality parameters	
	Regional-artisanal paramount	Ecological-natural paramount
Face-to-face (direct producers–consumers)	Typical products (e.g. speciality cheeses) On-farm processing Farm shops Farm producer	Organic box schemes Farmers' markets Organics
Proximate (some intermediation)	Farm-cottage foods Regional labels Wine routes Special events Local cuisine restaurants New cooperative marketing arrangements	Free-range GMO-free
Extended (high intermediation)	Designation of signs (CPDO-PGI) Fair trade products Ethical products Regional brands in supermarkets	Retailer organics (+70 % in UK) Integrated pest management systems Free-range GMO-free 'Slow food products'

Figure 2 AFNs and SFSCs scale²⁰

What emerges, from this multidimensional matrix (Figure 2), are two important tensions. Firstly, regional-artisanal or ecological-natural quality product definitions can be adopted by a distinct type of supply chains. Secondly, the evidence suggests the complex evolution of the social and economic diversity and separation in producer-consumer relations within the alternative sector, while the conventional sector is also rapidly developing product differentiation, often based on the relatively cheap oversupply of industrialised inputs and related 'surplus-vents' (Morgan et al. 2008).

One of the most important features of AFNs is that the main goal of these initiatives is to re-spatialise and re-localise food (Feagan 2007; Sonnino and Marsden 2006), because they introduce a spatial reorganisation of food networks, which does not necessarily privilege the local scale, but takes place simultaneously on more than one scale at the same time. Social actors use AFNs to produce new relational scales and contexts, that are less focused on the agro-industrial food system. Re-socialization of food is the intrinsic feature that distinguishes AFNs from the CFNs, by emphasising the role played by context components (environmental, social, cultural and economic) and giving value to food in specific spaces/places, against the dominant regime described as

²⁰ Source: Morgan K. et al. (2008), *Worlds of Food*. Oxford Geographical and Environmental Studies. p. 73

‘dehumanising’ and socially marginalising (Kneafsey et al. 2008; Sage 2003). The embeddedness appears like the most important characteristic of AFNs. The reference to a specific context, in terms of social, environmental, local and cultural features, defines the specificity and the uniqueness of each experience (Sage 2003). The concept of embeddedness has been discussed for a long time in the social sciences (Granovetter 1985). It interprets the link between AFNs and the context where relations between consumers and producers take place (Hinrichs 2000; Winter 2003).

Even the perception of the food quality characterizes and distinguishes AFNs from CFNs. However, as recent studies around ‘conventionalisation’ of food production, especially regarding organic food production and distributions, have been demonstrating how social actors involved within these networks need more guarantees. Whether the conventional agri-food system adopts certifications based on ‘objective’ criteria, norms, and normative framework institutionally constructed, AFNs, so the social actors involved, found their assurance on trust and ‘domestic conventions’ (Fouilleux and Loconto 2017; Goodman et al. 2012; Guthman 2004). Food quality, among AFNs, is granted through a multi-dimensional process, that does not exclude certifications, or any other ‘objective’ ways of guarantee, where the universally adopted is third-party certification (Sacchi et al. 2015). Parallely, grassroots and a peer-to-peer way to guarantee food quality have been developed by producers’ groups and AFNs. Groups Certification, Internal Control Systems (ICSs), and Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGSs) are a few examples of alternative tools implemented by these networks. This last, for instance, is one of the most used ways of guarantee within some of AFNs initiatives, especially among the developing countries (Källander 2008; Pugas et al. 2017; Rover 2011, 2013; Rover et al. 2017; Sacchi et al. 2015).

Despite the problems to universally define AFNs, we have been witnessing a continuous growth of such initiatives. In Italy, for instance, the phenomenon of SPGs testifies this fact. Several studies have been carried out on the side of consumption and political consumerism (Brunori et al. 2012; Cembalo et al. 2013; Dansero and Puttilli 2014; Forno et al. 2013b; Grasseni et al. 2013; Migliore et al. 2012). Less, it has been investigated on the production side (Migliore, Caracciolo, et al. 2014).

However, the studies about AFNs risk to fall into the trap of ideological and ‘romanticised’ definitions (Hinrichs 2000). On a formal perspective, it means considering a priori AFNs more right, sustainable and equal, ignoring the influences of power relations, externalities and inequalities (Goodman 2004; Tregear 2011), as well as

considering certain spatial dimensions as specific to AFNs. On the other hand, from a substantial perspective, another problem that could emerge among the AFNs studies is to consider embeddedness as a synonym of alternativeness (Higgins et al. 2008). The term ‘embedding’, even if it was used by many scholars to analyse the AFNs, appears nowadays unsuitable to describe the characteristics of AFNs (Penker 2006).

2.6 Summary

AFNs have been presented as spaces of innovation, social embeddedness, the social construction of new markets, and collective action. These initiatives are groups of collective action which try to abandon the logic and conventional markets norms. They re-build markets starting from the trust-relationship and the closeness of direct relationships between involved social actors. They share knowledge and common views of reality. Their approach overlaps the definition of social movements as networks presented in this chapter (della Porta and Diani 2006). Based on environmental, ethical, and economic issues, AFNs act as a new ‘economic social movement’ within both the Global North and Global South (Niederle 2014). These networks indeed are movements which try to bring into society a change, without adopting ‘classical’ forms of social movements’ repertoire of action. Indeed, on the political level, through the promotion of political consumerism, AFNs experiment also innovative models of environmental regulatory governance based on voluntary action and participation. Instead of imposing a certain kind of behaviour, AFNs aim to support and promote more sustainable development in practice (Forno 2018). They are not protesting’s movements. It is also shared the idea that these experiences, through solidarity exchanges, support strategies of direct social action (Bosi and Zamponi 2015) such as the sharing information, the awareness’ increasing, education, and lobbying. AFNs are encompassed indeed under the concept of SCMOs, which try to go beyond capitalist setting by encouraging the establishment of direct relations among social actors, based on solidarity and reciprocity, like the moral economies (Fourcade and Healy 2007; Sayer 2000), opposite to the capitalist economy, which is oriented toward maximization and profitability. AFNs, in sum, try to bring back the social dimension of marketing within society and try to re-embed and re-connect people to take responsibility for what concerns the consumption behaviour (Young 2004, 2006).

3. Approach, tools, and methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological design of this dissertation, which closely relates to the theoretical framework which will be presented in the next paragraph. Specifically, it will be specified how the theories presented in the previous chapters will be practically analysed. Therefore, the three dimensions of analysis will be considered: the micro-meso, and the macro dimension. In other words, variables related to actors' motivations, their way of collective organizing, and how the macrostructures influence both individual and organizational dynamics, will be considered. After the presentation of the theoretical framework, the research design will be described, specifying what has been done, how, and its timing. Moreover, it will be shown how it has been created the sample and the selected case-studies – the province of Bergamo (Northern Italy) and the micro-region of Grande Florianópolis (Southern Brazil). These last will be also deeply presented in a separated section, where information regarding the economic, political, and cultural/social features of the two considered contexts will be provided and put them in relation to the theoretical approach. Finally, this chapter will end with a general presentation of the actors which have been improving AFNs strengthening among the two territories.

3.2 Theoretical framework

The reason why theories about the financial and economic crisis, social movements, and AFNs are connected, is that AFNs seem to be a clear answer to the contemporary food system emergencies. As I mentioned above, nowadays, individuals are living (Bauman 2013b; Beck 1992; Sennett 2007) in a more individualized society, where precariousness of life (Bauman 2004) has been affecting all the Global World. Fear, poverty, and the loss of values (Castells 2011; Castells et al. 2012) are pushing people to ask for more security and protection. This is clear if we look at what is going on at the global level. Far right movements in Europe, the US, and South America are increasing and getting more and more consensus from citizens (della Porta 2015). At the same time, alternative practices (Castells et al. 2012), and direct social actions (Bosi and Zamponi 2015). that are trying to give another response to these problems, are emerging. AFNs are one of them.

As I argued in the previous chapter, one of the most important features of AFNs

are relations between social actors involved in these kinds of processes which are built around solidarity, ethical values, and trust. Social actors engaged in AFNs have the opportunity to share common visions of reality, sources, and as Diani argued about social movements networks (Diani 2013), both direct and indirect links can influence the emergence or limitation of networks of collective action. Among AFNs, people could create strong or weak ties, depending on the engagement's degree (Granovetter 1973). Following the conceptualization of Diani (Diani 1992a, 2003, 2004) on social movements, we are dealing with a social movement where there is a clearly identified opponent (e.g. industrial agri-food system), dense informal network (AFNs are characterized mainly by networks between the consumers and producers), and collective identities. Of course, AFNs are not all the same. They could differ in terms of successability and long-lasting life. Other differences may be related either on how various experiences can be constrained by and in turn affect by political and economic structures which they are embedded. Other variables which can differentiate AFNs are their form of internal organization, sustainability, as well as the pre-existence of other forms of solidarity/political collective action, as well as actors' motivation to act. For all these reasons, this research project aims to consider micro-macro dynamics, so, analysing actors' motivations, their history, their profiles, at micro level, while, at macro level, local, national, and international contexts will be considered, taking in to account such policies which ease or constrain the strength of AFNs. Moreover, specific attention has been given to the meso-level analysis, especially investigating the role played by pre-existing social movement organizations, on projects of alternative economies, and on the impact of professionals, professionalism, and academia. In this sense, the international literature on social movements provides useful theoretical approaches to study collective action. However, as it has been previously described, AFNs act within the Market and create new imaginaries at the cultural level. The relation between culture and social networks has long been stressed (Pachucki and Breiger 2010). Moreover, the relations among the actors are 'culturally constructed' (Mische 2003). Individuals have different cultural values that bring them to action. According to Snow and Benford (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988), what distinguishes social movements is their attitude to frame the collective action around political, economic and cultural issues. Framing activity is very important to social movement diffusion processes.

When only one party in the process – either the transmitter or the adopter – takes an active role in the process, or when the conditions of similarity or compatibility between transmitters and potential adopters are not given but are problematic and in need of construction (Benford and Snow 2000, p. 627)

Due to this, for studying AFNs it has been chosen to enlarge the Political (State) Opportunity Structure (POS) framework (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2004), toward a wider perspective that considers also Economic (Market) Opportunity Structure (EOS) and Cultural Opportunity Structure (COS) following the Wahlström and Peterson (2006) attempt for studying animal-rights movements in Sweden, being AFNs firstly economic and solidarity example of partnership between consumers and producers in a specific context.

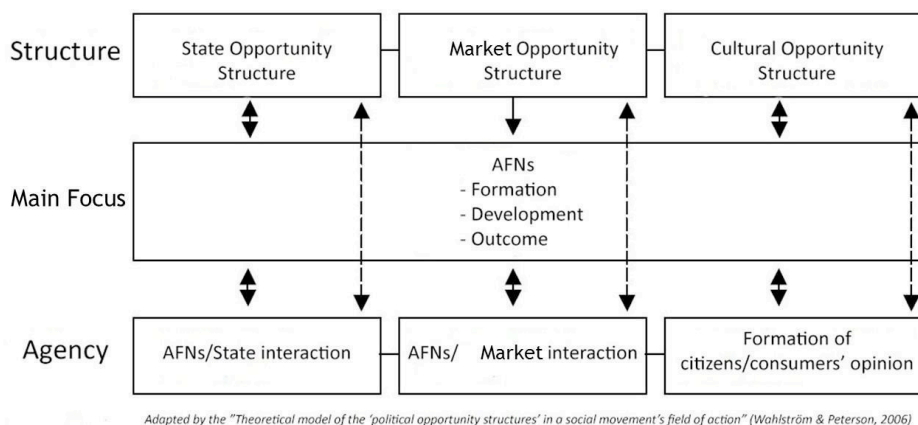


Figure 3 Theoretical approach. Adaptation of Wahlström and Peterson's model (2006)

As it has been reported in Figure 3 above, there is not only the structural level but also the agency level to explicit the concrete interactions between AFNs and their environment. Corresponding to the societal spheres, the structural level is divided into three different POS, representing the state, economic and cultural structures. The elements of the structures are not completely independent. A change in State opportunities (SOS) could influence the Market, vice versa, a change in public opinion (COS) could have influences on the market, consequently on the state action. The arrows between structures and AFNs underline the impact of structures on AFNs and vice versa (when are both directed). The structures influence AFNs also indirectly (dashed arrows) through their influence on the outcomes of the AFNs interaction with their environment. Thus, each structure could be treated as a single variable for analytical goals. This does, however, have some important methodological implications regarding how then to

capture the studied phenomenon. Indeed, the structures can be open, where more openness facilitate the emergence of a specific movement and being effective toward the political system. The structures could also vary from space to space and from time to time. To assess the openness of State Opportunity Structures (SOS) as McAdam (1996) has examined, it should be considered these following set of aspects: 1) the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system; 2) the stability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity; 3) the presence of elite allies; 4) the state's capacity and propensity for repression. (McAdam, 1996, p. 27). Moreover, for what concerns the economic opportunity structures (EOS) as Wahlström and Peterson have already experienced (2006) three set of factors will be considered: 1) the availability of cognitive and economic resources for change in the target organization/branch; 2) as regards the multiplicity of stake -seekers/-holders of the sustainable agriculture industry/sector, the analysis can begin by noting its allies among the political elites; 3) the capacity of this industry to lobbying and to organize counter-mobilization. Finally, concerning the cultural opportunity structures will be considered these following variables: 1) the mass media framing of sustainable agriculture; 2) the ability of AFNs and sustainable agriculture movements to create public opinion, 3) Assessing the way of exerting social influence on these claims.

Being this dissertation oriented to investigate the role of food to improve alternative markets and collective action within the two considered cities, what has been done was to study whether and in which way, AFNs (considering collective purchase groups and farmers' markets) have been working to re-socialize the Market along the financial and economic crisis of the last ten years (2008-2018). The idea, referring to what has been displayed in the previous chapters, is that the current multidimensional crisis and the neoliberal politics have been affecting the State, the Market, and the Society (citizens). Contextually, SMOs, starting from the 1990s, have been adopting other forms of political action, such as political consumerism. In this sense, AFNs represent a clear example of the achievements, at least at the local level, obtained by these SMOs, especially after the demobilization of the GJM. Included under the definition of what in literature has been defined as SCMO, AFNs, therefore, provide a possible answer to two main orders of problem: the increasing conventionalization of food markets, and, on the other hand, starting the commercial relationship, they seem to re-socialize both the Market and the social life, sharing views, values, and concrete political actions. All these ideas, which have been highly described in the previous chapters, have been graphically

represented in Figure 4. This last resumes the main above-mentioned concepts and tries to provide the general problematization behind this dissertation.

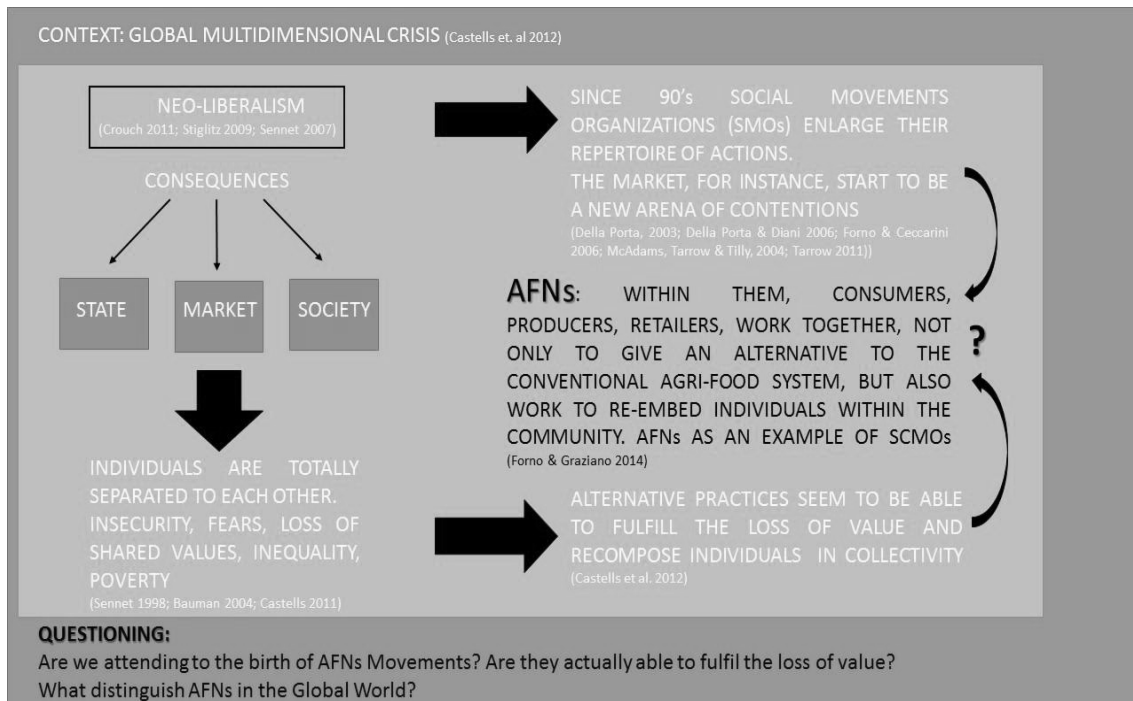


Figure 4 Conceptual Framework

After these theoretical considerations, this chapter follows presenting the research design of this dissertation, which will be extensively discussed in the next paragraph, where all steps, tools, and practical adopted methods will be deeply described.

3.3 Research design

The two case-studies have been chosen because of their geographical/territorial extensions, the presence of AFNs among the urban area of the capitals, and for the crucial role displayed by the academia's personnel, for what concerns the strengthening of alternative local food systems.

The research plan has been framed following the so-called 'pilot work' approach (Sampson 2001, 2004). To be more specific, it has been decided to split the research plan in four separated moments to better understand the context and to adjust the research strategy. The initial idea was to structure my research in just two different moments: the field works within the context, thus it meant to stay in Brazil for a medium-long term to implement field work. However, I preferred to split the research into four separated and alternating moments of research. The first two pilot works in Italy and Brazil, and

subsequently, the other two field works steps, of course, developed in both considered contexts. This decision has been guided by the aim to gather information and knowledge about economic, political, and cultural institutions which feature the two territorial contexts which I chose to study. Thanks to this choice, along with the data gathering process, for both pilot works and subsequent field works, alternating the two selected cases was strictly useful to deeply understand each one. Precisely, the preliminary step on the field for both contexts – as I anticipated – it was something like a ‘pilot work’. According to some evidence in social sciences, this strategy has been founded helpful to get a better understanding of both local contexts. As Sampson has stated (2004), a pilot work could help a researcher to develop the research design in the following time. Many ethnographic researchers have recognized these benefits either implicitly by regretting a lack of preparation prior to entering the field or explicitly by utilizing them in a relatively undocumented (Sampson 2001). As Sampson argued (2004), the pilot work could help the researcher to redefine the design of the main study. Even though this strategy is more commonly used in anthropology and by ethnographers, due to the research tools (e.g. confidential interviews, observations, field-notes, tape-recording, etc.), this strategy has helped me to review my previous proposal. Alternating the research work between Italy and Brazil – where I selected the two case-studies – it was useful for building up a more critic way of thinking about AFNs. It let me able to reflect deeply and I could coherently formalise the research questions. Then, after this preliminary investigation on the field, I properly implemented investigation tasks. Specifically, the research was divided as follows:

1. A preliminary one, the ‘pilot work’, for collecting environmental and historical useful knowledge to better understand how and what could be investigated. It has started in Italy, from October 2016 and January 2017, and I have suddenly implemented this preliminary step in Brazil, from February to March 2017);

2. Then, after the first experience in the Brazilian field, the field work has been developed. During this step, I collected data regarding both AFNs evolution and information regarding farmers involved in AFNs. The Italian field work has started in June 2017 until the beginning of August 2017. The Brazilian field work has subsequently begun from the end of August until December 2017.

3.3.1 The 'pilot work'

The investigation on the Italian case has started years ago. Specifically, the first research experience on this topic has regarded the construction process of a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) in Lombardy, starting from January 2015. For this research, I joined since the beginning all the steps which the organizing committees implemented to structure this participatory certification, focusing the investigation on the Bergamo and Como territories. Specifically, for this research, which finished in March 2016, I adopted the following methodological tools: **1 collective interviews** with the general committee, **2 focus groups** with the considered two local committees, participant observation and field-notes during the committees' briefings (with the two considered territories and the general committee), and finally the analysis of guarantee's protocols which were chosen to create the certification (logo) "*C'è Campo*²¹". In addition, **2 telephonic interviews** have been done with key-actors, which were important to collect specific information about the Italian panorama around organic certification.

However, referring to this research project, I started to collect preliminary data starting from October 2016, in conjunction with the beginning of the year of my PhD course. Regarding the Brazilian case-study, the research interest emerged contextually to the development of the literature review around both AFNs and PGSs in Latin America. Analysing previous works, I found a direct link between the European and Latin American tradition around these issues. Thus, I chose to consider both in a comparative perspective Bergamo, and Florianópolis, due to their geographical/territorial extensions, the increasing framing of AFNs among the urban area of the capitals, and for the crucial commitment displayed by the academia's personnel, for what concerns the strengthening of alternative local food systems. However, before comparing the analysed territories, in this section, I will describe how it has been structured the research design.

- *The 'pilot work' in Italy*

In October 2016, I started to join directly the monthly briefing of the local Solidarity Economy Network, Sustainable Citizenship (in Italian, "*Cittadinanza Sostenibile*") to better understand the dynamics between the actors and the next steps. During December 2016 and January 2017, I made 14 in-depth interviews with producers involved within SFSCs initiatives, to better understand what it could be studied, and

²¹ <http://www.cecampo.org/> last accessed 06 July 2018.

which was the farmers' perception toward AFNs, economic crisis and local food system. Then, I recontact some of them to make about this phenomenon within the Province of Bergamo. Indeed, I videotaped 11 interviews with producers of the local SFSCs. This work has been suddenly presented to them and to the public contextually to one of the farmers' markets which they use to participate. Then, it has been published online, and now it is available on YouTube²². The research timing of the preliminary step among the Italian considered case-study has been graphically resuming as follows (Figure 5).

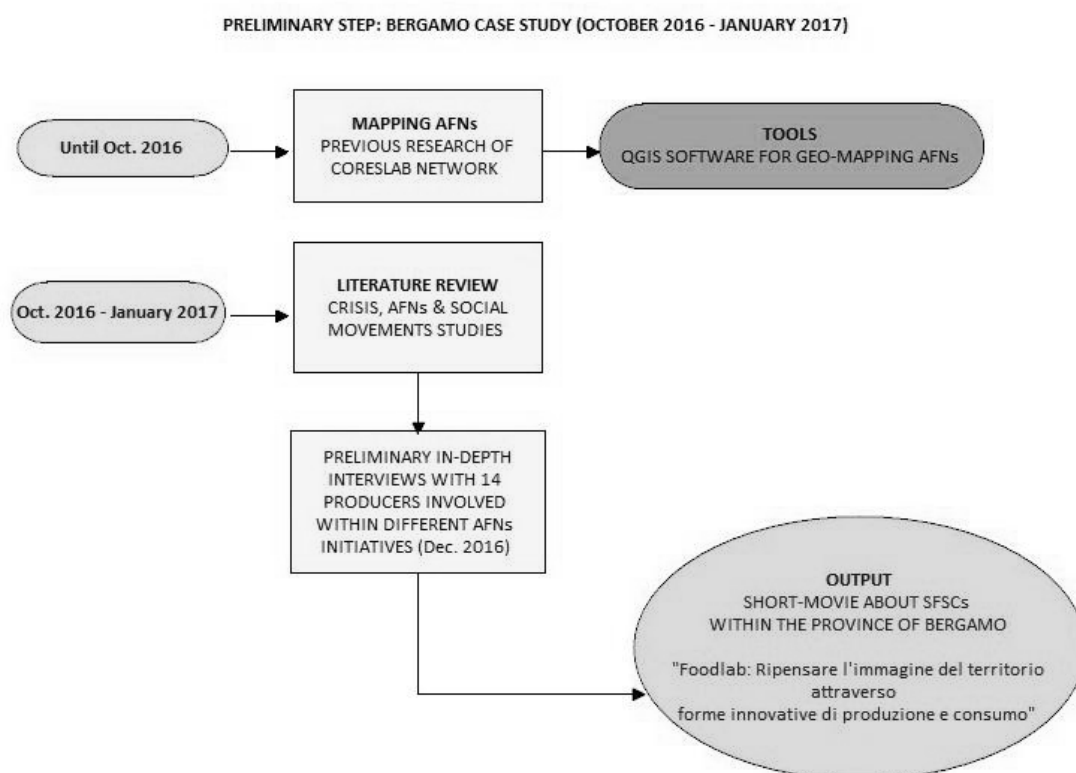


Figure 5 Research timing in Bergamo. Pilot work

- The 'pilot work' in Brazil

In February 2017, I moved to Brazil. During the Brazilian pilot work, I was engaged within the LACAF Laboratory of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC). Thanks to the Prof. Dr Oscar José Rover, I could share my project with the other PhD candidates and master's degree students, which are engaged within the LACAF Laboratory. They helped me to collect useful information and materials. With Prof.

²²<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46f7LGNKfo> last accessed 10 March 2017.

Rover, I was also engaged within two briefing of the Cepagro NGO that organizes the weekly farmers' market, and it was helpful, because I met producers, discovered dynamics among the actors, and got useful contacts to improve the sample that I will build in the next months. With a PhD candidate, I have also attended a monthly briefing of an Ecovida's group of producers. Furthermore, I attended a meeting of a collective purchasing group of Sambaqui neighbourhood on 18th of March of 2017. All these opportunities helped me to get a clear idea toward whom is directly committed within AFNs. The LACAF and Cepagro staff had contributed to giving me crucial suggestions for developing my research. Indeed, thanks to their contribution, I decided to focus my attention on the 'leaders' of each experience and/or stakeholder engaged within AFNs initiatives, at least for collecting data related to political, economic and cultural structures, which AFNs are interrelated, but it will be explained in detail in the next sub-paragraph. Overall, during this pilot work, I could achieve the following materials:

- a collective interview with an Ecovida's group of producers ("*Núcleo de Biguaçu*")
- two in-depth interviews with the administrator of Hippo Supermarket (based in the city centre of Florianópolis) and a couple of family farmers' that sells organic products to him
- three videotaped interviews with two producers of two different farmers' markets (City Centre and Lagoa de Conceição) and another one with the boss of the "*Feira da Lagoa da Conceição*" farmers' market (the oldest organic fair of the Santa Catarina State).
- I also made confidential interviews during other visits, especially with volunteers, producers, group of fishermen, and activists of Cepagro NGOs.

In general, I could visit:

- four farmers' markets
- one indoor organic market, and another supermarket.

In conclusion, during all these visits, I took photographs, I made videos, and got field-notes to remember and reassemble the observations. I chose to use an ethnographic approach during this step, most of all, to get a clearer idea of each initiative that I visited, and in general to have a wider knowledge about the context.

To sum the Brazilian pilot work, I graphically resumed all that it has been done as Figure 6 shows.

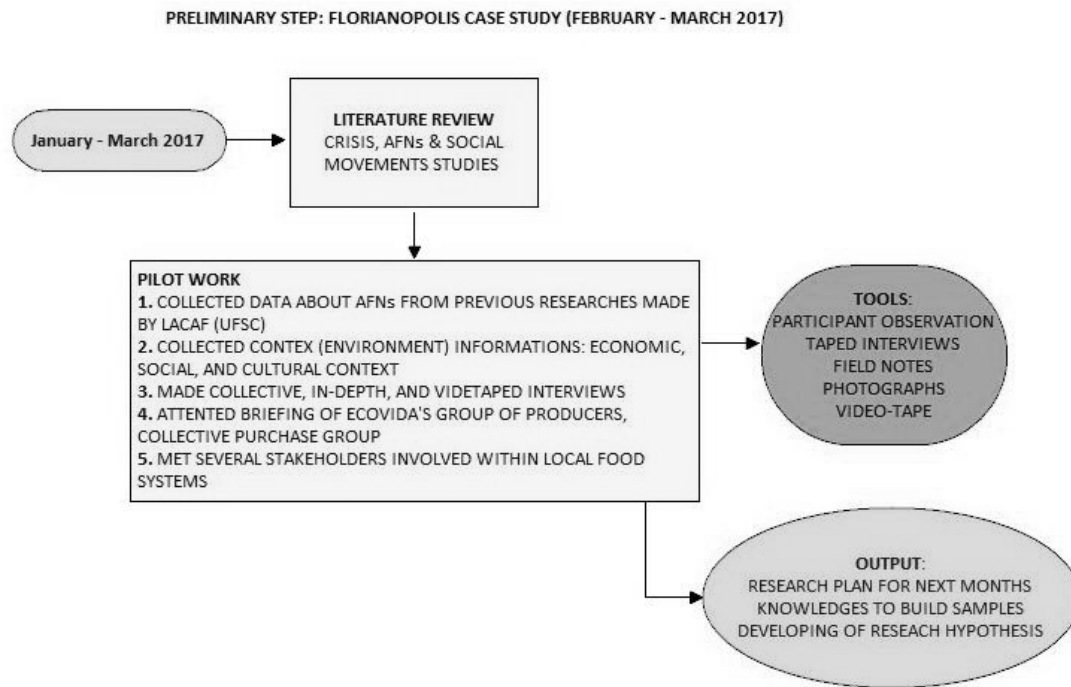


Figure 6 Research timing in Florianópolis. Preliminary step

3.3.2 *The field work*

Using a qualitative approach, the field work has been implemented along the second and the third year of my PhD. To be precise, the Italian field work has started in June 2017, and it finished at the beginning of August 2017. The Brazilian field work has subsequently begun from the end of August until December 2017. Thanks to the environmental data collected during the ‘pilot work’ in both territories, it was possible to develop the research design. Specifically, it has been chosen to consider two separated samples for submitting interviews. On the one hand, **local stakeholders**, directly involved in AFNs initiatives and special observant, that are leading or developing local food strategies and policies, were sampled. They have been selected firstly considering their importance in the local food system development and their direct engagement in some AFNs initiatives. With them, I chose to adopt in-depth interviews as a research tool to go deep into the **evolution of agriculture** in both contexts. Then it was asked to the stakeholders some question about the **current local food systems** and the relations between **political, economic, and cultural structures** toward AFNs. Finally, it was briefly covered **future forecast** about possible evolutions of the local and national perspective, in terms of sustainable agriculture. On the other hand, to investigate mechanism through which people get collectively engaged within AFNs, it has been

chosen to submit – in both territories – to **local farmers involved in AFNs** initiatives a brief questionnaire in form of a semi-structured interview. The sample – in both contexts – has been chosen respecting several criteria like the **provenance** within the considered geographical area, their **engagement** in AFN localized in the urban area, then it was necessary to choose, as varied as it was possible, farmers from **different AFNs initiatives**, maintaining a reasonable balance of **variety** within the sample. The semi-structured interviews submitted to these farmers had a different focus: firstly, it had asked them several questions about their **personal profile** (education, income, sales volume, production, etc.). Then, I left free them to talk to me about their own **story**, the story of their activities, family. Moreover, were investigated the **relationship** between consumers and other producers, their **engagement** in politics, social movements, their inclination toward cooperation and friendship with other local farmers. Further, I explored their relation respect the political, cultural and economic **institutions**. Finally, I asked them some question about the current economic and social crisis, especially toward their feelings, their own experiences, and then I conclude questioning their perception of the future.

Generally, I realized **27 in-depth interviews** with local stakeholders (13 among the Italian case-study and 14 among the Brazilian one). Concerning the semi-structured interviews, I finally considered **50 interviews** with local farmers (25 per each case-study), even though, at the beginning of field work in Italy, I made 4 more interviews as trials. All the respondents were interviewed once. The interviews were conducted in Italian and Portuguese. The extracts used in this dissertation have been translated by the author.

- *The field work in Italy*

For the Italian case-study, thanks to previously acquired expertise, the selected territory of the Province of Bergamo was easier to sample local stakeholders. Indeed, most of the members of the local Food Policy Council (*Tavolo Agricoltura*) were interviewed, so it was relatively easy to achieve the goal. Members of different farmers unions, local politicians, members of collective consumers' initiatives, farmers cooperatives, Slow Food, the local solidarity economy network, and other SMOs were also interviewed. Concerning the farmers' sample, it has been created starting from 6 different types of AFNs initiatives: farmers' markets of Slow Food movement, Solidarity economy network, farmers unions initiatives and the BioDistretto, together with producers strictly committed with SPGs, and producers that are not engaged in collective

initiatives, but which use to create a direct relationship with consumers through direct-sales.

- *The field work in Brazil*

In Brazil, to build up the local stakeholders' sample, I chose to follow the 'snowballing' approach. It was necessary to get preliminary information about whom could be key-observants about AFNs development and sustainable agriculture. Thanks to the contribution of other local researchers and asking from time to time to the people interviewed, it was possible to build up a comparable sample of key-stakeholders. Concerning the farmers' sample, it has first been considered the Solidarity Economy Network of Rede Ecovida, being one of the most important organizations which collectively engaged sustainable farmers. Thus, most of the farmers which have participated in my research come from this network being a sort of catalyst for producers' collective action. So, I had to begin with some important actors involved in this network to get contacts and for building the sample. Following the 'snowballing' approach, step by step I could create a well-mixed sample of farmers engaged in urban AFNs. I could intercept farmers from 4 different farmers market, other 2 committed with CSAs and SPGs, and other ones that are directly selling their products, being accurate as much as I could respect the Italian sample.

As stated above, the sequential succession, related to the field work improvement in Italy and in Brazil, it was useful for building up a more critic way of thinking about AFNs. It let me able to reflect deeply about the research questions, and I could coherently formalise the question list. It was also strictly important to interpret the interviews. Having already studied Italian people, I had a clearer idea of which aspects could be studied and faced with Brazilian respondents, and at the same time, I could start to compare findings from Italian interviews meanwhile the Brazilian field work has been implementing.

3.3.3 Interpretative approach and data analysis

Due to the theoretical approach, the research objectives and questions, I chose to focus on both main actors of AFNs and farmers, because they could represent and report meanings, feelings, and habits of each group in which they identify. As I specified in the previous paragraph, I chose to apply a theoretical approach which partially overlaps the enlarged Political Opportunity Structures model as Wahlström and Peterson have used

for studying animalist movements in Sweden (Wahlström and Peterson 2006). The most complicated aspect to study AFNs through the social movements' lens is that they are economic initiatives and operate within the market. They do not use contentions to raise issues. Operating within the market, they are trying to make a change within the supply chain, acting such as economic stakeholder. Even if they could appear such as individualistic action, led by profit values, what distinguishes them from conventional economic actors, is that they want to enlarge as much as possible their action sharing knowledge and behaviours. It goes without saying that they are initiatives for profits, but in meantime, they are trying to operate as cultural and political innovators. Analysing SPGs, for instance, what has emerged is that they could be interpreted as spaces of innovation and education (Forno et al. 2015; Hankins and Grasseni 2014).

The enlarged Opportunity Structures framework seems to be able to analyse AFNs from a multilevel perspective. By collecting values, meaning, and will of each selected actor, the framing analysis will be useful to understand how AFNs are evolving. In this research project, I used framing analysis to identify and articulate, economic, and cultural developments as opportunities for action and change (Wahlström and Peterson 2006), stepping back to the 'political opportunity structure' conceptualization.

Coherently to this, I planned to use both in-depth and semi-structured set of interviews to submit to strategic actors and farmers, as it was specified in the previous paragraph. Through open questions, it was possible to collect meanings, ideas, and motivations behind these phenomena. This strategy was coherent to what it has specified in the theoretical framework about the micro-macro dynamics. Moreover, to improve reliability, I used the core framing elements such as references, and I developed the research in a more inductive coding strategy, letting collected data to tell me on its own.

Moreover, due to the social movements' conceptualization as networks (Diani 2013), I studied the farmers' relational framework with the support of supported by Social Network Analysis (SNA). This technique allowed me to draw the graphical structure and the links between actors in each context. SNA is a methodological and conceptual toolbox for measurement, systematic descriptions, and analysis of relational structures (della Porta 2014, p. 368). SNA enables researchers to highlight the meso-level of social analysis, filling the gap between structure and agency, and focusing attention on the relation between micro and macro dimensions (della Porta 2014). Networks are also interpreted as a vehicle of meaning, important for sharing values, frames and identities, depending on specific configurations of contexts, opportunities, and constraints of

collective action. Moving from theory to practice, thus applying SNA to my research, I drew a set of networks among the two contexts. This method helped to confirm the hypothesis for what concerns key-actors which are leading and influencing these kinds of SCMOs. To do so, I created – through Microsoft Excel – a matrix with ties indicated by interviewees. Then, the collected data have been treated with UCINET Software 6 and drawn with the NetDraw application.

For what regards all gathered data, it is necessary to specify that all the interviews that I have done (in-depth as well as the semi-structured ones) were tape-recorded (except one case, where the farmer had not allowed me to record) and then transcribed verbatim. Suddenly, I create a general file with Microsoft Excel to organize all materials, both gathered from in-depth interviews and semi-structured ones. Data from in-depth interviews were firstly coded, being centred on the key-stakeholders' point of view and collected in a dedicated matrix. Separately, I located all data gathered through semi-structured interviews in an SPSS matrix. Even though the analysis follows the qualitative approach, this software was strictly important to organize a considerable number of interviews. Further, I coded all the semi-structured interviews and I analysed them.

Below, I resumed in the research design (Table 1) to better fix the empirical approach strategy in both case studies.

Table 1 Research design

Research Step	Research Method	Province of Bergamo	Micro-region of Grande Florianópolis
Pilot Work	Environmental data collection and preliminary interviews	14 in-depth interviews with producers involved within farmers market. 11 of them were also videotaped later to produce a short movie about Short Food Supply Chain in Bergamo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 collective interview with an Ecovida's group of producers - 2 in-depth interviews with the administrator of a supermarket and a couple of family farmers - 4 videotaped interviews with two producers of two different farmers markets - confidential interviews with volunteers, producers, group of fishermen, and activists 4 four farmers markets, 2 organic supermarkets - Ethnography in 4 farmers markets, 2 organic supermarkets
Field work	In-depth interviews	13 in-depth interviews with key-observants committed in AFNs. All interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed verbatim.	14 in-depth interviews with key-observants committed in AFNs. All interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed verbatim.
	Semi-structured interviews	25 semi-structured interviews with farmers involved in urban AFNs initiatives. All interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed verbatim.	25 semi-structured interviews with farmers involved in urban AFNs initiatives. All interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed verbatim.

3.3.4 A reflection on the researcher role and research ethics

As Latour noted (2005) the researcher is crucial in the network, in a sense that the study contributes to the existence of the network. As a member of CoresNet Research Group²³, in the context of this dissertation, I embraced, as our Research Group uses to do, a community-engaged research approach, which involves a collaborative process between the researcher and community partner that creates and disseminates knowledge and creative expression with the goal of contributing to the discipline and strengthening the well-being of the community. Along these three years indeed, especially in Bergamo, being my hometown, but also in Florianópolis, I tried to be as much as possible closer to the local solidarity economy networks. I participated in some meetings of *Cittadinanza Sostenibile* and I subscribe to their newsletter to be constantly updated on their own activities. In Florianópolis, on the contrary, thanks to the engagement within the LACAF Laboratory, I could help local volunteers, farmers and consumers, to create an SPG, as well as I could participate to some meetings and workshops organized by the Rede Ecovida and the Cepagro NGO. I am aware of the risk to have been not at all neutral, but being close to them, it was useful to get contacts and create the sample through a ‘snowball’ approach.

Moreover, I hope I did an ‘ethical’ work for what concerns the research. Before interviewing people, I informed all of them by email, and suddenly by phone, about the general topic of the investigation. Being conscious about the sensibility of some information gathered from the respondents, I committed to treating the acquired information with the greatest possible care, and this both regarding the obtaining and analysis of the data, and the reports stemming from the acquired information. In the case of individual respondents, I informed interviewed people at the beginning of any conversation about the topic of this study, and their role as research respondents. All of them were informed about the general aim of my thesis, especially in Brazil where no one knew me before. Sometimes, I should ask some key-stakeholders to introduce me to someone else, because of the lack of trust toward me, or missing answer. I suddenly assured everyone the complete anonymous way of treating their personal data. Therefore, all of them have subscribed a declaration of consensus which allowed me to use their personal information and to audio record each interview. All respondents have been informed about the fact that in any case their names and data would be used or simply

²³ <https://coresnetwork.wordpress.com/> last accessed 20 July 2018.

attributable to their person. Finally, all the audio files have been recorded and they are accessible just by myself and by my supervisor, as well as the transcriptions. Complementary data and files, like field-notes, photos, videos, participant observation reports, are also available just by myself and my supervisor.

3.4 Description of the two contexts

Food is a metropolitan issue. Food is often produced in the peri-urban area of cities and it is consumed within the city. Food is also an issue that concerns other specific challenges that medium and big cities must face: logistics, transportation, consumption, production, and waste control, all these challenges are strictly linked to the issue of food production, consumption and distribution. Coherently to these claims, this research has developed in two different contexts. Two cities have been chosen to implement the research. The reason for this choice is to try to compare similar dynamics, such as the spreading and evolving of AFNs in both developed and developing countries of the global World. Cities are the place where people use to live. In the second half of the 20th Century, the world's urban population trebled in size: more than 50% of people in the world are living in cities.

Urbanisation has brought tremendous socio-economic shifts. It is also one of the most important factors now shaping food systems, which are becoming more globalised and consolidated: increasingly centralised networks involving fewer individual actors are supplying a growing proportion of the world's food (Jennings et al. 2015, p. 4)

Also, as Wiskerke has stated, food planning and provisioning have never been just an urban issue, but they have been mostly connected to rural and regional development. Indeed, among the most relevant and common issues tackled by municipalities, we find for instance waste management, health, public transport, education, parks, and recreation (Wiskerke 2015). In this sense, to study AFNs, it will be necessary to take into consideration cities' boundaries together with the municipalities surrounding them. Moreover, talking about food production and provisioning, it is common to almost all the cities in the Global World that most of the food comes from the peri-urban areas (Veen et al. 2012). There is also an intrinsic explanation sustaining this approach: AFNs are based on this relationship between urban and rural areas. Consumption and production are geographically close to each other. For this reason, a geographical area bigger than municipality boundaries will be considered in both case studies. For these reasons, I studied AFNs in two medium-sized towns of both the Global North and Global South,

considering the neighbouring municipalities such as the main sources of food production. Another reason for the choice to compare two cities based on different contexts (Europe and South America), is the hypothesis that the global crisis is influencing all the countries in the global world. A comparative study, in this way, leads us to understand how and how much this phenomenon has been important, and which is the degree of this influence. The research here presented has been conducted in two metropolitan contexts: the micro-region of Grande Florianópolis (Southern Brazil) and the Province of Bergamo (Northern Italy). Both contexts have been chosen by considering a series of variables such as their similar **dimension** e the **presence of AFNs initiatives**, as well as the fact that both territories represent specific contexts where human and economic development is notable. Therefore, in the following sections, both territories will be comparatively described considering these variables.

3.1.1 Dimensions

The first selected case-study is Bergamo, which is a medium-sized city located in Northern Italy (Region of Lombardy). The metropolitan area of Bergamo extends beyond the administrative city limits, spanning over a densely urbanized area with slightly less than 500.000 inhabitants²⁴ (more than 120.000 inhabitants live in the municipality of Bergamo). The city is also the capital of the namesake province that count more than 1.000.000 inhabitants living on the overall area of 2.754,91 km². Moreover, Bergamo is the fourth biggest city in Lombardy, the latter being the biggest region in terms of inhabitants (more than 10.000.000 inhabitants live in Lombardy). Bergamo is one of the richest cities in the north of Italy, and the main economic activity is concentrated in the services and manufacturers sectors.

Regarding the **economy**, as I stated above, the Province of Bergamo is one of the richest territories in Italy, but also in Europe. The Province of Bergamo's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 30,4 billion Euros (referred to 2008)²⁵ on almost 2.400 billion Euros of the Italian GDP (referred to 2008)²⁶, representing 1,4% of the aggregate value of the national economy, while the GDP per capita amount as 28.700 Euros²⁷. Moreover, as the

²⁴ Istat data 2013, <http://demo.istat.it/bilmens2013gen/index02.html> last accessed 09 March 2017.
<http://www.comune.bergamo.it/servizi/Menu/dinamica.aspx?idSezione=3780&idArea=1182&idCat=1195&ID=3582&TipoElemento=pagina> last accessed 09 March 2017.

²⁵ Available at: https://www.ucer.camcom.it/studi-ricerche/dati/bd/contieco/eurostat/prodotto-interno-lordo-delle-regioni-europee-re/Valore_aggiunto_nuts3_province.xls/view last accessed 25 July 2018.

²⁶ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/italy> last accessed 25 July 2018

²⁷ Available at: <https://www.ucer.camcom.it/studi-ricerche/dati/bd/contieco/eurostat/prodotto-interno->

OECD has reported (2016), the Province of Bergamo (Lombardy) is featured by well-being indicators higher overall compared to the OECD average rate, except for education and regional development.

The main economic activities, nowadays, within the Province of Bergamo, are mostly featured in the third sector. Tourism is increasing year by year, thanks to the improvement of the International Airport of Milan (Orio al Serio) located in the southern metropolitan area. Being well-connected with other European capitals, Bergamo has faced, over the last year to an increasing number of visitors. Even though, industry and service sectors remain the most important economies of the Province (OECD 2016). Referring to the **agricultural industry**, the food production is concentrated along the urban and peri-urban area of the city, especially in the northern part of the province, where the mountain landscape fosters dairy small-scale production, vegetables and fruit. The southern part previously was featured by food production. Today, that area is characterized by agriculture, but just for livestock and industrial production. Small-scale farmers indeed are mostly located around the city (see Figure 7). Available croplands are decreasing. As the ten-yearly census of agriculture has demonstrated, the entire province had lost the 24% of available croplands between 2000 and 2010²⁸ affecting especially small-scale farmers. Even though, along the last ten years, have sensibly increased the number of small-scale farmers involved in short food supply chains and alternative food network. Despite the economic crisis, sustainable agriculture and consumption have grown, as well as AFNs initiatives (Maurano and Forno 2017). As it has shown in the below map, production and consumption (urbanized) areas are clearly divided, apart from the middle of the Province, where urbanized area and food production areas are overlapped.

[lorido-delle-regioni-europee-re/Valore_aggiunto_abitante_nuts3_province.xls/view](#) last accessed 25 July 2018.

²⁸ http://www.istat.it/en/files/2013/02/Focus_Agr_Lombardia_revMalizia_rivistoMarina_26feb.pdf last accessed 25 July 2018.

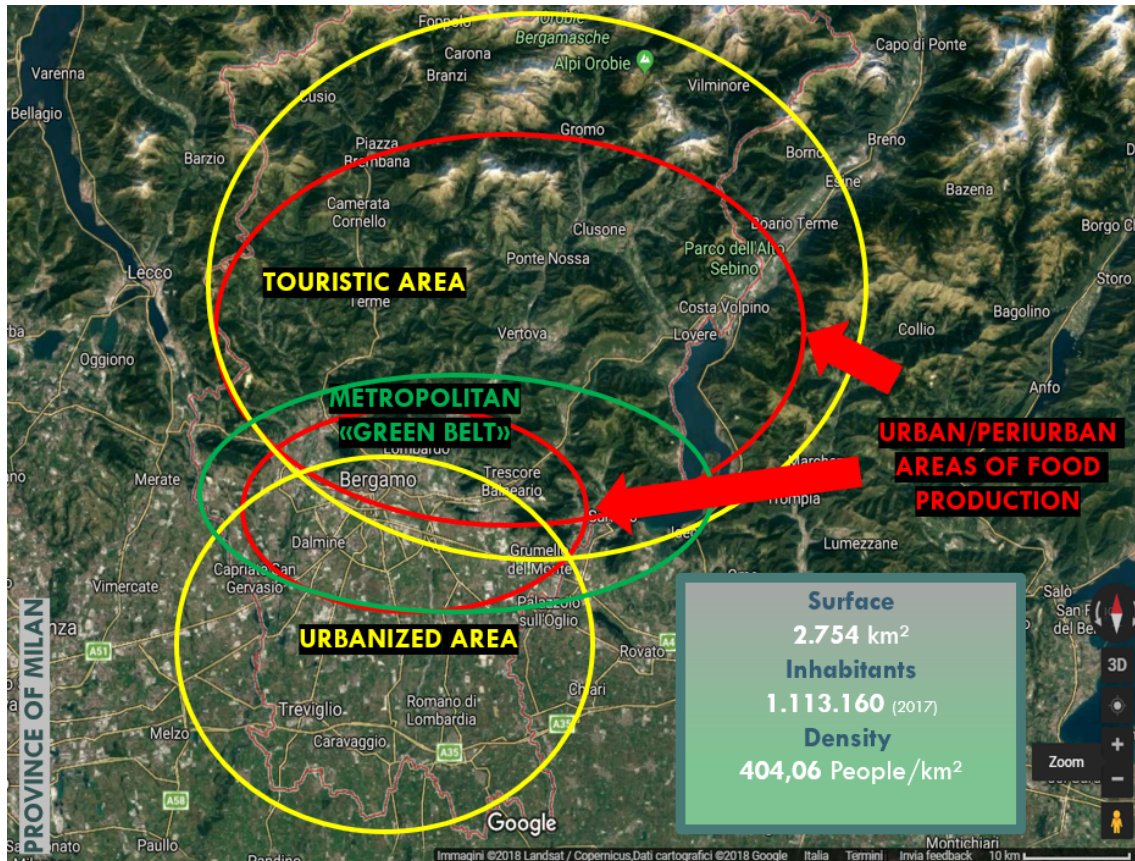


Figure 7 Overview of the Province of Bergamo

Concerning **politics**, like the other Southern Countries in Europe, Italy, after the crisis is through hard times. Austerity policies, together with the frequent government changes between 2011-2018, have framed a general situation of instability and impoverishment for lower and middle classes. Several reforms regarding social security, labour market, infrastructures, approved to face to global conjuncture caused by the economic and financial downturn, have propagated instability and lack of trust toward the political institution. The last parliamentary election has perfectly drawn this picture. The consequence is the success of euro-sceptical parties like *Lega Nord* (nationalist and far-right movement) and *Movimento 5 Stelle* (euro-sceptical and populist movement). At the local level, contrary, starting from 2014, following the increasing stream of consensus toward the *Partito Democratico* (centre-left wing party), the local administration changed their leadership, demonstrating since the beginning a different inclination toward certain issue related to local and urban agriculture, environmental protection, and public health.

At the **cultural** level, Bergamo, and its Provinces are historically influenced by the strong presence of the Catholic Church, as most of the Italian territories. There are indeed plenty of social cooperatives, non-profits associations, projects, which directly or

indirectly linked to this institution. Moreover, the local University, over the last years, in partnership with the local administration, has also begun different action and research project oriented to improve sustainability within the territory. In addition, other informal organization like SPGs, and the local solidarity economy network, have demonstrated and created a series of concrete actions which have undoubtedly increased citizens' awareness toward the environmental risk and the food production issues overall.

The other selected case-study is Florianópolis, a medium-sized city located in Southern Brazil. Florianópolis is the capital of the Santa Catarina State. It is composed by the Santa Catarina Island and a small continental part. Almost 480.000 people live in Florianópolis²⁹. The metropolitan area (microregion) counts more than 1 million inhabitants, on an overall area of 2,489 km² (almost the same dimension as the province of Bergamo). One of the main features of this city is that it is not so urbanized. In fact, the island is divided into several suburbs (in Portuguese, “*barrios*”) that seem to be more like separated towns within the city. This feature distinguishes enough Florianópolis from the cities of the Global North, but this is reasonable. Brazil is almost as big as a continent. In terms of the geographical extension, it looks more like a continent rather than a country.

Referring to the **economy**, the Southern Regions of Brazil are richer and more developed compared to the other regions of the Country. Indeed, the micro-region of Grande Florianópolis GDP is almost 5 billion USD (referred to 2008)³⁰ on almost 1.700 billion USD of the Brazilian GDP (referred to 2008)³¹ representing the 0,3% of the aggregate value of the national economy. The GDP per capita within the micro-region of Grande Florianópolis is almost 5.400 USD (IBGE, 2008). Even though the GDP is lower at all in Grande Florianópolis, the Human Development Index (HDI)³² registered in 2000 was 0,726, lower compared to the Italian one (referred to the entire Country) at the same year which was 0,828. However, in 2010 HDI has increased until 0,815 in Florianópolis. The capital Florianópolis, where most people are living, has got an HDI of 0,847 in 2010 (last update for Brazil is dated back to 2015, where the average HDI was 0,754)³³, being the third Brazilian city in terms of well-being and human development, with a GDP per

²⁹http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/estimativa2014/estimativa_dou.shtm last accessed 10 March 2017.

³⁰ <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/sc/Florianópolis/pesquisa/38/46996> last accessed 25 July 2018.

³¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/brazil> last accessed 25 July 2018.

³² <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/trends> last accessed 25 July 2018.

³³ See, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BRA#> and http://www.atlasbrasil.org.br/2013/pt/perfil_rm/Florianópolis last accessed 25 July 2018

capita 10.716 USD³⁴ (IBGE, 2015), more than two times compared to the average value registered for the entire region.

Regarding Florianópolis, the main **economic activities** involve services and tourism. It is the main source of economy, even though in the past it was essentially based on fishing and agriculture. Manufacturing activities are mostly developed in other cities of the Santa Catarina State, and industrial agriculture occupies most of the available cropland. What is not linked to the industrial agriculture, is used by family' farmers. Food provisioning in Brazilian cities seems to be supported by small farmers (family farmers). The “*Censo Agropecuário*” developed in 2006, for instance, affirmed that most of the domestic food consumed in Brazil are produced by family farmers (IBGE 2009)³⁵. Moreover, as Rover argued (2016), in Brazil, there are more than 4 million family farmers, and they represent the 85% of the entire number of agriculture enterprises while using less than 25% of croplands to produce food. Approximately 90,000 of them declared to follow the organic production philosophy, but approximately 14,000 have got an organic certification³⁶ (last update, 31/01/2017, from “*Ministerio da Agricultura, Pecuaria e Abastecimento*”). Therefore, sustainable agriculture is a small phenomenon compared to the dimension of entire Brazil. However, it is commonly accepted that most of the family farmers, that are trying to produce in a more sustainable way (organic or agro-ecological approach), are based in rural areas close to the biggest cities (the Metropolitan ‘Green Belt’ in the below map). Indeed, even in the Florianópolis metropolitan area, as previous researches have demonstrated (Rover et al. 2015; Viegas 2016; Zoldan and Mior 2012), most of the fresh products come from the municipalities that are located among the micro-region (see Figure 8). To help and support this way of production, which is more sustainable and more respectful for the land, in the last years some AFNs have been emerging on the island.

³⁴ See, <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/sc/Florianópolis/pesquisa/38/46996> last accessed 25 July 2018.

³⁵ <http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/economia/agropecuaria/censoagro/default.shtm> last accessed 10 March 2017.

³⁶ <http://www.agricultura.gov.br/assuntos/sustentabilidade/organicos/arquivos-organicos/cnpo-mapa-31-01-2017.xls/view> last accessed 10 March 2017.



Figure 8 Overview of the Grande Florianópolis

Moving beyond **politics**, it is unavoidable to consider what happened at the national level after 2015. The ‘white coup d’état’ occurred against the Dilma Rousseff put under impeachment procedure have completely changed the political panorama. After more the one decade of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (left wing party) leadership, which developed a series of social programs for women emancipation, lower classes engagement within universities, labour reforms, agrarian reforms, and so on. After 2015, everything changed. Brazil is still under uncertainty. The Workers’ Party leader, Lula has been arrested in 2018, and in autumn will be the next presidential election. The current government guided by Michel Temer, member of the *Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (right-wing party) have started to approve few reforms (social services, investments, public funds have been cut) to face the economic crisis which Brazil is passing through. At local level on the other side, even though the local administration of Florianópolis is guided by a member of the same party of Temer, thanks to the commitment of other local politicians and NGOs, several interesting laws and guidelines are discussed, especially regarding urban agriculture, agroecology, and participatory public balance management.

In Brazil, **cultural** features are strictly different from a State to another. The Northern Brazilian Regions are more influenced by African traditions, while the ‘white’

South is more associated with the European culture, and it is certainly richer. The Santa Caterina State, as well as the Rio Grande do Sul and the Paraná States, have a clear imprinting of the Italian, Portuguese and German cultures, and this has a historical explanation: colonization and migrations, had a crucial role in developing the current situations where Florianópolis represents one the most touristic area of Brazil. An important role in dissemination of more environmentally and social-economic practices has been played by organization like the solidarity economy network of Southern Brazil, the grassroots organizations related to Catholic and Lutheran Church, the local University and some NGOs which have developed pedagogical works with farmers, inhabitants, and consumers among the capital, but also in rural areas.

3.1.2 Actors and Spaces in Alternative Food Networks

For what concerns Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) initiatives, what it has been witnessed over the last 20 years is a continuous growth of these alternative supply chains started with the SPGs experience. In Bergamo, the growth of SPGs initiatives around the metropolitan area of Bergamo is outstanding, being more than 50 collective purchase groups around Bergamo. This dynamic has incredibly improved between 2000 and 2010: after that moment the growth has slowed down, while it has been witnessing a literally ‘explosion’ of farmers markets (29 mapped in 2017), as well as the local farmers that are involved in short food supply chains initiatives. These forms of AFNs are relational spaces where consumption is realized. Looking at the picture below is clear how relational spaces build up by consumers’ activism have significantly spread over the last years.

But these two categories are just some of the AFNs experiences emerged in Bergamo. Below the main AFNs initiatives are listed, thanks to the previous works made on the field (Maurano and Forno 2017)

- 29 Farmers’ markets
- 53 SPGs in the province³⁷
- 113 urban gardens (50 of citizenship and 63 of the municipality of Bergamo)
- 71 ‘green shops’
- 2 Group of producers (“*BioDistretto*”, 14 producers involved; “*AgrImagna*”, 10 producers in the province)

³⁷<http://retegasbergamo.it/elenco-gas> last accessed 09 March 2017. Moreover, the local solidarity economy network is working on the construction of CSA which will engage local organic farmers based in the mountain area.

- 370 producers³⁸ of SFSCs (136 involved within farmers' markets) in the province. Almost 30 are based in the capital. (See, Salvi and Vittori 2017)
- 1 Organic supermarket (franchising)
- Online platform for collective purchasing ('Food Assemblies', in Italian, "L'Alveare che dice sì")

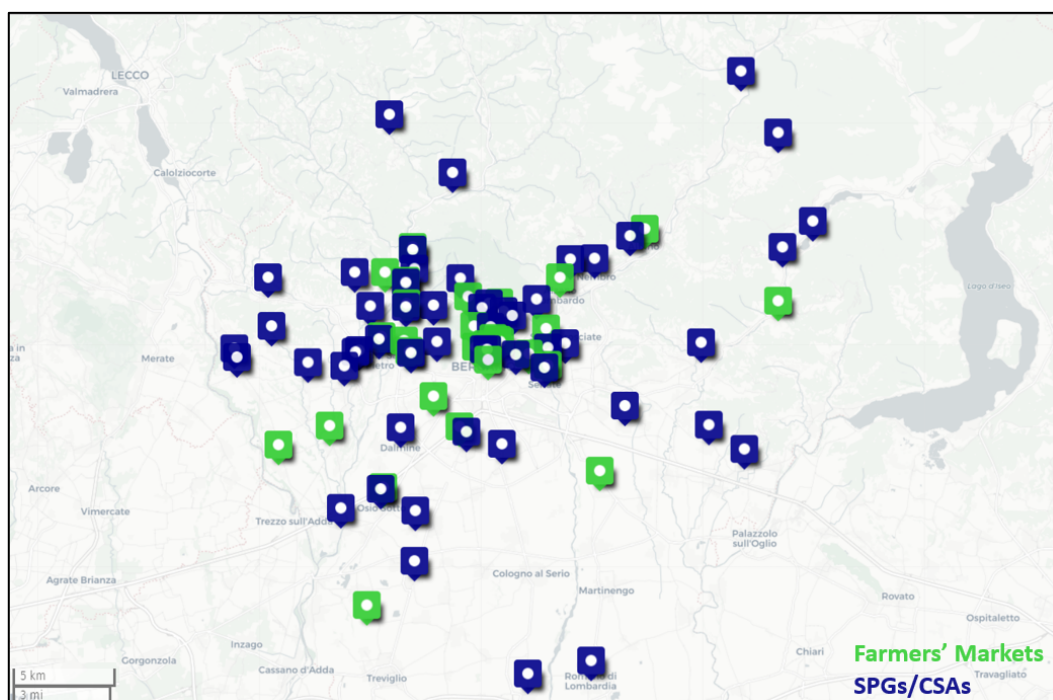


Figure 9 AFNs of Province of Bergamo

Giving a picture of the actors mostly involved within AFNs, certainly, it is necessary to count the solidarity economy network "*Cittadinanza Sostenibile*"³⁹, which include several important local stakeholders like non-profits organization related to fair trade, like *Coop. Amandla*, ethical banks like Banca Popolare Etica, social movement organizations like *Bilanci di Giustizia*, *Slow Food Bergamo*, environmental association like *Legambiente*, grassroots networks of SPGs, like *ReteGas Bergamo*, media press like *InfoSostenibile*, and the academia with the *Osservatorio CORES Research Group* (now, CoresNet Research Group). Together with this organization, the local administration, the social organic farmer's organization, *BioDistretto*, which leaders are some social cooperatives that work of organic farming since the late 1980s, are other social and institutional actors which are working on the local food system development. Last, but not least, it is also remarkable the growing interest registered by farmers' union

³⁸ More than 70 producers are improving educational programs.

³⁹ <http://www.cittadinanzasostenibile.it/> last accessed 09 March 2017.

organization like *Coldiretti*, *Confagricoltura*, and *Confcooperative*, around sustainable agriculture.

A bit different is the Brazilian case. In Florianópolis, there are currently 6 collective purchase groups, built on the model of SPGs, 2 CSAs, 12 farmers markets, and a community garden project developed by Cepagro in a peripheral neighbourhood. Nowadays, there are 40 organic farmers in the metropolitan area (referring to official data of the Ministry of Agriculture), where 6 groups of producers are involved within the solidarity economy network of Rede Ecovida. This one, it was created in 1998 by a constellation of NGOs and social movement organizations interested in agroecology. Ecovida is one of the biggest solidarity economy networks in the World that get involved more than 4000 family farmers on the entire Southern Region of Brazil (São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and the Rio Grande do Sul States). It has developed also a Participatory Guarantee Systems, where take part especially small farmers (Rover 2011; Sacchi et al. 2015; Zanasi et al. 2009). Their guarantee system it was also being adopted as an example from the solidarity economy network of Lombardy (RES Lombardia) in 2015, where Bergamo was one of the territories most involved within the process (Vittori 2018). Based on, and on Mapping SPGs and farmers' markets structured within the metropolitan area of Grande Florianópolis, as it can be seen in the picture below, AFNs moved by farmers activism, like farmers' markets are prevailing. However, other relational spaces of food distribution, like SPGs and CSAs have been emerging. Other forms of alternative food networking and commercialization have been already mapped, thanks to a research made by LACAF⁴⁰ ("*Laboratório de Agroecologia e Comercialização da Agricultura Familiar*") which have investigated and mapped all the sales points of organic food among the Florianópolis' territory (Rover et al. 2015, p. 27). All of them have been resumed as follows:

- 13 Farmers' markets
- 6 Collective purchasing groups⁴¹ (like SPGs)
- 3 Community-Supported Agriculture (CSAs)
- Urban gardens: Cepagro's ongoing research⁴² – Project of "*Revolução dos Baldinhos*" about Urban Agriculture

⁴⁰<http://LACAF.paginas.ufsc.br/> last accessed 10 March 2017.

⁴¹ Prof. Oscar José Rover is working on the construction of new collective purchase groups in Florianópolis.

⁴² <https://Cepagroagroecologia.wordpress.com/> last access 27 May 2017.

- 46 ‘green shops’ (2 restaurants that I visited)
- 6 groups of producers of Ecovida and 1 association of small-scale farmers
- 1 Cooperative of producers (Biguaçu)
- 40 organic producers in the microregion (MAPA 2017)
- 1 Organic supermarket and 1 grocery public markets (BOX Ceasa)

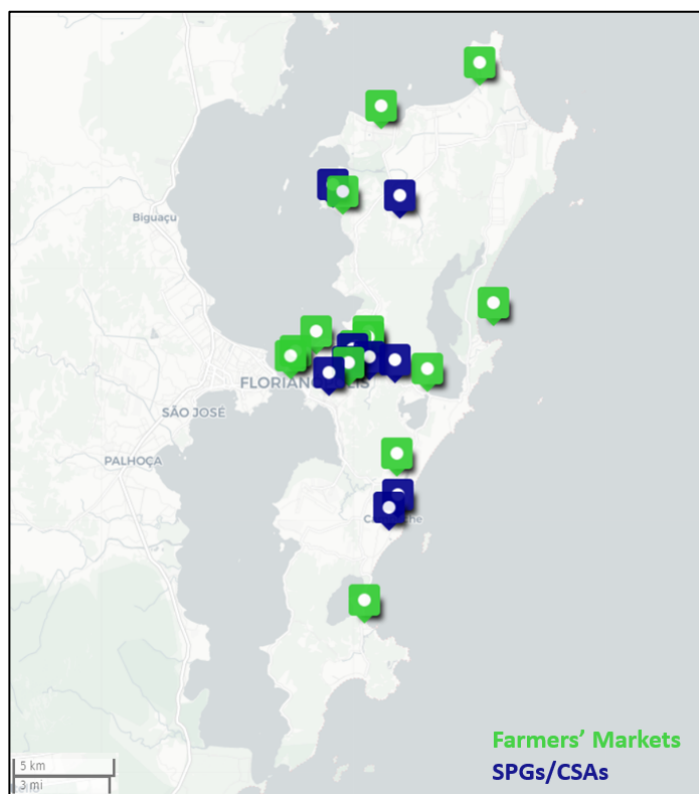


Figure 10 AFNs mapped in Florianópolis ⁴³

Describing the social actors mostly involved in AFNs strengthening, together with Rede Ecovida, it is necessary to consider the role played by local universities, not just the Federal one, but also other academic institutions are spreading environmental and sustainability-related claims. Other grassroots initiatives are emerging in partnership with some local politicians. Moreover, Cepagro as above-mentioned plays an important role in dissemination and education. Also, farmers’ unions are directly engaged in some AFNs engaging and sustaining small-farmers. Other neighbourhood’s associations, like AMORA (*Associação Moradores Ratonés*), are also implementing initiatives related to environmental protection and conservation of peasantry tradition. Moreover, there are

⁴³ Figure 9 and Figure 10 have been created using Umap/OpenStreetMap online platform. See, <https://umap.openstreetmap.fr/it/> last accessed 05 September 2018.

Available at: <https://bit.ly/2LaPVR7> last accessed 20 July 2018.

other subjects which play an important role. Between them, there is one of the most important farmers' cooperatives of the Santa Catarina State (Agreco)⁴⁴, that has become now industrialized, and another one – more grassroots – which involves small farmers (*Cooperativa Sabor da Terra*)⁴⁵.

3.5 Summary

What has been done along this chapter was to summarize, in details, the entire theoretical approach of this thesis linking it to the empirical approach. The research design has been explained specifying all the steps occurred along the research project. Then, the two analysed contexts have been illustrated.

In the following section, as it has anticipated at the beginning of the introductory chapters, this dissertation goes through the empirical work. Starting from the static analysis on how AFNs are related to the political, economic, and social structures, and in turn, how AFNs are influencing these structures, the diachronic framing process of these networks along the crisis will be suddenly described in the second empirical chapter. While, the last two chapters will focus more specifically on the wider photography of the state of art of the sustainable agriculture in Bergamo and Florianópolis, and finally some alternative forms of organic certification, developed at grassroots level, will be considered in a comparative perspective, focusing upon two specific case-studies: The Participatory Guarantee System of Rede Ecovida and the Participatory Guarantee Systems of Lombardy.

⁴⁴ <http://www.agreco.com.br/> last accessed 01 March 2018.

⁴⁵ <https://goo.gl/3tSDXu> last accessed 01 March 2018.

SECOND PART: EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS

1. Reconnecting the Social Around Food. Discussing Alternative Food Networks from a Social Movement Perspective⁴⁶

1.1 Introduction

Food provisioning has returned as an increasingly contested issue and food movements have emerged in both the Global North and Global South. In this sense, food provisioning has to face toward some important challenges: food security (Jha 2009) and food sovereignty (Altieri and Toledo 2011), together with the environmental and social sustainability of the agri-food system (Sage 2011). Facing these emergencies which have been affecting the Global World, a wide range of initiatives, which promote a dialectic idea of the Market, has been surfacing over the last three decades. Labelled as Alternative Food Networks (AFNs), these alternative forms of food provisioning, which are built upon strong and direct relationships between consumers and producers, have been considered as part of a wider set of direct social actions which try to provide a possible answer to the negative externalities of the conventional food systems. In this sense, some scholars have already considered them as part of a set of social movement organizations (SMOs) which act among the Market, develop alternative cultures, and create new spaces of food democracy within cities, instead of only facing the State, as the traditional SMOs have done. Consequently, the aim of this chapter is to place itself within the debate developed over the past few years around alternative food systems. By combining insights from social movement theories and AFNs literature, this paper will focus how the economic, political, and cultural contexts, as well as the social structures of two specific cities, have been influencing AFNs' practices and their growth. Due to the Global dimension of this phenomenon, it has been chosen to study, in a comparative perspective, these dynamics in both the Global North and Global South, focusing the attention on two considered case studies, thus, the Province of Bergamo (Northern Italy) and the micro-region of Grande Florianópolis (Southern Brazil).

To reach these goals, several findings carried out from in-depth interviews, conducted with producers and local stakeholders involved and/or committed to AFNs initiatives will be presented. Following a qualitative approach, the research has been

⁴⁶ Presented at the 23rd International Conference on Social Movements 'Alternative Futures and Popular Protest', Manchester Metropolitan University, 26-28 March 2018, and at the AIS – Italian Sociology Association Annual Conference on 'Politica, Città e Sistemi sociali', Sapienza University of Rome, September 20-21, 2018.

developed within the case-studies presented in the first section of this dissertation (see chapter 3). Finally, the results will be discussed in a comparative perspective, following the Political Opportunity Structure (POS) framework enlarged to both Economic Opportunity Structure (EOS) and Cultural Opportunity Structure (COS), highlighting the current opportunities or constraints which these SCMOs have been facing.

This chapter is divided as follows: in the following two paragraphs, starting from the sociological analysis of markets, the link between the theoretical debate around social movement studies and what in literature is defined as AFNs will be treated. Then, the research design will be presented, together with the description of the selected case studies. Finally, findings from the implemented field work will be discussed following the opportunity structure model.

1.2 Re-embedding the social within the Market

The sociology of markets has described the minimal structures of markets, which are composed of two sellers and one buyer. Both occupy different sides of the Market, pursuing opposite goals: maximizing profits (sellers) and buying at the lowest price (buyers) (Aspers 2006; Geertz 1978). The sociology of markets faces three main orders of issues: networks (Granovetter 1973), institutions (Fligstein 1996), and performativity (Callon 1998). Focusing on relations among markets, they can be featured by different degrees of competition, cooperation, and exchanges. Moreover, the institutions regulate the Market. This last is constantly in a dichotomous relationship with the State, which establishes norms and laws which define the economic framework. Contrary, the performativity paradigm sees the economy as a result of calculative processes which adopt technologies that economic actors use to employ. Another strand of studies which the sociology of markets investigates is consumption. The ‘market economy’ sees the market as an autonomous and self-regulating force (Polanyi 1944). Thus, neoclassical theory considers consumers’ choice as rationally-oriented, contrary to the premarket societies where economic behaviour is embedded within a non-economic social relationship, for this reason, in literature, these societies have been considered as moral economies (Polanyi 1944; Scott 1977). However, as Boltanski and Thévenot have demonstrated (2006), in the structures of markets, especially among specific ‘niches’ of consumers, people also mobilize beliefs, ethics, values views of the common good to talk about the effects of market processes. To the consumers’ tendency to seek both moral and economic goals through their consumptions, it obliges to consider both economic analysis

and sociological theories (Fligstein 1996; Granovetter 2017). Therefore, by their own nature, markets are the site of moral conflicts of social actors, who are committed to different principles, and the place where political struggles between various interests happen (Fligstein 1996; Schneiberg and Bartley 2001).

Referring to the agri-food system, over last thirty years have surfaced a wide range of grassroots initiatives which try to provide a possible answer to the emergencies of the global agri-food systems, pursuing ethical, moral, and environmental issues. Defined as AFNs, this concept refers to the newly emerging networks of producers, consumers, and other social actors that embody alternatives to the more standardised industrial mode of food supply (Murdoch et al. 2000). Positioning themselves as an alternative to the conventional food system, these experiences, structured as networks, aim to re-spatialize and re-socialize food consumption and production (Sonnino and Marsden 2006). These new forms of direct alliances between consumers and producers (Delind et al. 2011; Goodman et al. 2012; Renting et al. 2003), mostly at local scale, want to re-localize food, in other words, these networks link food more directly with local farming practices, rural nature, landscapes, and resources (Renting et al. 2003). AFNs have been studied by several strands of researches, starting from different perspectives. Much of the initial theoretical works on this field have been dedicated toward understanding the social and material construction of ‘quality food’ (Goodman 2004; Harvey et al. 2004). Moreover, new approaches to food provisioning, which offer a practical pathway for rural development, have been studied. In this sense, Murdoch et al. (Murdoch et al. 2000) conceptualized the growing consumers’ interest in food provenance as offering small-scale producers the potential to collectively build up what they called SFSCs (Maye and Kirwan 2010). Suddenly, the studies around AFNs raised issues in relation to the concept of *social embeddedness*. This propagates the idea that economic behaviour is embedded in – and mediated by – a complex and extensive web of social relations (Sage 2003; Winter 2003). Moreover, AFNs have been considered as networks which adopt political consumerism (Bossy 2014; Forno and Ceccarini 2006; Micheletti and Follesdal 2007; Stolle et al. 2005) to strengthen agri-food alliances between social actors. AFNs have been indeed considered as ‘new’ spaces of democracy oriented to the construction of ‘sustainable citizenships’ (Forno et al. 2015; Micheletti and Stolle 2012), grassroots innovation (Hankins and Grasseni 2014), and civic food networks (Brunori et al. 2012; Grasseni et al. 2013; Graziano and Forno 2012; Lyson 2004; Renting et al. 2012). This last interpretation is most probably the revolutionary payload of such initiatives.

Therefore, food becomes a tool for strengthening collective action.

Meanwhile, the Great Recession has been influencing contemporary societies. As it has argued, it seems to be more than just economic and financial related: it appears structural and multidimensional (Castells et al. 2012). As it has been shown, it exerts influence as on the State (Crouch 2011) and the Market (Stiglitz 2009), as the local communities, individuals (Bauman 2004) and their perception of reality (Sassen 2014). At the same time, traditional politics seems to be unable to solve people's needs (Crouch 2004, 2011). Distrust in politics and the loss of values have been encouraging the development of so-called alternative 'practices', in terms of social and economic dimensions (Forno and Graziano 2014). Meanwhile, as the social and political sciences have demonstrated, new challenges and new struggles have emerged in western democracies. From the 1970s, social movements have started to raise new claims. Therefore, as Touraine affirmed (1985), social movements have shifted from materialistic values (e.g. working-class movements, peasants movements), towards post-materialistic ones (e.g. feminist, environmental, and pacifist movements). New Social Movements (NSMs) have developed a holistic idea of the collective action. For instance, in the past, the factory was the social spaces of the working-class, where workers used to share experiences, feelings, and meanings (della Porta and Diani 2006). By living in cities, workers have also started to share a common point of view about politics, as well as what they could do within society. However, in the last three decades, both factories and agriculture became more globalized and internationalized, transforming completely the general structure of the market. Moreover, the industrialization and globalization of the Market have driven the State in a condition of inability to face towards social conflicts, in terms of spatial space. The integration process of the global market has strengthened the political power of multinational enterprises through international agreements like GATT and NAFTA. In this way, the State became unable to act and influence policies on a global scale.

Facing this panorama, SMOs claiming for both materialist and post-materialist issues, they united together against a common 'enemy': the markets' globalization. what happened in Seattle in 1999, during the WTO meeting represents an important step for this process. It is indeed considered a milestone in the dawn of the so-called GJM (della Porta et al. 2015). In this context, Catholic, left-wing, and anarchist organizations, workers' unions, and much more, for the first time they fought together against the richest governments asking for economic reforms of the system that had created inequalities on

the Planet. New issues have emerged: for instance, the deliberative democracy, the dichotomy of heterogeneity and homologation, and new repertoires of action (della Porta 2005). In this sense, starting from the mid-1990s, boycotts, critical consumption, and *buycotts* have been spreading within social movement organizations. The Market, as it has already stated, was identified by GJM organizations as the new arena of contention politics (Micheletti 2003; della Porta 2003). In this perspective, consumption and lifestyles started to have an important role in the transformation of the social structure. It has been diffusing the idea that individual choices on consumption could be crucial for changing the system and *status quo*. Especially around agri-food industry, this phenomenon was more evident (e.g. boycotts toward Coca-Cola and Nestlé). Furthermore, in the last two decades, a positive form of critical consumption has raised, which is labelled as political or critical consumerism in the literature, or simply *buy-cotts* (Micheletti and Follesdal 2007; Micheletti and Stolle 2007). Specifically, around food production and distribution, the consumption, and the demand for a more sustainable production system, have increased and they started to be central within the discourses of SMOs, in both Northern and Southern hemispheres. In opposition to the conventional agri-food system (Morgan and Murdoch 2000), social movements have supported the idea that reorganizing and pressuring the economic system by the development of a less standardised consumption could be possible. In this sense, they have begun to promote an alternative agri-food system more respectful to the lands, to the agrobiodiversity, and to the people (Altieri and Toledo 2011). This new paradigm has been basically designed for social and economic development of local communities, and its final expected goal was to represent a radical change in the Market structure. The social movements role was strictly important to highlight the negative externalities of the global food provisioning system, which generally affects marginalized areas of the urban and peri-urban landscape. During the era of the great collective mobilizations against capitalist institutions, several meetings have been created: the so-called social forums, where NGOs, activists, non-profit associations, and other organizations that have participated to the GJM, have emerged (della Porta 2005; Scherer-Warren 2006). At the same time, arose the first solidarity economic networks, as forms of self-organization, in some case inspired by the work of social activists (e.g. Euclides Mance in Latin America). Within the solidarity economy networks, consumers, activists, and producers have begun to work on the creation of new local food system of production and provision, maintaining the focus on the main goal: influencing the global market.

1.3 Alternative Food Networks through the Social Movements perspective

As it has above-mentioned, the diffusion of political consumerism was influenced by what happened after the *Battle of Seattle*. During the early 2000s in fact, political consumerism has started to be included in the repertoires of actions of different groups, not only those specifically related to habits and behaviours but also by pacifists, religious, workers' organizations and anti-mafia groups (Forno and Gunnarson 2010; Micheletti and McFarland 2010). As it has proved, the GJM was rather short-lived (della Porta 2007). The internal variety of groups, repression during some episodes of protest (e.g. during G8 meeting in Genoa, 2001), the lack of institutional allies, and the unsuccessful mobilization against the Iraq war in 2003, brought to a quick downfall of the transnational mobilization. However, tactics and practices developed during this cycle of protest vanished within many SMOs. The end of the GJM, which scholars dated between 2003 and 2005 (della Porta 2015) was followed by a substantial re-positioning of some SMOs from the global to the local scale of action (Forno 2018). A continuous spreading of political consumerism has been carried on at the local level. It has been not only used by SMOs to improve transnational awareness to push corporations, but it has been also employed to facilitate the creation of new alliances between different actors, that often materialize themselves in form of alternative production and consumption networks (Forno and Graziano 2014). Concretely, there are several examples of these types of alliances like new consumer-producer cooperatives, Community-Supported Agriculture (CSAs), solidarity purchase groups (SPGs), Slow Food, urban and social gardens, within others, that in literature have been encompassed under the concept of SCMOs (Forno 2018; Forno and Graziano 2014). Thus, the political consumerism goes beyond the idea of individual responsibility-taking (Stolle and Micheletti 2013) to be used as a tool of engaging together various collectives, helping them to build up shared strategies of territorial and economic intervention (Cembalo et al. 2012; Graziano and Forno 2012). In sum, political consumerism is a vehicle to improve solidarity between consumers and producers, and AFNs are a clear example (Goodman et al. 2012).

In literature, AFNs have been defined as non-conventional food channels where producers and consumers create strong relationships promoting a new idea of food consumption, the economic, social, and the environmental sustainability, and the community engagement (Dansero and Puttilli 2014; Venn et al. 2006). Within AFNs, all the involved stakeholders, both producers and consumers, discursively contract their

cooperative efforts as forms of creating alternatives to the traditional marketplace (Dixon 2010). These networks distinguish themselves based on the spatial distance through which the commercial relationship between consumption and production is realized. Thus, there are three different forms of AFNs which classified in terms of the distance through which the relationship materializes itself. Thus there are AFNs featured by *face-to-face* (where production and consumption are materialized in the same space and time), *spatial proximity* (where production and consumption are materialized in relatively closed spaces), and *spatially extended* (where production and consumption are far from each other) interactions (Marsden et al. 2000).

The development of AFNs was based on different emerging issues that features the agro-industrial food system like products quality, malnutrition, and the food social value (Harvey et al. 2004). The first examples of AFNs have emerged as niches that included ethical experiences featured by justice, sustainability and local dimension (Delind et al. 2011; Goodman et al. 2012; Morgan 2009). One of the main aims of these networks is to re-localize food among the territories and re-create ties between urban and peripheral areas of cities (Feagan 2007). AFNs put into public agenda the problem to re-organize food supply chains. AFNs have got also a social aim: among the direct and spatial proximity relationships, the Market returns to be more ‘humanized’ and ‘socialized’ (Hinrichs 2000; Kneafsey et al. 2008; Sage 2003).

What it has been witnessing is the continuous growth of this kind of initiatives all around the Global World. In Italy, for instance, collective purchase groups, the so-called Solidarity Purchasing Groups (SPGs) (in Italian, “*Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale*”), prove this dynamic. In order to follow this trend, several studies were done later – during the 2000s – crossing different theoretical frameworks (Brunori et al. 2012; Cembalo et al. 2013; Fonte 2013; Forno et al. 2013b). Nevertheless, AFNs are non-conventional forms of food provisioning that are different/counteractive to the mainstream (or conventional) food system (Maye 2013; Tregear 2011). Some of them try to disseminate social innovations among contemporary society. The above mentioned Italian SPGs, for instance, do not only want to buy fresh and healthier food for themselves – and their related friends or families. SPGs, try to improve the collective awareness of small-scale agriculture, biodiversity, and food sovereignty through their parallel activities, like workshops, seminars, conferences, visits to local producers. Their main goal is to enlarge the number of people who can get access to fair, fresh, healthier food: and it can be possible – for them – to modify the social structure starting from the purchasing action

(Forno et al. 2015; Hankins and Grasseni 2014). Hence, these networks help to create a new re-distribution of the resources' flow, and they create common interpretations of reality, in this way they also provide a framework for collective action and the spread of an actual alternative lifestyle (Forno et al. 2015).

Therefore, by combining insights from social movement theories and AFNs literature, this chapter will focus on the mechanism through which individual get collectively organized in AFNs and how political, economic, and cultural structures have been influencing their actions. Specifically, to study how AFNs initiatives are related to economic, political and cultural institutions which are involved, the theoretical framework of POS (McAdam et al. 2004) will be used. The use of the concept of POS could be generalized as an attempt to connect the local features of SMOs (in this case the AFNs) with their own context (Wahlström and Peterson 2006), considering also the EOS and the COS, which AFNs are related. The structures can be open, where more openness facilitate the emergence of a specific movement and being effective toward the political system. The structures could also vary from space to space and from time to time. To assess the openness of state opportunity structures (SOS) as McAdam (1996) has examined, it should be considered these following set of aspects: 1) the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system; 2) the stability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity; 3) the presence of elite allies; 4) the state's capacity and propensity for repression. (McAdam, 1996, p. 27). Moreover, for what concerns the economic opportunity structures (EOS) as Wahlström and Peterson have already experienced (2006) three set of factors will be considered: 1) the availability of cognitive and economic resources for change in the target organization/branch; 2) as regards the multiplicity of stake -seekers/-holders of the sustainable agriculture industry/sector, the analysis can begin by noting its allies among the political elites; 3) the capacity of this industry to lobbying and to organize counter-mobilization. Finally, concerning the cultural opportunity structures will be considered these following variables: 1) the mass media framing of sustainable agriculture; 2) the ability of AFNs and sustainable agriculture movements to create public opinion, 3) Assessing the way of exerting social influence on these claims. Before applying the above-mentioned theoretical approach, in the next paragraph, the two selected case-studies will be briefly presented, together with the research tools and methods chosen for the data analysis.

1.4 Data and methods

As anticipated in the introduction, the research has been conducted in two metropolitan contexts, the Province of Bergamo (Northern Italy) and the micro-region of Grande Florianópolis (Southern Brazil). As it was previously presented in the first part of the dissertation, both contexts were chosen by considering a series of variables such as their similar dimension, the increasing presence of AFNs initiatives, and the central role played by the local universities. More specifically, for this chapter, the 27 in-depth interviews (13 for the Italian case-study and 14 for the Brazilian one), made with local stakeholders directly involved within AFNs initiatives and special observants that are leading or developing local food strategies and policies, have been considered. In detail, members of different farmers' unions, local politicians, members of collective consumers' initiatives, farmers cooperatives, Slow Food movement, solidarity economy networks, and other social movement organizations were interviewed. All of them have drawn a wider photography of the AFNs framing process among the considered structured for each case-study. Hence, in the next paragraph, findings from these interviews will be discussed and analysed, starting from the theoretical approach of the opportunity structure model presented in the previous section.

1.5 Findings

The considered contexts are similar for several sets of issues. First, the growth of AFNs initiatives in both context, which has been featuring the local food system development in a more sustainable way. Second, these territories have got a similar geographical location of sales points, which follow the population distribution within both cities, accordingly with Wiskerke (2015), while the geo-localization of production is more concentrated around the city centres, or a bit far from there (average distance from city centre is between 20 and 70 Km). Furthermore, both cities represent two specific territories featured as ones of the richest regions respectively for each Country. In both territories, as stated, AFNs are emerging and reinforcing their action and enlarging their audience. Moreover, in both territories, universities are directly involved within these processes: the Italian one is more engaged for what concerns the construction of a participative urban food strategy with the local administration, while in Brazil, academia is more specifically related to the improvement of AFNs. Finally, both territories have a strong relationship in terms of cultural roots and tradition in common: Southern Brazil, historically, has been strongly influenced by the Italian immigration between the 19th and

the 20th centuries, which consequently have had externalities in agriculture and cooperative framing-process which have characterized the States of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina, two of the main areas of agricultural and livestock production (de Azevedo 1961).

After this brief presentation, the compositions of AFNs will be first introduced. Then, following the POS enlarged to economic and cultural structures, it will be shown how they are organizing themselves, facing to the political, economic, and cultural framework, considering both micro and macro perspectives.

1.5.1 Composition of Alternative Food Networks

First of all, it is necessary to specify that the considered AFNs were farmers' markets and collective purchase groups. This choice was firstly necessary due to the limited timing available to develop the project. Moreover, these two forms of AFNs seem to be the most privileged by producers and consumers, in terms of commercial relationships making-process, but also because through the direct relation, which involved actors use to create, AFNs are able to re-socialise the Market e re-construct collective action through critical consumption and alternative forms of production.

After this brief introduction, it is important to compare AFNs in both contexts, starting from the activators of these networks. In Italy, AFNs are usually built by consumers' will. In Bergamo, for instance, most of the farmers' markets were created thanks to SPGs (numerous) initiatives, even though nowadays they are more independent. Coherently, SPGs have brought social innovation within territories where they are more active and proactive (Forno et al. 2015; Hankins and Grasseni 2014). Slightly different is the Brazilian case. In Florianópolis, the role of producers is more emphasized thanks to the engagement of the Federal University and NGOs such Cepagro. They have played an important role in educating local farmers to end up with agro-toxic input and monocultural production, to go toward a more sustainable way of production. They also have pressed local farmers to take part to the farmers' market and local organic fairs, (e.g. the first one ever was created within the department of agrarian sciences), as well as being engaged by collective purchase groups, CSAs and other projects.

On the consumption's side is clear that in Bergamo, what had pushed critical consumers to be involved within SPGs were worries about food quality, the sense of justice and the will to sustain local farmers (Grasseni et al. 2013). Contrary, in Brazil, the widespread motivation – for what emerged – is the worry about health. This is just what

emerged from in-depth interviews with some of the members of collective purchase groups and CSAs. On the production's side, it is important to highlight that the producers involved within AFNs are numerically bigger in the Italian case-study rather than the Brazilian case. Although, in both case-studies, local farmers involved within AFNs are moved by similar motivations, such as the stronger ties that could create with local consumers, featured by trust and confidence, as well as the chance to build a fair price of their products.

The research has also highlighted that Italian producers are limited to take part in a cooperative approach toward production and provision. They are not formally organized, neither informally. They are just two formal groups of producers in the Province of Bergamo, the association of AgrImagna⁴⁷ and the association of social organic producers and cooperatives called BioDistretto⁴⁸. This one has been launched almost two years ago. This project has engaged all the social cooperatives – together with small farmers involved in a few social projects – based in the province of Bergamo working on social agriculture to strengthen their commercial and personal relationship. The final goal is to create a formal producers' network specific for this kind of agriculture that promote, together with sustainability and environmental conservation, social inclusion and participation of people affected by mental disease and/or handicaps. During the field work stage in Italy, one of the interviewed actors, member of a historical and pioneer social agroecological cooperative, talking about this project and the features of Bergamo's context, stated:

Even though there are 23 producers and 10 rural communities involved around the city centre, it is hard to establish if this project could develop a real networking process between producers of BioDistretto. There is a historical and cultural explanation of this uncertainty: Bergamo's citizens used to be selfish. Compared to other regions in Italy, where there were not peasants' struggles. Here, that movement was very marginal (Actor n. 4 – Male, Member of Agroecological Cooperative Bergamo)

This is one of the most significant differences between the two case studies that have emerged from the interviews. It has also been confirmed directly by producers involved, but their perspective will be deeply analysed in the third empirical chapter. On the other hand, In Brazil, specifically in the Santa Catarina State, the role of Ecovida was

⁴⁷ <http://www.agrimagna.it/> last accessed 09 March 2018.

⁴⁸ <http://www.biodistrettobg.it/> last accessed 05 March 2018.

– and still be – strictly important for collective action. Actually, the birth of Ecovida is the result of two decades of collective action in Southern Brazil (Rover 2011; Viegas et al. 2017; Zanasi et al. 2009). Indeed, Florianópolis is not the core-centre of contention politics, as one the Ecovida’s activist, who had worked in the past with small farmers in transition (toward organic agriculture) affirmed:

The most notable experience, in terms of cooperation, that we have had here, is Ecovida, especially being a marketing structure. Farmers cooperatives, here in Florianópolis, there are not, maybe because of the short distance to the market, maybe because of the historical and cultural background of people. The presence of *Movimento Sem Terra* (one of the most powerful peasant movements of Southern Brazil) there was not, in terms of occupied fields (Actor n. 15 – Male, Ecovida Florianópolis)

However, over last years, a notable number of non-profit associations has surfaced. A considerable number of producers based within the Grande Florianópolis area has started to be engaged in collective action, getting inspired by other experiences of the Santa Catarina State. Confirming this, a professor of the Federal University said:

Here in Florianópolis, there is not a cooperative tradition, because, here, is more complicated compared to the western part of the Santa Catarina State, where this tradition is more alive. I could say that it could be related to history. Here the geographical density of farmers, that helps to create strong ties between producers, is lower compared to the western part of the state. Moreover, most the western cooperatives are derived from the Catholics grassroots movements, especially starting from the ‘theology of liberation’, and from Communitarian dynamics already present among the local communities [...] there was a bishop in Chapeco (one of the biggest cities in that area) that is remembered within the Church for his role in organizing local producers. This is an example just for saying that these are historical and cultural processes, but there, people, names, organizations behind these dynamics [...] by the way it cannot be forgotten that, over last 10 years, has been increased here the number of non-profit associations, cooperatives and collective practices. Local farmers based in Florianópolis have learned and discovered western experiences [...] What I’m observing is a birth of new cooperative organizations encouraged by public policies, like PNAE and PAA⁴⁹, especially for commercialization. Through the Market, buying products from family and local farmers, the State has helped small producers to collectively organize themselves in groups, cooperatives, and associations (Actor n. 26 – Male Federal University, Florianópolis)

This last quote highlights another important issue, or rather, the importance of public

⁴⁹ <http://www.fnnde.gov.br/programas/alimentacao-escolar> last accessed 05 March 2018.

policies behind the AFNs and sustainable agriculture framing processes which will be considered in the following section.

1.5.2 The state opportunity structure (SOS)

In relation to the POS, being AFNs considered as economic social movements, the presentation of the findings will follow the order: firstly, political opportunities will be presented describing the collected context's data, focusing the attention on the normative framework which AFNs are inserted. Then, the presence of elite allies and their approach to these networks will be compared.

Political opportunities, in both contexts, are changing in a more favourable way for the development of AFNs. For what regards Italy, public policies around agriculture and food production are strictly encompassed by the European policies on agriculture, which, as an external element, feature the entire Communitarian panorama. Initially, after the Second World War, Europe and Italy have been influenced by an intense economic growth. Italy, after a previous period of scarcity, doubled the quantity of food consumed and shifted toward a more complex diet. After the introduction of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the problem of food scarcity was replaced by overproduction. As Brunori et al. stated (2013) the price-support has generated unsold surpluses, dumped on the international market or destroyed. With the removal of trade barriers, Italy found itself vulnerable to competition in some product markets. Imports have increased, and the modernization has been the unique solution to this problem. Suddenly, the CAP has been reformed in 2003. This reform was aimed to stimulate international markets competitiveness, environmental performance, rural viability, and to better satisfy consumer demand. Moreover, the new CAP aimed to strengthen the multifunctional role of agriculture, acknowledging the differences in economic, environmental and social potentials within European regions (Piorr et al. 2009). A further development has been done in 2013. Through the EU Regulation 1305/2013, the new Rural Development Program (in Italian "*Programma di Sviluppo Rurale*") for the period between 2014-2020. This program is one of the most important subsidies which farmers and firms can have access. Thanks to this program rural entrepreneurs, farmers, and firms, can realize projects and investments to improve their activities. The goals behind this new reform are basically three: innovation, environment, and resilience to climate change. Each Region can publish some calls for subsidies for those farmers interested in enhancing their activity. Thus, for what concerns public investments, the main role is played by the

Regions, and it is clear at the normative level, where for example in Italy, it has been specified in the last constitutional reform (Art. 117 Cost.). Indeed, the Italian Constitution, referring to agriculture and rural development, gave the exclusive power to the State just for what concerns the environmental protection, the guarantee of full competition among the market, and the main role among the international relationships with European Union (MIPAAF 2016). Even though, at the national level, in Italy, over the last years, several public programs have been developed, especially to encourage healthier diet within public schools. Some laws have been also introduced. Two main innovations, introduced by the previous Labour Government, have respectively faced the problem of food waste and the related solidarity distribution of exceeds (L.O. 116/2016), and the fulfilment of the EU Regulation 1169/2011 on the milk traceability through the decree D.M. approved last 9th December of 2016⁵⁰. Even concerning the organic agriculture, the normative reference is at the Communitarian level, and it has been established through the EEC Regulation No. 2092/91, suddenly deeply modified through the EC Regulation No. 834/2007⁵¹.

Even concerning organic agriculture, the normative reference is at the Communitarian level, but it will be discussed in chapter 4.

Moving toward the local dimension of politics, thus at regional and local scale, which the Bergamo territory is embedded, thanks to the EU program established by CAP, the Lombardy Region has access to more than 1 billion euros until 2020 to sustain the agro-environment, cooperation, exchanges among rural entrepreneurs, and formation of technical personnel⁵². Moreover, in 2017 the Lombardy Region has introduced a special law on ‘social agriculture’ (L.R. 35/2017), previously introduced by a national regulation introduced in 2015 (L.O. 141/2015), recognizing and promoting, through acts and regional planning tools, social agriculture as an aspect of multifunctionality of agricultural activities. What is intended as ‘social agriculture’ is a set of initiatives oriented to social inclusion, environmental protection, creation of employment, especially for those people who suffer from incapacity, mental or physical handicaps, or even reintegration for those people who are detained people or have got the refugees’ status, and so on (Rete Rurale Nazionale 2017). This normative innovation represents a

⁵⁰ <https://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/202> last accessed 07 September 2018.

⁵¹ https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/index_en last accessed 12 January 2019

⁵² <http://www.psr.regione.lombardia.it/wps/portal/PROUE/FEASR/programma/> last accessed 07 September 2018.

meaningful upgrade at Regional level, especially for the numerous social cooperatives, non-profits organizations, and rural entrepreneurs, which have been developing this kind of social and more sustainable agriculture since decades ago. Even though AFNs have not been directly engaged in the policy-making process, these networks are privileged channels of distribution and partners to support this agriculture as the recent report published by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture highlighted, where most of the surveyed producers stated that their privileged channel of distribution is direct sell, Solidarity Purchase Groups and farmers' markets (Rete Rurale Nazionale 2017, p. 45).

Looking at the local scale, hence within the municipality and among the entire Province of Bergamo, several issues and institutional projects emerged over the last years. For example, referring to the idea of the presence of elite allies (McAdam 1996), in Bergamo, the local representatives, along with activists of solidarity economy networks, the association BioDistretto (Cristini, Grasseni, and Signori 2018), and the local University, has been developing an urban food strategy, like what in literature is defined as a Food Policy Council (Forno and Maurano 2016; Harper et al. 2009). Indeed, a committee has been created to manage and schedule farmers' markets within the city. This process has been launched in 2016, testifying a relative openness toward AFNs by local administration. An online platform has also been launched which collects all the useful information about AFNs in the city, thanks to the University which has mapped, in the previous years, all the AFNs and short food supply chains initiatives in the province⁵³. These last two examples can also be intended as outcomes of SMOs, due to their direct commitment. On the other hand, in Bergamo, local institutions, with different degrees of engagement, are sustaining these networks. It is shared the idea that public aids are important. The local politics has played an important role in sustaining the 'democratization' of local food systems. However, as a research of the University of Bergamo stated, the risk of co-optation is clear, especially in Bergamo, where the local administration has appropriated itself most of the tools created in a participative approach (e.g. BergamoGreen.net).

It is ever present the risk of co-optation, green-washing and closure of niche. It's necessary the cooperation and creating opportunities (Actor n. 13 – Male, University of Bergamo)

Slightly different is the scenario emerged from the Brazilian case. Indeed,

⁵³ <http://www.bergamogreen.net/it/> last accessed 05 March 2018.

considering the institutional framework at the national level, there are different public policies that are helping small farmers to be engaged within AFNs and face to food insecurity.

Starting from the early 1990s, through the campaign “*Ação da Cidadania contra a Fome, a Miséria e pela Vida*”, a notable number of activists (Brazilian artists and intellectuals) has re-located the importance for the society and the State to improve political actions aimed to face poverty and hunger for millions of Brazilian citizens. These themes got more space in public agenda during the Worker’s Party administrations. Starting from 2003, with the election of the President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva and the implementation of a series of public policies oriented in those directions, the State started to face the problem of food security and rural development. Important normative improvements have been done over the last twenty years in Brazil. Between others, the normative recognition of the economic and social importance played by family farming was one of the most important issues arose by these administrations, through the implementation of the “*Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar (PRONAF)*” starting from the year 1996. On the other hand, other policies have been introduced to face the problem of food insecurity. Firstly, the *Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos (PAA)* was improved, which has been developed contextually to the “*Fome Zero*” program⁵⁴ developed by Lula’s Government. PAA has been introduced in 2003 through the federal law *Lei n° 10.696 art. 19* with two main goals: solving the problem of food insecurity and encouraging family farming. To reach these goals, through this program, the public institutions buy food produced by family farmers, through biddings, and allocates food to people who live in food insecurity conditions, through social assistance networks, public resources, and public educational system (Hespanhol 2013). Moreover, it promotes the food provisioning through public investments by the government. It empowers local and regional supply chains and food systems. It enhances the agrobiodiversity, organic and agroecological production. Finally, it encourages more sustainable and healthier consumption’s habits, as well as it stimulates cooperation and associationism among family farmers. At the institutional level, the PAA program has been formalized and implemented by the *Conselho de Segurança Alimentar (CONSEA)* and by other organizations from civil society. At the national level, this program has coordinated by a group which involved personnel from these ministries: *Desenvolvimento*

⁵⁴ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i3023e/i3023e.pdf> last accessed 07 September 2018.

*Social e Combate à Fome (MDS); Planejamento, Orçamento e Gestão; Desenvolvimento Agrário (MDA); Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento (MAPA); Fazenda, and the Ministério da Educação. At the operational level, PAA has managed by MDS and the Companhia Nacional de Abastecimento (CONAB). Later, in 2009, though the federal law Lei 11.947/2009 has been introduced the Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar (PNAE). This program offers food provisioning for school canteens and actions oriented toward nutritional education for students engaged in all public schools at all basic levels. The federal government delegates state governments and municipalities to address resources per 10 months per year, guaranteeing 200 days of food. PNAE is directly joined and controlled by the society through the *Conselhos de Alimentação Escolar (CAE)*, and by the *Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação (FNDE)*, *Tribunal de Contas da União (TCU)*, *Controladoria Geral da União (CGU)*, and by the Public Ministry⁵⁵. The innovation of this public policy is that it imposes a minimum of 30% of consumed products within food services gotten from family farmers⁵⁶.*

Moreover, for what concerns organic agriculture, Brazil is one of the few countries in the World (together with India and Bolivia) that recognizes as official certification for organic agriculture, thus Participatory Guarantee Systems⁵⁷ (*Lei 10.831/03*, law that regulates organic certifications), that use to be cheaper and powerful for small farmers (Källander 2008), contrary to the European Union, where this kind of certification still is out of law. Although, this issue will be studied in the fourth empirical chapter.

These are just some examples that confirm that the Brazilian normative system is helping the development of a more sustainable model of agriculture. Moreover, few of these innovations have been improved thanks to the activism of SMOs, so they can be also intended as direct outcomes created by these grassroots initiatives. However, the institutionalized political system has been influenced by the ongoing political uncertainty. The so-called ‘white coup d’état’ in 2015 has affected the public opinion toward the Workers’ Party. The current government is strictly neoliberal. Few lobbies in the Parliament are forcing their agenda. The government is reducing public investments in healthcare, public food services, etc. The consequence of this uncertain social climate is

⁵⁵ <http://www.fnde.gov.br/programas/pnae> last accessed 07 September 2018.

⁵⁶ https://www.fnde.gov.br/fndelegis/action/UrlPublicasAction.php?acao=getAtoPublico&sgl_tipo=LEI&num_ato=00011947&seq_ato=000&vlr_ano=2009&sgl_orgao=NI last accessed 01 March 2018.

⁵⁷ http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/2003/L10.831.htm last accessed 01 March 2018.

going to discourage not only people but also local institutions. An activist of the CSA has said:

The political crisis is extremely negative: we are living in a process where people don't what will happen. They are removing all rights. They are stopping all the achievements of the last years. Just in agriculture, one of the first decision of the coup was destroying the Minister of Rural Development [...] it was created before Lula's government but were Lula and Dilma that had developed public policies. Now it was transformed into a State Secretary, and who works there says that are operating on the last funds for public policies, that were reduced. The tendency is that they are going to disappear (Actor n. 21 – Female, CSA Florianópolis)

This is a shared perception among the interviewed stakeholders in Brazil. In addition, some of them have also affirmed that political participation is seriously decreased.

Social movements got infrastructures, agroindustry, resources, but they didn't keep force. Independently from the Workers' Party, people stayed in the street during the 1990s. It was for protecting public services, like food services, students' accommodation, public universities. IMF said that universities should ask for private payments, even though they are public. It is a misrepresented view of the public university. During the 1990s, the movement was unified, students and workers defending together this issue. During the last decades, professors make a strike for defending their salary. Nowadays, the current generation is depoliticized, and whom should be politicized, is on the edge of the politics. The clear example is the students' movement who mobilize itself to make parties within the campus, instead of defending their rights. Moreover, who is 25 years old today, was 8 years old when Lula got the power, during the popular achievements. They are just witnessing to the current corrupt system. They didn't pass through suffering. I guess it is happening throughout the country, except when there is a specific cause, a specific demand [...] the worst problem is the politicization: university's extension misses. Employees stay within the laboratory, instead of outside, within the community (Actor n. 15 – Male, Ecovida Brazil)

Even though social movements have lost their efficiency compared to the past, AFNs are still being characterized by relative strong ties between actors. Numerous are the formal and informal associations that are working for the shared goal of planning and build a more sustainable food system.

Contrary, at the local level, the situation is different. Even though the local administration of Florianópolis seems to have a relative openness toward AFNs, there is not shared urban food strategies. At least, there are some politicians directly engaged in approving some urban measures to spread AFNs and urban agriculture. Several stakeholders have stated that just the environmental and left-wing party of PSOL (in

Portuguese, “*Partido Socialismo e Liberdade*”) is clearly committed to urban food strategies and urban/peri-urban agriculture. In the last local election, a politician, previously engaged within NGOs, and Ecovida, was elected specifically for carrying on public policies for sustaining their collective action. Last year, for instance, it has been presented a draft law, within the borough council, named as “*Programa (Politica) Municipal Sobre Agroecologia e Produção Organica, Projeto Lei 17002/17*” that it was thought to spread both sustainable production and consumption within the city, which it has been approved by the City Council the last 6th of June of 2018⁵⁸. This urban policy, finally, is going to be approved this year. Interviewing this politician, he said:

The purpose of politics is to understand agroecology, the agroecological consumption, and to reduce the distance between production and consumption. In this way, you can build up a lot of long-term positive externalities, that could reduce public investments in health care and environmental degradation. The public administration does not fix errors and negative externalities. It works for a systemic view. The primary issue is that public commitment should be at least balanced between agroecology and conventional food system (Actor 24 – Male, PSOL Florianópolis)

Additionally, the municipality of Florianópolis has started to finance a weekly organic farmers market in the city centre, that gathers a ten of local producers involved in the Ecovida network. There is also another commitment that testifies the relative openness of local politics: in Florianópolis is based Epagri⁵⁹, a public research company that helps small farmers to improve their own activity.

1.5.3 The economic opportunity structure (EOS)

Passing through the analysis of economic openness, as previously mentioned, three different orders of variables will be taken into account: the availability of economic resources, the multiplicity of involved actors and their allies among the political elites, and finally, the AFNs capacity to make lobbying.

Considering the economic available resources, it results important to first see the dimension of this industry which AFNs are moving along. Indeed, the demand for healthier and more environmentally sustainable food is increasing in both countries. The market, in both contexts, shows openness to what regards sustainable food, even though

⁵⁸ <https://ndonline.com.br/Florianópolis/noticias/capital-catarinense-e-referencia-nacional-em-agroecologia-urbana> last accessed 25 July 2018.

⁵⁹ <http://www.epagri.sc.gov.br/> last accessed 06 March 2018.

the Italian situation seems to be more advanced compared to the Brazilian one. Thus, the available resources for making a change in the Market are evident. Indeed, the annual report “*BioInCifre*”⁶⁰ (SINAB 2017) published by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, referred to the year 2016 (this is the last update published) shows that organic agriculture has increased of 20,4% of production, 0,3 million hectares compared to the previous year (totally almost 1,8 million hectares), occupying the 14,5% of the available croplands (keeping in mind that Lombardy, where is located Bergamo, is the most industrialized regions of Italy). Organic certified farmers in Italy are more than 72.000, 20,3% more rather than the previous year, globally representing the 4,4% of the Italian farmers, 1% more than 2015. This report also states that organic consumption is constantly increasing of 20% per year, generally representing the 3% of agri-food market in Italy, where more than 80% of the organic market exchanges pass through supermarkets (48%) and hypermarkets (35%).

On the other hand, as displayed in the report published by IFOAM International in 2013, organic croplands in Brazil are 0,7 million hectares, occupying less than 1% of global croplands (Willer and Kilcher 2011; Willer, Lernoud, and Home 2011). Organic farmers (certified) in Brazil are more than 17.000⁶¹, but it is a small percentage compared to the global number of family farmers that amount to more than 4 million family farmers. Unfortunately, there are no official statistics on organic agriculture. What it could be affirmed, based on other researches, is that generally Latin American markets tend to export. However, among other Latin American Countries, Brazil is still featured by the most developed domestic market. Farmers street-markets and cooperatives have been organized for 30 years, and a balance has been kept between domestic and international organic markets (Willer and Kilcher 2011). The most updated data comes from the *Conselho Nacional da Produção Orgânica e Sustentável* (ORGANIS), which stated that organic market in Brazil has increased of 20% in 2016 for a gross amount of 3 billion R\$ (0,75 billion €), but there is no further available information about the Brazilian market⁶².

⁶⁰ Available at: <http://www.sinab.it/sites/default/files/share/Bio%20in%20cifre%202017%20%282%29.pdf> last accessed 25 July 2018.

⁶¹ Source: *Censo Agropecuário*, Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento, last update 28/03/2018. Available at: <http://www.agricultura.gov.br/assuntos/sustentabilidade/organicos/cadastro-nacional-produtores-organicos> last accessed 06 March 2018.

⁶² Several research state institutes are developing internal research about consumption and production of organic products (e.g. *Instituto de Economia Agrícola-IEA*, an agency of the *Secretaria de Agricultura*

In Santa Catarina, as the State Secretary of Agriculture has reported, there are thousands of producers, especially within the Grande Florianópolis and the Southern region of the State, representing almost the 90% of the domestic (State, in this case) consumption⁶³ is produced in Santa Catarina.

In terms of actors involved and available spaces of marketing, it is clear that in both contexts it has been witnessing a relative openness of the Market in general, even though the economic and financial crisis in Brazil is slightly slowing market opportunities. Moreover, the growth of consumption, at the local level, offers them new economic opportunities, even though also the conventional supply system is getting benefit from this growth. In both contexts, there are emerging selling points, like farmers' markets, or basically, local supermarkets that are interested to buy fresh local products. Business opportunities, the chance to be independent, and the economic conjuncture seem to be the issues that are bringing into the agricultural sector new entrepreneurs, especially relatively young, proving an increasing multiplicity of stake-holders/seekers in the sustainable agriculture sector. Referring to the phenomenon of 'neo-rural' (Cazella 2001) is present in Italy, as well as in Brazil. Talking about it with a delegate of Slow Food Bergamo, he affirmed:

Going back to the field is giving autonomy to young people. With the farmland, it is possible to meet stability in labour, in time-managing, and it could give the chance to become again protagonist (Actor n. 5 – Male, Slow Food Bergamo)

Other Brazilian stakeholders said something similar, highlighting the university's role:

I feel that the phenomenon of 'neo-rural' is present in Florianópolis [...] Farmers' sons are coming here (in the agrarian sciences department) for studying and for returning back to the field for working with their family (Actor n. 17 – Female, Cepagro NGO Florianópolis)

We are witnessing to a revival of young people with high-education, that are looking to the environment such an opportunity, bringing technologies, know-how, and seeking business opportunities. Our culture, especially here within the region of Grande Florianópolis, is incorporated with agribusiness. Most of the people have a 'foot in rural roots'. But this it does not mean that young farmers should be farmers' son, but this is not strictly linked with

e Abastecimento do Estado de São Paulo-SAA).

⁶³ <http://www.agricultura.sc.gov.br/index.php/noticias/648-secretaria-da-agricultura-incentiva-investimentos-na-producao-de-organicos> last accessed 06 March 2018.

their parents' job (Actor n. 19 – Male, Fetaesc Union Florianópolis)

The 'neo-rural' generally comes with a handicap in terms of production. Some of them, thanks to universities' internship, could learn useful technics, but sometimes he starts without any production's experience, but with the know-how of marketing, aggregation of value, he could know where there is a chance to make money (Actor n. 26 – Male, Federal University Florianópolis)

New spaces of the market are emerging in both local contexts, not just farmers' market, or GDO shelves. As it has stated above concerning the composition of AFNs, SPGs, CSAs, farmers which directly sell their products, online platforms of food distribution, and other AFNs are numerically increasing. However, there is not available data which refers to the entire sales volume of AFNs and SFSCs, even because it is reasonably complicated to evaluate it, but this lack should be solved in future researches. At the same time, it was not clear how these initiatives have been lobbying the entire agro-industry, due to their relatively small dimension and impact at macro-level. Although, in the next session will be highlighted their importance for what concerns the creation of new meanings and imaginaries around food consumption and production.

1.5.4 The cultural opportunity structure (COS)

Lastly, the AFNs' and sustainable agriculture movements' ability to create public opinion and exerting social influence around these claims left to be analysed. To do so, it is necessary to historically reconstruct the framing-process of their issues and the reached cultural outcomes.

Thus, as Brunori et al. claimed (2013), in Italy the critics toward the agrarian industrialization and the conventionalization of the agri-food system have surfaced around the 1970s, with the birth of organic agriculture movement. These organic farmers, being excluded from the conventional food channels, developed alternative spaces for reaching a counter-public based on the direct relationship between consumers and producers. Starting from the mid-1980s, when the Green Party have been founded, they got a political space to address their claims and disseminate their counterculture. Later, one of the most important actors around food issues appeared. Indeed, in 1989, Slow Food Movement was founded by Carlo Petrini and Folco Portinari, who issued the Slow Food Manifesto⁶⁴. Without making a historical reconstruction of this movement, it is necessary

⁶⁴ http://slowfood.com/filemanager/Convivium%20Leader%20Area/Manifesto_ENG.pdf last accessed 07 September 2018

to report how this SMO was and is still important for what concerns framing food issues. Even though they have currently created alliances with big companies, especially Italian ones, they have undoubtedly put into the public agenda the emergencies of global food production, contrasting the American model of 'fast food'. Acting at all levels, they have increased consumers and citizens awareness around food. They got the trust, even though the Slow Food 'logo', nowadays, could be also perceived as a 'brand'. This is clear even if we turn the focus at the local scale. Indeed, Slow Food, among the Bergamo's territory take part to the most important actor who has developed knowledge, practices, and culture in Bergamo which is "*Cittadinanza Sostenibile*", the local solidarity economy network. This collective actor involves several important local stakeholders like non-profits organizations related to fair trade, ethical banks, environmental associations, media press, and other SMOs such as *Bilanci di Giustizia*, who, together with SPGs, have played a crucial role in terms of creating a culture around food. Indeed, through political consumerism, SPGs and *Bilanci di Giustizia* have disseminated the idea and the importance to shift our consumption toward a more sustainable perspective, together with share knowledge and educate consumers to be more aware (Forno et al. 2015; De Vita and Vittori 2015). Together with these organizations, also the local university, through the *Osservatorio CORES Research Group* (now, CoresNet Research Group), takes part in the within this grassroots network. Together with this organization, which could be considered as grassroots, other more institutionalized actors are working on food claims: the local administration for instance, or the social organic farmers organization, *BioDistretto*, created in anticipation to the Regional Law on social agriculture, which leaders are some social cooperatives that work in organic farming since the late 1980s. Furthermore, other institutional actors who have influenced both consumers and producers around these issues are the farmers' unions/organization, first all Coldiretti, which was this first subject in Italy, so in Bergamo, to promote the importance of framing farmers' markets.

Contrary in Brazil, the agri-food system, and the idea of it, is still dominated by stereotypes. Even though the consumption is increasing, as it has been demonstrated in the previous section, consumers and producers' awareness around the emergencies of the conventional agri-food systems is notably weaker rather than the Italian one. Moreover, media attention, even though is increasing, tends to encourage and promote the mainstream ideal of the food system in a stronger way compared to Italy. Recently, for example, one of the most important broadcasters has started to spread the advertising

campaign of “*Agro: a indústria-riqueza do Brasil*” (Agri: the prosperity-industry of Brazil) which directly encourages and emphasizes the crucial role of agri-business for the Brazilian development, in opposition to the small-scale farming. In addition, the same broadcaster has been largely considered as the main responsible for what concerns the gender and racist stereotypes framing, as a recent documentary made by a global broadcaster has shown⁶⁵⁶⁶, thus, the idea that Brazilian media are responsible for this mainstream culture jamming, which has been influencing the agro-industry, is largely shared. In turn, to analyse and assess the SMOs ability to create public opinion and to exert social influence, at national scale, against this stereotyped reality, since the 1980s and 1990s several SMOs like *Movimento Sem Terra*, solidarity economy networks, such as Rede Ecovida, grassroots organizations of Catholic and Lutheran Church, have been working to face this scenario, improving a notable work in education and technical formation for both producers and consumers (Almeida 1999; Schmitt 2010; Schmitt and Tygel 2009). This has been clearer at the local scale. From what I could observe, Florianópolis appears in countertendency respect the national mainstream approach toward food provisioning and rural development. Thanks to academia’s commitments, these stereotypes are daily faced with practices, workshops, public debates around these issues and so on. The role played by the academic institutions is crucial. First, the main university directly organizes AFNs within the campus, but also other universities, through radios, events, and other initiatives, are spreading environmental and sustainability-related claims. The Rede Ecovida in Florianópolis, and among the suburbs, collects tens of producers and an important number of supporters. Furthermore, some neighbourhood’s associations, like AMORA (*Associação Moradores Ratores*) are also implementing initiatives related to environmental protection and conservation of peasantry tradition. Other grassroots initiatives are emerging in partnership with some local politicians. Moreover, some NGOs like Cepagro play an important role in dissemination and education. Also, other institutionalized actors like farmers’ unions are directly engaged in some AFNs engaging and sustaining small-farmers. Moreover, there are other subjects which play an important role. Between them, there is one of the most important farmers’

⁶⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/listeningpost/2017/09/brazil-media-monopolies-political-manipulations-170909072110030.html> last accessed 03 August 2018.

⁶⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/listeningpost/2017/09/brazil-media-monopolies-political-manipulations-170909072110030.html> last accessed 03 August 2018.

cooperatives of the Santa Catarina State (Agreco)⁶⁷, that has become now industrialized, and another one – more grassroots – which involves small farmers (*Cooperativa Sabor da Terra*)⁶⁸.

To sum, within media, TV, social media, radio, there is also in both Countries special attention toward chef and gourmets' shows, and so on, which has been pushing people to pay more attention toward premium quality cuisine. However, thanks to other SMOs, the idea of food left to be a simple commodity. Food has been reinvested of meanings. Food became social, and sometimes, politized. Thanks to some contributions in academia – e.g. (Pollan 2006) – as well as successful documentaries like *Super-Size Me* (2004), *Food. Inc.* (2008), or *Cowspiracy* (2014), and the media exposure toward food issues were and are still decisive for increasing consumers' awareness.

1.6 Conclusion

Through the POS it was possible to understand an ambiguous trend: the relative openness of the local institutions and macro-dynamics that have been affecting the AFNs action. As it has reported, it was possible, thanks to the expertise and the commitment of the universities and some local politicians, to improve some local strategies able to help AFNs structuration in both cities, like Food Policy Council, urban agroecology policies, new groups of collective purchase groups, between others. However, the governmental change in both Countries needs to be deeply understood and investigated in the future, especially for what concerns Brazil, where the radical change in political representation shocked the public debate along the last months.

The EOS has shown how supermarkets and big companies are locating sustainable products within their circuits. Indeed, as it was reported above, at macro-level, data show that production and consumption of sustainable food are significantly increasing, especially within large-scale retail channels. Food has been influencing the marketing strategies of several agri-food companies and it has created newly available spaces in the Market, as it was shown before, graphically explained by the interconnections between the COS and the EOS (see Figure 3). Moreover, the economic and financial crisis which has strongly damaged European economies, mostly in the peripheral Countries, as other researches have shown, on the other hand, seems to foster the emergence of new AFNs

⁶⁷ <http://www.agreco.com.br/> last accessed 01 March 2018.

⁶⁸ <https://goo.gl/3tSDXu> last accessed 01 March 2018.

(Maurano and Forno 2017). Differently, in Brazil, the ongoing economic and financial crisis seems to affect mostly the consumers' perception. Indeed, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Brazil was worth 1796.19 billion US dollars in 2016, significantly lower compared to the GDP that has reached the peak of 2616.20 USD Billion in 2011⁶⁹. The GDP should increase in the next year, as the World Bank's forecast reports⁷⁰, but the current level is still higher compared to the GDP level of 10 years ago. The effects of the economic and financial crisis toward AFNs should be studied in both contexts, but for what emerged, it didn't have discouraged AFNs to get collective-organized. Indeed, new actors and new spaces of marketing have been surfacing in both cities. However, there is not available data which refers to the entire sales volume of AFNs and SFSCs, even because it is reasonably complicated to evaluate it, but this lack should be solved in future researches. At the same time, it was not clear how these initiatives have been lobbying the entire agro-industry, due to their relatively small dimension and impact at macro-level.

Finally, the COS has displayed a controversial dynamic: the role of mass media, like TV, radio, social network, on one hand, are bringing people to become much more aware of consumption and the importance of sustainable agriculture for their territory, on the other hand is still hard to tear down stereotypes around food, especially in consequence of the so-called 'gourmetization' of food, as well as the gender and racist stereotypes' framing at large scale, especially on the TV, and social media. AFNs seem to be a middle-class phenomenon. Black people seem to be excluded, even though in Countries such as Brazil, due the distribution of black and white people among the population, it should be differently represented, while in Italy the presence of immigrants within this network is almost absent. AFNs and SMOs have created and framed public discussions in both contexts, but this pressure seems to be guided by middle- and upper-class citizens. It does not involve marginalized and lower-class people, at least for what emerged in this study.

What could be said to conclude is that food, and food consumption, being strictly important for our life, have been undoubtedly put in the core-action of several urban and peri-urban social and community movements. Being a tool, or being a purpose, it has

⁶⁹ <https://tradingeconomics.com/brazil/gdp> last accessed 07 March 2018.

⁷⁰ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/brazil> last accessed 07 March 2018.

pushed several groups of people to establish and strengthen ties. It is still not possible to say that it is the vector for the creation of a new social paradigm, but in a de-mobilization era, AFNs are springing up. However, these initiatives, even though collect an increasing number of consumers and producers, they appear as functional to the mainstream system, due to their non-contested approach to the system. Their innovative contribution has been used by bigger economic actors to reinforce their own role within the Market, instead of forcing political institution to control more the conventional production, which often hides a systematic exploitation system on Earth and people. This was an attempt to combine insights from social movements theories and AFNs. Further attempts should be done, maybe combining Social Network Analysis, AFNs literature and urban and rural sociology, especially to investigate whether AFNs are linked to other forms of resistance to contemporary capitalism. Differently, the idea of AFNs as SMOs should be reviewed in the sense of considering them as just a subcultural movement which has been influencing consuming habits. A wider and deeper study on ties which link social actors engaged in food initiatives should be done. Certainly, another possible improvement around these phenomena could be to combine studies on future evolutions of the Market and the State, possibly by combining insight gathered through quantitative researches on AFNs economic impact, which could lead us to better understand the effective economic role and their relevance at the macro-level.

2. Alternative Food Networks in Times of Crisis: A Dialectical Co-Construction Process⁷¹

2.1 Introduction

The negative externalities of the agro-industrial food system are even more evident, and they are often borne by local communities and marginal areas. Food insecurity, greenhouse gas emissions, environmental pollution, lack of biodiversity, are just some examples of the consequences caused by industrialized agriculture. At the same time, the economic and social crisis has been striking the Global World (Stiglitz 2009). The crisis appears structural and multidimensional (Castells et al. 2012), and it has been influencing individuals in their every-day life, but at the same time it seems to push (or even forced) people to invent and find new opportunities, especially relatively young people, being the most deprived ones. Hence, the profound crisis, of the Market and the State governance, has left to the grassroots and civil society-based initiatives a considerable space to improve and become sources of innovation – especially through social and self-learning processes and by creating ‘space to manoeuvre’ for re-organizing differently solidarity-based initiatives, together with the food system (Renting et al. 2012). These practices have appeared in both the Global North and Global South, especially within urbanized areas, with different degrees of institutionalization and autonomy. Examples of solidarity-based initiatives are the so-called Alternative Food Networks (AFNs). What has been labelled by the international literature as AFNs (Renting et al. 2012) are non-conventional channels of food distribution, which connect producers and consumers, promote a new concept of ‘food quality’ that respects local economy productions and eating traditions, sustain social development and business relations based on trust and community engagement (Venn et al. 2006).

In the following pages, starting from the contemporary debate around grassroots collective initiatives, the case of AFNs will be presented as part of Sustainable Community Movement Organizations (SCMOs) (Forno and Graziano 2014). By combining insights from alternative forms of resilience, thus AFNs literature in times of crisis, this chapter will show how AFNs are evolving in the Global World. In details, this chapter displays how – and in which way – the economic and financial crisis has been

⁷¹ Presented at the AESOP SFP Workshop ‘Toward sustainable City Region Food Systems’, Polytechnic University of Turin, June 28-30, 2018. The conference proceedings are available at: http://www.dist.polito.it/focus/newsletter_dist/numeri_speciali_newdist last accessed 20 July 2018.

shaping AFNs experiences, which seem to be more developed after 2008, in both the Global North and Global South. It investigates whether the crisis has been differently affecting AFNs in different places in the Global World – and eventually – the reasons behind this tendency.

To reach these goals, data collected in two different contexts – Italy and Brazil – will be compared as follows: firstly, the diachronic evolution of AFNs initiatives, for each case-study, will be presented. Then, following a qualitative approach, it will be analysed the crisis' impact, starting from the findings gathered through in-depth and semi-structured interviews, respectively submitted to key-informants and AFNs producers sampled in two different cities.

2.2 Grassroots collective initiatives in times of crisis

Even though the European and Western countries have passed through different economic and social crises along the 20th Century, the financial and economic collapse of the last ten years is something unprecedented (Giugni and Grasso 2018). The economic downturn has completely changed people's perception of the economy and social life (Giugni and Grasso 2016). Unemployment growth, Austerity's policies imposed by international institutions, and the loss of opportunities overall, have brought people to be less trustful for what concerns the traditional political system. Losing jobs opportunities – for instance – people have lost socialization, information, and personal contacts, key-elements usually related to the participation within the social and political sphere. Following the Hirschman's conceptualization (1970), as Giugni and Grasso have recently written (2018), apparently just those who have not been hit by economic crisis could have enough resources to give 'voice' to their claims and engage social and political action, and contrary to those who were hardest hit could be those who most likely 'exit' from the political sphere and the relative engagement. However, the crisis's consequences on citizens' resilience are not limited to the choice between escaping from or be active in political participation and public life. Indeed, there is a range of other possibilities for citizens' responses to crisis and their negative externalities. The 'voice' side also refers to people who try to find out different strategies to make their claims heard as an active reaction to crises (Giugni and Grasso 2018). It could regard political protests, but also other forms of acting in the community. For what concern the 'exit' side, citizens could develop new practices toward the economic systems, but also toward society at large. Several authors have defined them in different ways such as 'alternative forms of

resilience' (Kousis and Paschou 2017), 'alternative economies' (Castells et al. 2012), 'solidarity economy' (Bauhardt 2014) 'Sustainable community movement organizations' (Forno and Graziano 2014). As Giugni and Grasso have stated:

Alternative forms of resilience include the strengthening of social and family networks and community practices to foster solidarity in the face of crises, change of lifestyles toward more sustainable forms of consumption and production, developing new artistic expressions, and moving abroad for short or long durations (Giugni and Grasso, p. 263)

The major disaffection toward the economic system could enhance people to strengthen their relationships and build up alternative ways to deal with the economic downturn and the related reduction of possibilities. As Kousis and Paschou (2017) have claimed:

They usually flourish during hard economic times marked by austerity policies, multiple, compound inequalities, governance problems, the weakening of social policies, as well as the depletion of labour and social welfare rights (Kousis and Paschou, p. 140)

Their work is strictly important because they have encompassed several streams of studies, which have paid attention – over the last decades – to these phenomena. Following their analysis, these alternatives practices are reflected in social strategies to build community ties, locally shared knowledge and networks of social interaction (Kousis and Paschou, p. 141). Within these alternative forms of interaction, new relationships between producers and consumers rise with the aim of re-conceptualizing food as a common good, instead of a commodity (Corrado 2010). These alternatives re-territorialize food within territories (Marsden 2008; Sage 2003), and they resist the mainstream and industrialized food system, creating alliances among different actors. Together with these above-mentioned approaches, another recent contribution has also surfaced which had filled the gap between alternative practices and social movement studies. Forno and Graziano (2014) have made a crucial contribution to alternative practices studies. They have combined political consumerism literature (Bossy 2014; Bostrom and Klintman 2009; Micheletti 2003; Micheletti and Follesdal 2007; Micheletti and Stolle 2012) and social movement, framing these alternative practices as SCMOs, linking these initiatives to the GJM (Alisa, Forno, and Maurano 2015; Bosi and Zamponi 2015; Guidi and Andretta 2015). These authors define SCMOs as:

Social movement organisations that have the peculiarity of mobilising citizens primarily via their purchasing power and for which the main 'battlefield' is represented by the market where SCMOs' members are politically concerned consumers. Clearly, this does not imply

that all the members share the same level of political consciousness (similarly to other social movement organisations), but it implies that the main motivation for such a social movement organisation to exist is only marginally (if existent) linked to the benefits that collective consumption may offer. In this regard, SCMOs are different from Groupon or other collective purchasers since the act of buying is typically associated with the expression of broad political and social preferences. (Forno and Graziano, p. 142)

Through this definition, the central role of the Market surfaces as the most important SCMOs' feature, being the main 'battlefield' of this kind of initiatives. As the previously-mentioned scholars have shown, also Forno and Graziano consider these new forms of organisations and actions as strongly related to crisis and globalisation, following the conceptualization of Castells et al. (2012). Forno and Graziano consider a wide range of initiatives (e.g. fair trade, time banks, transition towns, eco-villages, simplicity movement, community-supported agriculture, community food networks, Slow Food, etc.), classifying them basing on their scale of action (global vs local) and their attitude towards consumption (alter-consumerism vs anti-consumerism). Following their conceptual framework, on the axis of the local scale of action and alter-consumerism approach, there are the so-called AFNs. As Barbera and Dagnes have reported (2016), AFNs are a comprehensive body of alternative practices connected to the food provisioning which distinguish themselves from the mainstream food systems (Murdoch et al. 2000). Even though it is complicated to define exhaustively them, the proximity of the stakeholders plays a central role in shaping these practices. AFNs are featured, in most cases, by short channels of distribution (Renting et al. 2003), considering not only the geographical proximity but also the economic and social ones. Producers and consumers involved within these networks could also be separated by long distances: a clear example are the international networks of fair trade which connect local communities, usually based in Southern Countries, and critical consumers. The term AFNs is also used for grassroots attempts to partially re-organize the agri-food sector, according to ethical and moral principles (Sayer 2000). Over the last years, some preliminary studies have been done investigating the relation between GDP downturn and AFNs trend. For instance, Andretta and Guidi (Guidi and Andretta 2015) have made a preliminary study on Solidarity Purchase Groups (SPGs)⁷² in times of crisis, demonstrating that the lack of economic sources does not have an influence on SPGs improvement. Hypotheses based on cultural and political processes seem to be more encouraging. They continue affirming:

⁷² The widespread Italian AFN initiative.

Post-materialist values resulting from economic well-being might have produced organized practices of political consumerism, but once it gets organized – this is our tentative argument – not only does it resist to external shocks but also it transforms itself and adapts to fit the new conditions (of crisis), that is, it becomes ‘resilient’. (Guidi and Andretta 2015, p. 469)

Studying SPGs in Tuscany (Italy), they have shown how this type of AFNs, in the context of economic crisis and austerity, could be an alternative resilience opportunity. The financial crisis seems to provide new opportunities for the development of AFNs, as it has been described by Bauman (2013) and Castells et al. (2012). As Forno and Maurano have shown (Maurano and Forno 2017) the economic crisis is one of the drivers that fosters AFNs improvement, as well as the impoverishment of the middle class and the greater citizen awareness around sustainability as a whole.

Most of the previous studies paid attention to the consumption and the role of political consumerism related to these alternative practices. However, for this research, it has been chosen to focus on the production side, at least for collecting several data about crisis’ perception and producers’ meanings which have been driving social actors to get involved in – and framing themselves as – AFNs.

2.3 Data and methods

To reach the above-mentioned goals, the aim of this chapter is firstly to compare AFNs initiatives in two specific contexts, where the research was conducted, thus a medium-sized city in Italy (Bergamo), and another one in Brazil (Florianópolis). The two contexts have been selected considering a series of variables: the dimension, the presence of activities (AFNs) and the role of local universities, as specified in the section I (see chapter 3.4). The research plan was divided into two separated steps as previously described (see section I, chapter 3.3). For this chapter, data regarding AFNs gathered during the field work will be used. Therefore, data on which this chapter builds can be categorized into three sources: primary data from 50 semi-structured interviews with local farmers involved within AFNs initiatives; primary data from the 27 in-depth interviews with actors who are involved in the development and/or implementation of AFNs initiatives, and secondary data from participant observation, ethnography in several AFNs initiatives, and information about AFNs gathered throughout the research process for what concerns the mapping (mainly during the ‘pilot work’). The interviews dealt with the respondents’ perception of the economic crisis, and its impact on sustainable agriculture and the improvement of AFNs experiences. Finally, following a qualitative

approach, it was made the data analysis considering the variables related to the economic crisis.

2.4 Findings

AFNs are located along the urbanized area in both contexts, even though the physical structure of the cities is different. Bergamo is built as most of the cities in the Western World with a unique urbanized centre and the surrounding peripheral areas, while Florianópolis is composed by different populated centres (in Portuguese, “*Bairros*”). Numerically, AFNs are increasing despite the financial and social crisis. In the Italian case-study, it emerged that the SPGs remarkable growth which has been witnessed over the early-2000s has slowed down notably around 2010. A possible explanation is related to the appearance of other forms of AFNs since mid-2000s, such as farmers’ market (almost 30 were mapped in 2016), food assemblies (in Italian, “*alveari*”), multi-functional farms (almost 400 farmers practising direct sell were mapped in 2016), urban and community gardens, and so on (see Maurano and Forno, 2017). More recently, from autumn 2017, the local solidarity economy network has started to work on the construction process of a CSA, as a purpose emerged after the counter-summit called the *alternative to G7 Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture* (in Italian, “*Alternativa al G7 per l’agricoltura*”), that occurred last October in Bergamo. The aim of this CSA would strengthen deeply the relationship between critical consumers and local peasant, who wants to develop alternative forms of agriculture. The histogram below (Figure 11) presents this trend showing the growth tendency of SPGs and farmers’ markets which have been mapped along the research project.

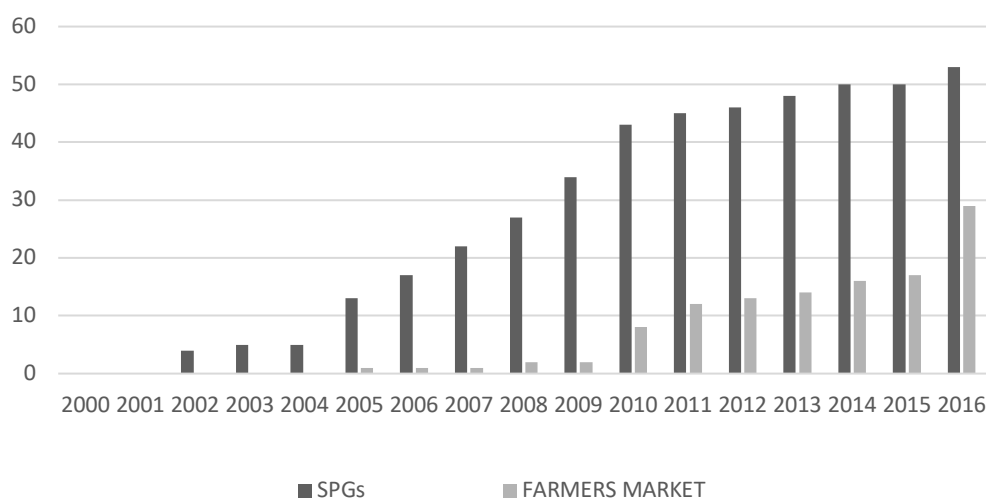


Figure 11 AFNs in Bergamo

As can be seen, starting from 2005, the first experiences of farmers' market have appeared in the city in the Agenda 21⁷³ framework. Since 2007 the citizen solidarity economy network 'Sustainable Citizenship'⁷⁴ (in Italian, "*Cittadinanza Sostenibile*") has been created. Different actors were involved such as local SPGs, Slow Food Movement, environmental organizations, and the local university, among others. This informal network has been created after the international conference on political consumerism, organized within the local university with the purpose of spreading and promoting sustainable and solidarity-oriented lifestyles. After three years (in 2010), they decided to set up a non-profit association called 'Market and Citizenship' (in Italian, "*Mercato e Cittadinanza*") with the aim of enlarging and improving alternative forms of provision. They have started to organize some farmers' market within the city and in the municipalities closer to the capital city centre. This shift toward a wider perspective to be more inclusive has given them a central role in spreading AFNs practices, as it has been confirmed by most of the respondents. For instance, one of the main stakeholders involved in the social organic farmers association BioDistretto affirmed:

Thinking about Bergamo's territory, the birth of SPGs was an element which had helped to connect producers and consumer [...] The SPGs movement, so Mercato e Cittadinanza, the reconfiguration of this sector, and the latter presence of the University, through their dissemination, have turned on spotlights on this issue (Actor. 8 – Male, BioDistretto Bergamo)

⁷³ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf> last accessed 15 May 2018.

⁷⁴ <http://cittadinanzasostenibile.it/index.php/chi-siamo> last accessed 15 May 2018.

Another stakeholder which played an important role, especially for what concerns the citizens' awareness, was Slow Food (as the previous chapter demonstrated), while on the practical side also the main farmers' union association *Coldiretti* was important, being the first institutionalized actor, which promoted the concept of SFSCs. Specifically, the Slow Food movement is largely recognized as the main responsible for the re-conceptualization of food. As a social cooperative's activist stated:

One of the stakeholders who collocated in the public agenda the food issue was Slow Food, surely [...] Bringing together food quality issue, the food philosophy, and the importance of food for traditional cultures, together with what concerns sustainability overall, especially in times of crisis, Slow Food has given to food an increasingly importance. [...] Slow Food was a pioneer: today whether a small producer must introduce himself, he or she uses to talk about their own history, and the history of the territory, where he/she are embedded, instead of talking about their production (Actor 4 – Male, Member of Agroecological Cooperative Bergamo)

The role of consumers and other social movement organizations seem to have fostered these practices in the Bergamo area.

Over last years, as it has been shown in the previous chapter, it is also necessary to consider the institutional engagement of the solidarity economy network, being one of the actors involved within the Agriculture Round-Table, a sort of a Food Policy Council which try to develop a more sustainable local food system.

In Brazil, as well as Italy, AFNs are springing out. Contrary to Bergamo where consumers' initiatives were pioneers, due to the strong presence of SPGs, in Florianópolis, the first AFN initiative was a farmers' market located in one of the most touristic areas of the Santa Catarina Island, where Florianópolis is located. This market has been implemented within the University more than twenty years ago (in 1996). After three months, they moved to the touristic area, being more attractive to consumers. Thanks to researchers of the Federal University and Cepagro NGO, several local producers belonging to Rede Ecovida, one of the most important solidarity economy networks in the World, were involved. After a decade, it was created another farmers' market within the main campus of the Federal University. For what concerns consumers initiatives, the first experience emerged in 1998: a CSA created by one of the most important organic farmers of the city and the local consumers of his community (based in the northern part of the island) and a collective purchase group prompted by environmental and social justice issues. This was what happened until 2006. As shown in

the histogram below, new AFNs experiences came much later. In 2014, the Federal University together with Cepagro NGO created a new farmers' market within the department of zootechnics and rural developments. They created an organic warehouse for helping small local farmers to sell their products. After two years, this experiment failed. They stopped the farmers' market activities, until two years ago, when they engaged an Ecovida farmers' group for providing fresh food and they went back to the initial purpose to sell the agroecological product within the university.

Nowadays, the Federal University is still playing a central role to spread AFNs initiatives like SPGs. Thanks to some researchers which belong to the department of zootechnics and rural development, since 2017 they have started to directly fuel the creation of SPGs experiences in different neighbourhoods of Florianópolis. Globally, I could map nine different consumers' and co-producers' initiatives (6 SPGs and 3 CSAs), a smaller presence compared to the Italian case-study.

For what concerns farmers' markets, I could map 13 different initiatives sufficiently structured in several parts of the urban area.

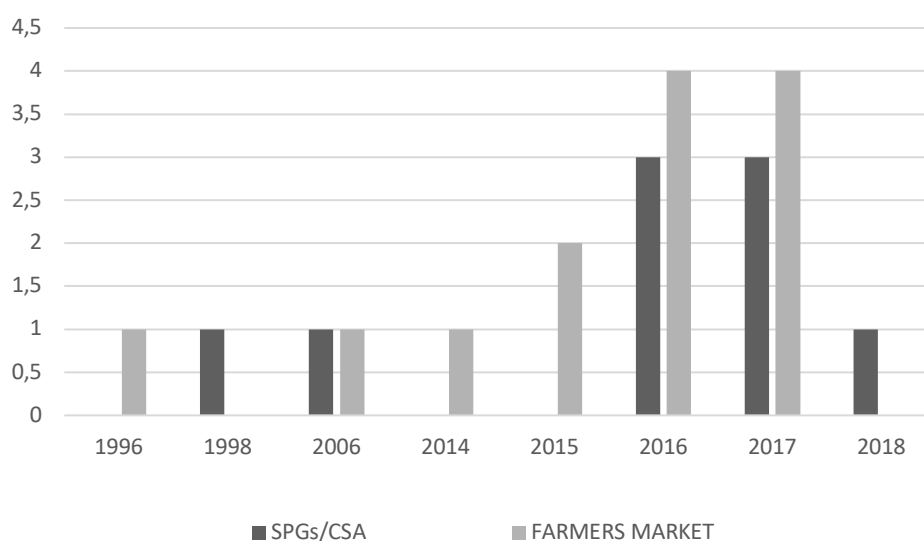


Figure 12 AFNs in Florianópolis

Looking at both histograms (Figure 11 and Figure 12), AFNs have significantly emerged after the economic and financial downturn caused by the 2008-crisis, highlighting a positive trend for the development of alternative practices in both cities and small local farming involved within these networks. However, what emerged are different perceptions about the economic crisis, mainly interviewing local farmers. Whether on one hand key-observants have stressed the growth of sustainable agriculture

initiatives, at the local level, and the increasing consumers' awareness toward the environment and food quality, on the other hand, the producers' perception toward crisis was quite different among the Italian and Brazilian farmers. Italian key-observants have prevalently agreed on what concerns the continuous growth of demand for more sustainable food.

In times of crisis, most people have shifted their purchases toward higher-quality products. Middle-upper class have been re-orienting their consumption: they buy less, but they buy better. I explain it because of the lack of trust toward certification of food products [...] Forty years ago, when the Green Party was talking about environment, most people used to laugh in their face, while today people directly touch with their hands a series of consequences related to the environmental pollution (Actor. 8 – Male, BioDistretto Bergamo)

Contrary, Brazilian key-observants have stressed other issues. Most of them highlighted the fake construction of the crisis's narrative made by agri-business players and industrial lobbies and media, that are influencing people in everyday life, especially for endorsing the neoliberal agenda of the government. The case of the Dilma's impeachment is a clear example of such engagement of the Brazilian media and their related role in agenda settings⁷⁵. As a local member of Slow Food Brasil stated:

The economic crisis has been affecting the people's mind [...] The government creates a fake economic crisis, and so creates costs. It was not the crisis which has caused welfare cuts. I think the opposite: they invented the crisis for sustaining welfare cuts. The economic crisis is affecting the poorest people. It did not exist. It was established (Actor 18 – Female, Slow Food Brasil Florianópolis)

Moreover, a local politician affirmed:

Firstly, the economic crisis is storytelling. It is a topic for strengthening the idea of scarcity condition. We are living in an abundance state. What does the economic crisis sustain? A neo-liberal agenda of privatizations, welfare cuts and reinforcing inequalities between rich and poor people [...] They want to reduce the progressive agenda, that has already got fewer resources. Now, the public agenda is open toward the market, toward free liberal initiatives. It is a crisis of a lot of resources. Who has got money invests for making more money? It is a crisis of abundance. The classic systems are collapsing. Sustainable agriculture is going to increase. Who practice this type of agriculture won't get back to conventional agriculture. I can see it clearly, as well as the people will change their habits. Producers do not want to go back to GDOs. This is a pathway which will improve, also in public investments, even though it uses to be seen as marketing. Contrary, I see it as a development model. I would like to see

⁷⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/listeningpost/2017/09/brazil-media-monopolies-political-manipulations-170909072110030.html> last accessed 03 August 2018.

agroecology as a systemic strategy for territorial development. It is a powerful tool. It is a new model of social organization (Actor 24 – Male, PSOL Florianópolis)

What arose from Brazilian key-observant interviews was the evident nexus which seems to link the ongoing political crisis (the ‘white coupe d’état’ and more recently the capture of the leader of the Workers’ Party, Lula) and the perception of reality, thus the economic crisis. Most of the respondents have underlined how it has been deeply affecting the everyday-life:

The political crisis is extremely negative: we are living in a process where people don’t what will happen. They are removing all rights. They are stopping all the achievements of the last years. Just in agriculture, one of the first decision of the coup was destroying the Minister of Rural Development (Actor n. 21 – Female, CSA Florianópolis)

This was what I found by interviewing key-observant in both contexts. However, within farmers, there was not a common vision. Among the Italian farmers, the economic crisis seems not to have influenced their action. On the contrary, most of them have improved their activity.

The economic crisis, at least, has limited the construction industry development. Welcome crisis! He still waiting for economic growth after ten years. Of course, there are people who have lost a lot of sources. We have lost our freedom. But, the crisis, in terms of workers’ rights has started in the WTO era and when has started the globalization process. The crisis did not shock me. In times of crisis, there was a growing trend. I think no one got problems. It is the future which worries me. If I had to think about fifteen years ago, I would see the World completely different. But things went through another path. I was dreaming a different World (Producer 15, Bergamo)

There were some exceptions like this producer, who started to be engaged in AFNs just two years ago, is mainly engaged with small local retailers.

The crisis in our industry: what I see the same prices as thirty years ago. Living costs are increasing, but the prices for fresh food still at the same level. Too much low! Moreover, climate change has been striking us for what concerns the loss of products (Producer 3, Bergamo)

Contrary to the Italian case-study, in Brazil, the farmers’ opinion seems to be two-pronged. There is a good percentage of them who have not been affected by economic crisis, but, more than a half of them expressed the idea which highlights a general downturn of consumptions:

There was a slowdown in sales. We are dependent on the supermarket (the organic one), and

there was a significant downturn. During the summer generally gets better, because of tourism. With foreign people, we can get a better price (Producer 45, Florianópolis)

and the reduction of public investment toward sustainable consumption, especially for public and students' canteens.

Yes, the crisis within the University has reduced available resources, but also outside. Public investments in agriculture have decreased. The current economic situation is stagnant. We came from a season of greater investment in this industry (Producer 47, Florianópolis)

However, there are also other producers, a small number of them, who share the idea expressed by key-observants like the quote reported below, which belongs to one of the most aware producers which I interviewed:

The economic crisis, I think is a sort of manipulation for keeping us sick. The best slave is who does not know to be it, and all we are slaves (Producer 48, Florianópolis)

Another issue surfaced through the interviews is the notable number of young people involved in these alternative networks. It is a shared opinion, within the respondents – both key-observant and producers – that there are more relatively young people committed to sustainable agriculture and alternative food practices. To better understand it, I report below an extract from an interview made with an Italian activist, who was directly engaged with the counter-summit for the Alternative to the G7. It is significant because it synthesizes features which characterise the ongoing situation,

I have friends who are leaving the stressing reality. They are going back to the backyard, finding self-sufficiency and living with fewer things, out of the system. There are young people which are doing it. But if I must tell you: how does the economic crisis shock young people? It is not linear. It is a negative trend. Young people are not going to mobilise themselves. Our generation is not that much mobilised [...] The economic crisis has divided and individualised more individuals. When there are no more common spaces like factories, with strong workers unions, so a defined strategy of struggle and contention, together with the spreading of precarious job contracts, of course, it gives to the Capital the opportunity to divide people more. Today, young people are individuals who try to survive until the end of the month. They have left the idea of collective action because it does not exist anymore. They do not live the idea of collective in their workplace, so they do not have this awareness. The welfare state is going to disappear, but our families still help us. [...] These alternative experiences, that left to be simply niches, have not only created a local reality, but they have built an Alternative. If it will return another crisis, these alternatives could give an answer. Contrary, we would have the Fascism. But we have not already reached the real crisis. I'm hopeful, we are the Alternative when a new crisis will come. (Actor 12 – Female, Alternative to the G7 Bergamo)

As a matter of fact, in both contexts, it seems to be a notable presence of relatively young people who are going back to the farmland. However, this claim will be faced in-depth in the next chapter.

Finally, asking the farmers their opinion toward the cultural and economic ongoing panorama, it is shared the idea that the consumers' awareness of the importance of buying products from sustainable agriculture is increasing. Indeed, despite the economic and financial crisis, they confirmed that the ongoing economic context is still favourable for the growth and implementation of such activities.

2.5 Discussion and conclusion

Analysing what it has been reported in the previous paragraph, Italian AFNs appear to be fostered mainly by the activism of consumer-actors, accordingly with previous studies made on the evolution of these alternative practices in times of crisis (Guidi and Andretta 2015). One reasonable explanation of this trend could be linked to the strong presence of SPGs within the metropolitan area of cities, where the consumption use to materialize itself (Wiskerke 2015). In the case of Bergamo, as written above, along the urban and peri-urban area have been established almost 70 different SPGs, apart from other alternative forms of food provisioning, like farmers' markets which have literally sprung out over last ten years. Contrary, in Brazil, AFNs are mostly encouraged by the activism of producers with the support of the Rede Ecovida and University. In the previous paragraph, it has been shown how the first initiatives of alternative forms of provisioning were developed by the university personnel, properly inside the campus. The current will of spreading some practices like the Italian SPGs, in several neighbourhoods of Florianópolis, confirm this trend. Moreover, other social actors like NGOs and the solidarity economy network support this idea, beyond other strategies finalized to engage more producers within the network.

Moreover, comparing data collected on the field, what emerged is that the economic crisis has not been affecting AFNs initiatives yet, which are increasing. What previous researches – and this one – have demonstrated is that the economic crisis, the impoverishment of the middle class, and the greater citizen awareness on economic, social, and environmental sustainability issues have shaped the form of development of this type of collective action (Maurano and Forno, 2017). Therefore, the economic crisis, as well as the increasing attention toward sustainability, are pushing both consumers and producers to find out alternative solutions. This is what this research highlights, but it is

also proved by official data included in the annual report published by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture (SINAB 2017). The consumption of more sustainable products is increasing as data testify, which also show how the cropland area occupied by alternative forms of production is increasing too, with an outstanding growth rate which is almost around 20% per year. Despite this evidence, as a recent study, made by Forno and Graziano on political consumerism and solidarity economy in Italy, has demonstrated⁷⁶, comparing data from 2002 and 2018, it has been shown how the number of people who have started to address, in a more sustainable way, their consumption is increased, reaching 30% of the sampled population. These scholars also showed the increasing percentage of people who take part in SPGs, and it represents more than 10% of the population. However, what Forno and Graziano highlighted is the surprising data related to people who do not buy ‘politically’. More than 50% of their sample answered that they have never heard before the term ‘political consumerism’, proving how long more should be the pathway to follow for this kind of practices. The evidence of the increasing citizens’ awareness it was also confirmed by people interviewed (both Italian and Brazilian producers) for this research. The number of people interested in these claims is greater than before, but as most of the Brazilian farmers have affirmed, the economic crisis has impoverished lower-middle classes, hence, each person uses to buy less, also because the number of sale points is growing, as well as the presence of more sustainable products within the GDO. The enlargement of food supplies has reduced the market power of small producers. Brazilian farmers are passing through worse times, instead of Italian farmers, who highlighted their continuous positive trend, and this is reasonable. The crisis, even though it has started in 2008, as well as Italy and other Western Countries, in Brazil it began to affect real economy just in 2015, where the GDP was 27% lower compared to 2014⁷⁷ rate, in conjunction with Dilma’s impeachment and the consequent change in government leadership in favour of lobbies and other parliamentary groups of interests. The consumers’ awareness is still weaker in Brazil, comparing to Italy. From what I could observe during the interviews with farmers and key-observants, local consumers are more focused on their own health, rather than in Italy. Even though are surfacing consumers’ experiences, they still are weaker and lesser compared to the Italian case-study. It could be a possible explanation of the Brazilian AFNs, which are mainly

⁷⁶ <https://www.socialcohesiondays.com/osservatorio/la-rivoluzione-nel-quotidiano-il-cambiamento-degli-stili-di-vita-degli-italiani/> last accessed 07 August 2018.

⁷⁷ <https://tradingeconomics.com/brazil/gdp> last accessed 18 May 2018.

built by local producer organizations and/or local NGO or research groups belonging to the university.

All these circumstances reconfigure new balances within the Market and the society. The economic and financial crisis, as it was previously described, creates insecurity, instability, fears, precariousness, distrust toward institutions. However, most interviewed people have confirmed the idea of Castells et al. (2012): the current economic crisis offers opportunities to develop alternative practices among the urban (and peri-urban) landscape. There are ever more new farmers which started to produce and to be engaged in alternative forms of distribution. Most of the new activities founded by the crisis, within the selected sample, are led by relatively young people, the so-called ‘neo-rural’ (Cazella 2001). This data has been also confirmed by *Coldiretti*⁷⁸. Indeed, as it has been published by “la Repubblica”, last February⁷⁹, one of the most important Italian newspapers, almost ten thousand of the new agricultural activities have been opened by under-35 people along the year 2017, proving an increasing interest toward agriculture from relatively young people. This finding was also confirmed in previous research made among the province of Bergamo, in which 58 farmers committed to the SFSCs were sampled (Salvi and Vittori 2017). The lack of opportunities and values, which the crisis has created, has been filled with a new value system. This new re-configuration is not anti-consumeristic, but alter-consumeristic, and it is carrying out itself as a new ‘cultural vanguard’. That study confirmed the centrality of environmental and workers’ rights protections within young people claims, who are leading these new activities. Being conscious about the environmental and socio-political risks which contemporary economic systems entails (Forno 2015; Renting et al. 2012), it is reasonable to think that new generations of people, due the impossibility to consume or get a secure job, which is even more precarious (Bauman 2013b; Beck 1992; Giddens 1998; Giddens 2012), could be directly committed to creating their own activity.

Through these pages, it was possible to re-construct how is and in which degree the financial and economic contemporary crisis has influenced the establishment or the re-configuration of these initiatives. What is left to be analysed are the limits of these practices. Even though the solidarity economy is increasing, it is still a marginal economic

⁷⁸ The most important Italian farmers’ union.

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http://www.repubblica.it/economia/miojob/2018/02/01/news/giovani_e_lavoro_nascono_300_impresa_al_giorno_boom_in_agricoltura-187706782/ last accessed 13 June 2018.

sector. If the will is to institutionalize this form of making the economy and create new markets, undoubtedly, they should make a special effort to engage a bigger portion of people, who are still unaware. The political and social crisis appears to be more rooted and worrying especially in Brazil and it should also be observed together with the future economic trend, to assess its impact. Both countries are passing through serious times of uncertainty. More studies should be carried out to better understand a possible connection between these trends.

3. Sustainable Agriculture in a Comparative Perspective: Data Analysis from Italian and Brazilian Producers involved within Alternative Food Networks

3.1 Introduction

The so-called ‘Green Revolution’, a synonym of the intensive agriculture, resulted unable to guarantee an enough and abundant production of secure food for all citizens in the Global World. This process has started from the idea of the long-term availability of natural sources like water, soil, low-cost energy, and the impossibility to affect climate change. However, its core-elements like the adoption of chemical inputs, agriculture’s mechanization, and the exploitation of natural sources were completely related to oil and other fossil sources’ exploitation. The ‘Green Revolution’ milestones indeed have brought into society several negative consequences. First, climate change is even more evident and violent compared to the past. Monocultural agriculture, which is the most practised, often exercised with GMOs, covers today the 80% of the entire croplands on Earth, and it is responsible for the 30% of the global greenhouse gas emission, compromising the future scenario (Altieri et al. 2015). Due to the lack of monocultural agriculture’s ecological defences, this type of production, to be sustainable, needs to be protected and fuelled by pesticides and chemical fertilizers, which often impoverish soils. The increasing consumption of GMOs seeds has been affecting the traditional and the alternative forms of agriculture, which are more ecological-oriented. Despite the green revolution’s aim to feed the World, today almost 1 billion people suffer from undernutrition yet, and 600 million people could fall into the risk of hunger by 2080 (De Schutter 2010). Even though we are producing enough food for feeding 10 billion people (the estimated population by 2050), most of the cereals and monocultural productions are addressed to livestock and to make biofuels. The goal to improve agricultural production by 2050 seems to be oriented to sustain the current economic system, instead of feeding people. We are producing more than what we need. Indeed, more than 1 billion tons of food is wasted in the World (Altieri et al. 2015). Contrary to what could be thought, this excess of production affects hunger, because it reduces food-stuff prices and demolishes the economic sustainability of the local food system, especially for those territories which survive through small-scale subsistence farming. The industrialization of agriculture has concentrated the land ownership in favour of a few stakeholders such as the biggest global

food companies. This phenomenon is even more evident after the crisis of food-stuff prices happened in 2006-2008: big companies are buying available foreign croplands to improve their profits, leaving local communities without any chances to be self-sufficient⁸⁰. However, around the World, most small-holders (who are 1,5 billion people overall) are developing alternative forms of agriculture (almost 75% of them) to respond to the above-mentioned negative externalities. These peasants are responsible for more than 50% of the food production on the Planet (ETC 2009). They are also conserving the biodiversity, unlike the industrial development which would limit the variety of seeds and available products. Most of them are improving their activity without any chemical input, and they are protecting the landscape where are embedded (Altieri 2002). This new paradigm, which combines natural and/or organic productions with an ecological approach toward the environment, in literature has been defined as agroecology (Altieri 2002; Altieri and Toledo 2011; Rosset and Martínez-torres 2012; Rover 2013). It was considered a new science because it provides basic equipment for those rural social movements which are promoting food sovereignty, fighting for self-sufficiency, and preserving the environment, as well as peasants' health.

What this chapter shows, starting from the historical evolution of food and alternative agriculture movements in Italy and Brazil, is a suitable picture of the current state of health of sustainable agriculture in the Global World. This chapter is divided as follows: at the beginning, the preliminary literature review for what concerns the agriculture evolution will be discussed showing the historical evolution of sustainable agriculture and the ongoing process called as 'post-organic' movement. Therefore, findings from 50 semi-structured interviews conducted within farmers involved in alternative forms of distribution among the two considered case-studies, thus, Bergamo and Florianópolis, will be presented. Specifically, it will be shown previously who these producers are, their motivations and reasons behind their action. It will be also analysed the degree of their network's engagement. Therefore, the main goal is to highlight if there are any connections between Italian and Brazilian farmers, or, on the contrary, which are the differences behind their action.

⁸⁰ https://www.grain.org/bulletin_board/tags/221-land-grabbing last accessed 04 June 2018.

3.2 Sustainable agriculture: a Century-length pathway

Sustainable agriculture is a widespread concept described in various ways, varying from a place to another, or from a production system to another one. The definitions such as organic farming, natural farming, Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA), agroecology, and some others, all of these describe some forms of sustainable agriculture. In this paragraph, the aim is not to classify them, but rather to refer to the shared idea published by Via Campesina⁸¹, one of the most important peasant movement in the World. What is important is to make explicit what is commonly intended as sustainable agriculture. To clarify it, a list of principles has been reported below:

1. Enhance the recycling of biomass and optimizing nutrient availability and balancing nutrient flow;
2. Securing favourable soil conditions for plant growth, particularly by managing organic matter and enhancing soil biotic activity;
3. Minimizing losses due to flows of solar radiation, air, and water by way of microclimate management;
4. Species and genetic diversification of the agroecosystem in time and space;
5. Enhance beneficial biological interactions and synergisms among agrobiodiversity components thus resulting in the promotion of key-ecological processes and services.

These are milestones of the sustainable agriculture for Via Campesina (2010). As it can be easily understood, the role of small-farmers is crucial to develop a more sustainable model of agriculture. To better understand the evolution of this phenomenon, it is necessary to remember the historical pathway which has enhanced the current situation.

The history of alternative agriculture began before the dawn of the so-called ‘Green Revolution’. Originally, the alternative agriculture (today ecological agriculture, or simply ‘agroecology’), was associated with a philosophic, anthropo-sophist or esoteric thought. It was born in Germany in 1924 oriented by Steiner as biodynamic agriculture,

⁸¹ <https://viacampesina.org/en/> last accessed 13 June 2018.

then it was developed as organic in England and biological later in France (Brandenburg 2002).

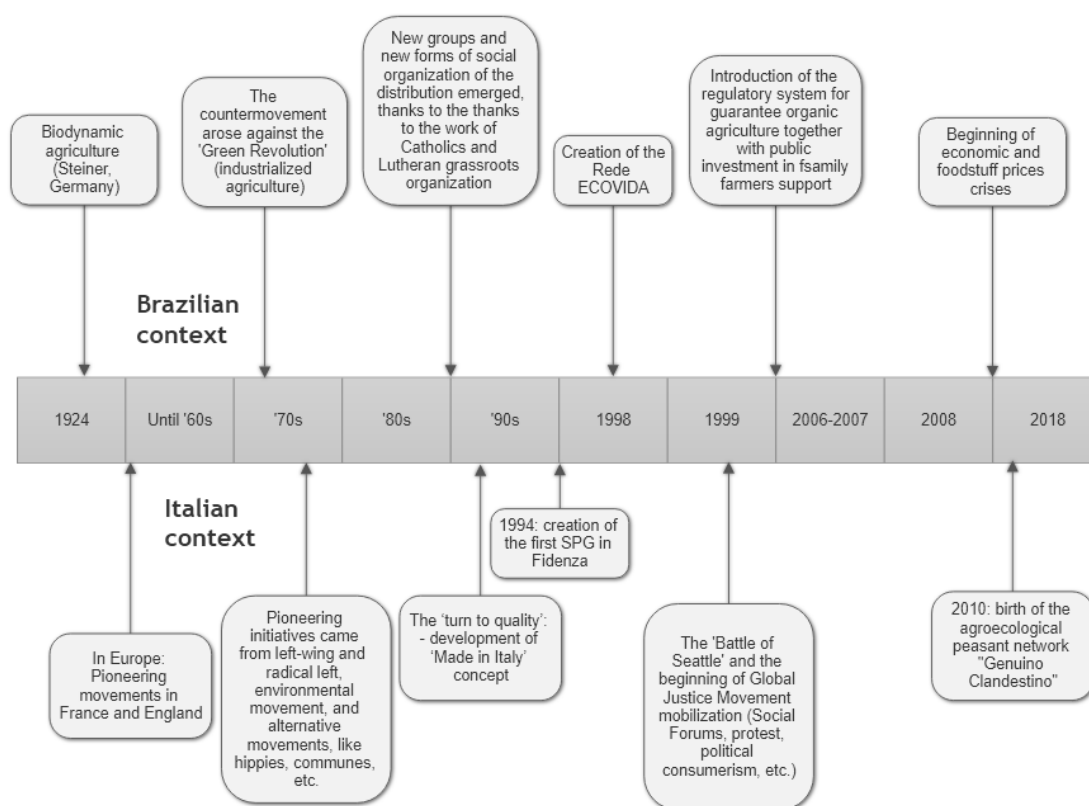


Figure 13 Sustainable Agriculture Evolution: Timeline

Thus, this process started in Europe, thanks to the scientific contribution of agronomist and other technicians (Figure 13). However, the Second World War left the Continent in a critical situation of poverty and hunger. The 'Green Revolution' indeed had the main goal to solve this problem. Hence, between the 1960s and 1970s, it has completely changed the agricultural panorama. Although, according to previous studies (Brunori et al. 2013; Fonte and Cucco 2015), a counter-tendency to this progressive industrialization and standardization of agriculture, arose. Other experiences starting from the 1970s emerged. To give an idea of what happened in a specific European context (Italy), the evolution of this counter-movement will be summed following three different phases: the genesis of sustainable agriculture, the consolidation and the 'turn to quality', and finally the 'turn to politics', which specifically refers to those organizations/groups which have adopted political consumerism to strengthen this alternative paradigm of production.

1) The genesis: the origin of the sustainable agriculture movement arose between the 1970s and the early 1980s. The pioneers of the organic agriculture came from different backgrounds such as left-wing and radical left, environmental movements, and other anti-conformist and/or alternative movements, like hippies, communes, and other similar experiences (Fonte and Cucco 2015). This phase was featured by the scattered multiplicity of regional-local level initiatives. The first Italian organic association called “*Suolo e Salute*” was founded in Turin in the late 60s by a group of medical doctors, agronomist and farmers who fought against the use of chemical inputs in farming. We must wait until the early 1980s to witness the institutionalization of the process, when different consumers’ initiatives, food influencer experiences (such as “*Gambero Rosso*”), and farmers organizations such as AIAB (the Italian association of organic agriculture initiatives) were born. The full institutionalization was achieved only during the 1990s when the first European common regulation organic agriculture was approved (Fonte and Cucco 2015).

2) The consolidation and the ‘turn to quality’: the idea of ‘Made in Italy’ was developed during this time, which was constructed as a quality brand (Fonte and Cucco 2015). Between the late 1980s and 1990s, the attention to artisan quality was crucial, with a specific focus on local production and cultural identities of food. As Brunori et al. stated (2013), it gained consensus among the business sector replacing the competitiveness approach typical of the industry. The emphasis has been given to food safety because of some scandals like BSE, wine adulteration (e.g. the methanol wine scandal in 1986), and so on, which have emerged. Scandals and the public debate around the diffusion of GMOs triggered a reflexive behaviour among European consumers, especially toward food safety and health (Fonte and Cucco 2015). These claims brought, in the late 1990s, ‘conventional’ and ‘alternative’ forces, such as farmers’ unions and Slow Food Movement, to form a ‘coalition’ aimed to make changes among the Italian agri-food system. The first large-scale production and distribution experiences, such as consumers’ cooperatives, distribution companies specialized in commercialization (e.g. “*NaturaSi*”), began at this moment (Santucci 2009).

3) The ‘turn to politics’: Starting from the mid-1990s, several consumers’ locally-based initiatives oriented toward the direct support of local and

small farmers have emerged. The main example of this category is the Solidarity Purchase Groups (SPGs), which are basically households' small groups that orient their purchases to buy food and other products based on ethical and environmental principles. The first experience emerged in 1994, but it was after the millennial turn when they reached and considerable 'popularity' within the Italian society. The aim of SPGs is to criticize the conventional agri-food system and by-pass the long food supply chains. Most of them are more interested in directly support local farmers and reinforce the consumer-producer relationship, instead of consuming merely organic food, for this reason, Fonte and Cucco (2015) referred them as a 'post-organic' movement. These new grassroots initiatives in literature were initially considered as 'local food networks' or Alternative Food Networks (AFNs), being centred on the re-localization of food and a certain degree of critical position toward conventional food system (Goodman and Dupuis 2002; Goodman et al. 2012; Hinrichs 2000, 2003). Today they are mostly related to the idea of 'civic food networks' (Renting et al. 2012). They emphasize more the social relations embodied in the product, which should become an expression of food citizenship, food democracy, and food sovereignty (Fonte and Cucco 2015; Renting et al. 2012).

This is what happened in Italy over the last decades. On the other hand, in South America, there was no evidence which testifies to the presence of such agriculture before the 'green revolution'. There were practices, before the industrialization, linked to ecological production: indigenous practices and European immigrants' traditions of natural sources conservation were crucial to develop this type of agriculture. Indeed, the alternative agriculture arose during the 1970s in South America. Specifically, in Brazil, where the most important initiatives of contention politics of peasant movement emerged (e.g. the "*Movimento Sem Terra*"), these alternatives groups were formed by family farmers excluded by public policies of reallocation of croplands. As it has been previously done referring to the Italian case, now, following the Brandenburg's historical reconstruction (2002), the evolution of ecological farming in Brazil will be resumed considering three different moments: the genesis, the consolidation of agroecological movement and the institutionalization of organic agriculture.

1) The genesis: the countermovement arose against the agricultural industrialization during the 1970s in opposition to the chemical fertilizers' and agro-toxic inputs' introduction aimed to improve the production efficiency. In the

beginning, the agroecological movement was strictly linked to the preservation of the natural way of production. The alternative agriculture brought a new environmental and ecological message, in which the relationship between humans and nature is completely differentiated rather than what the industrial/conventional agriculture was reinforcing and spreading around the World.

2) The consolidation: after a decade, approximatively between the 1980s and the early-1990s, new groups and new forms of social organization of the distribution (farmers' market and deliveries) emerged. As some scholars have stated (Schmitt 2011; Schmitt and Tygel 2009), it was during this period that the solidarity economy has reinforced thanks to the work of Catholics and Lutherans' grassroots organizations and pedagogical contribution of scholars such as Paulo Freire⁸², especially within rural communities, cities, recovered factories, cooperatives of producers and/or consumers, financial cooperatives, and so on. These movements started to scale-up their action reaching a national perspective maintaining their local identity, and their conflictual approaches toward political institutions. These movements achieved a social acknowledgement thanks to the identity reaffirmation around ecology.

3) The institutionalization: with the emerging social and environmental risks, people were even more aware of environmental issues, as well as the political institutions, which consequently started to be more aware. The alternative agriculture has been even more recognized by consumers, as well as it has been considered in public policies. This third period is dated around the second half of the 1990s and the 2000s, when some specific laws oriented toward the direct sustaining of alternative agriculture have been introduced. In 1998, in Brazil, for instance, the Federal Law on organic agriculture was approved. Later, during Workers' Party governments, other laws were introduced specifically to help small-owners and producers. This third period was specially featured by the entrance of powerful stakeholders. Organic production and distribution started to follow the conventional market that characterized the mainstream distribution (see next chapter where they will be deeply discussed).

⁸² See Freire, P. (2018). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA (first edition in 1970).

3.3 The ‘post-organic’ phase

Despite what the previous section displayed, especially referring to the Italian case, other scholars, instead of considering the third phase as featured by the ‘turn to politics’, they consider experiences like SPGs as an example of ‘post-organic’ movements organization (Fonte and Cucco 2015). I partially disagree with this interpretation. Indeed, if one side Fonte and Cucco (2015) affirmed:

Organic production is often certified, although this is not necessarily required. Sourcing from local producers promotes ecologically sound production and distribution methods. At the same time, it serves the even more fundamental objective of establishing direct, frequent contacts with producers, in this way sustaining local economies, local products and biodiversity (Fonte and Cucco 2015, p. 284)

This quote underlines and confirms the SPGs’ proximity to organic agriculture, no matter whether is certified or not. However, it is partially verified. In the beginning, they were more interested in this issue, together with the direct support of small farmers. As Forno et al. demonstrated (2013), the main motivations behind SPGs members’ actions were mostly self-oriented, especially for what concerns their own health, but also the need to be engaged in concrete forms of political actions was central. Fonte and Cucco (2015) considered it as a ‘post-organic’ movement, but there are no studies which testify their direct opposition toward the ‘conventionalization’ of the organic market. On the contrary, they seem to sustain an alternative purpose to support a radical change toward consumption habits, criticizing the conventional and dominant system of food and goods consumption. They act against the homogenization of food and the flattening of shared knowledge (Carrera 2009). Contrary to what Fonte e Cucco (2015) have done, Brunori et al. (2013) have considered the third phase of the organic agriculture evolution as a response to the emergencies generated by the economic crisis. They claimed:

The pressures generated by the economic crisis, with the emergence of food poverty, not only in developing countries but also in the wealthy West. In this phase, we can observe a convergence between ‘domestic food security’ and ‘global food security’ into a unifying concept of quality, linking together a variety of pieces of discourse (Brunori et al. 2013, p. 21)

These authors highlighted another important cause that has influenced this trend. Without any doubts, the economic and financial crisis was, and is still an important driver for the evolution of such a type of agriculture, in both the Global North and Global South. It has impoverished middle class as well as producers. The increasing production, and

related importations, of organic products in Eastern Europe (EU and non-EU members) have affected Italian producers, especially the ones based in Southern Regions of Italy (Sicily, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria), the most productive areas, as it has been demonstrated by SINAB⁸³ (2010). This trend together with the consequences of the economic and the 2006-2008 foodstuffs crisis have pushed Italian producers and consumers to re-focus their perspective toward the domestic market. The increasing globalization has created a more competitive system among farmers. GDOs have started to buy abroad, instead of sustaining local producers, to make more profits due to the lower cost of labour. The most important Italian fair-trade distributor “*CTM-AltroMercato*”, for example, has started to sell Italian products within their shops, providing to Italian farmers the chance to get a fair income, as well as SPGs and farmers’ unions, have begun to organize farmers’ markets to directly support and enlarge the local consumption. As the international organization forecasts claimed in 2010⁸⁴, food prices will not get back to previous levels. As Schmitt has stated (Schmitt 2010), the 2006-2008 food-stuff crisis exposed the main contradictions of the mainstream food system, such as its disequilibrium of allocated sources and its negative influence toward the ecosystem. As demonstrated in the previous empirical chapter, the financial and economic crisis fuelled the birth of alternative forms of distribution that are trying to respond to these contradictions. Indeed, what I supposed is to eventually consider the **fourth phase** starting from the Fonte and Brunori interpretations. It could be called as a ‘post-organic’ phase as well, or as a ‘post-agroecological’ phase, but what it has been witnessed is a continuous growth of experiences which are explicitly inconsistent with the conventionalization of organic agriculture. In Italy, such examples can be identified initiatives such as “*Genuino Clandestino*”, an agroecological peasant movement emerged in 2010 which directly refuses to submit Communitarian legislations such as CAP and the EU organic law (Sacchi 2015), or “*Mondeggi Bene-Comune*”, an occupied farm which is developing agroecological practices with the local support of activists (Poli 2017). These initiatives support alternative forms of organizations, certification and guarantee the production referring to experiences such as Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGSs), which directly involved both producers and consumers in the guarantee process. New forms of critical consumption like Community-Supported Agriculture (CSAs) are

⁸³ <http://www.ambienteterritorio.coldiretti.it/tematiche/Ogm/Documents/import%20bio.pdf> last accessed 06 June 2018.

⁸⁴ https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=HIGH_AGLINK_2010 last accessed 06 June 2018.

surfacing in Italy, which entail a further effort for consumers, rather than SPGs. All these examples testify the will to protect these closed or ‘nested market’, as it has been labelled in the literature (van der Ploeg et al. 2012; Polman et al. 2010).

Apparently, it could be a prerogative of Western Countries, but such initiatives have been reinforced also in South America. In Brazil, as Schmitt showed (2010), the birth or re-birth of solidarity economy got a stronger expression starting from the 1980s, thanks to the co-operative experiences born within the rural and urban landscape. It was just in the 1990s where the term ‘solidarity economy’ started to be widely used, defining borders of such experiences committed to the construction of a ‘new’ economy. However, the recent introduction of specific laws has encouraged agroecology and small and family-farming (e.g. *Lei 11.947/2009*). Public policies oriented to buy directly food from these new forms of agriculture are helping small organic and more sustainable farmers. Surely, thanks to the left-wing governments’ openness, solidarity economy is increasing, and the agroecological production has been re-oriented toward the domestic and local market. Thanks to the NGOs and solidarity economy network contribution, like Rede Ecovida, the number of producers in transition toward the agroecological paradigm is increasing, as well as the AFNs experiences. Contemporary, big companies have been involved in the organic market, increasing the conglomerate growth of organic production.

This fourth phase of the sustainable agriculture evolution is even more featured by the dualism between the ‘conventional’ organic agriculture and the agroecological one. It has not been studied yet who sustainable farmers are. Findings from sampled farmers interviewed in Italy and Brazil will be discussed and presented, analysing their socio-demographic profile, their economic and profit/solidarity attitudes, their opinions and their awareness toward the current global context.

3.4 Data and methods

As specified in the introduction, this chapter will investigate and draw a preliminary farmers’ profile involved in AFNs initiatives. In the following pages findings from 50 semi-structured interviews conducted with farmers involved within both Italian (Province of Bergamo) and Brazilian AFNs (micro-region of Grande Florianópolis) will be presented and discussed. The selected farmers have been chosen from both organic and conventional ones, especially within the Italian context where the issue related to organic agriculture is not strictly important for whom has created AFNs initiatives. The

sample has been created as vary as possible, combining and cross-tabling farmers list of the main AFNs initiatives in both contexts. In Brazil, it was also necessary to follow a snowballing approach, due to the lack of entry information.

Following a qualitative approach, the data analysis was made considering the socio-demographic and motivational variables which characterize farmers' action. Moreover, the degree of farmers' engagement in networks, and their gaze toward the future will be also analysed.

After the data presentation, it will be discussed whether there are any connections and similarities between Italian and Brazilian farmers.

3.5 Findings

3.5.1 Farmers profile

The respondents were relatively young: 15/25 people within the Italian case-study and 17/25 for the Brazilian one, were born after the 1970s. Most of them are the owners or directors of their activity, just 9 people were simply employees (6 for Bergamo, 3 for what concerns Florianópolis).

Concerning their own personal situations, in Bergamo there is a balance between who is married/or engaged in domestic relations (14 people on 25) and who is not married/or engaged in domestic relations (11 people on 25), while in Brazil the presence of married/engaged people (19 on 25) is more evident, and it reflects also the chance to have kids.

An interesting evidence is the level of education. As the histogram below reports (Figure 14), it is clear, in both cities, how interviewed people are high-educated.

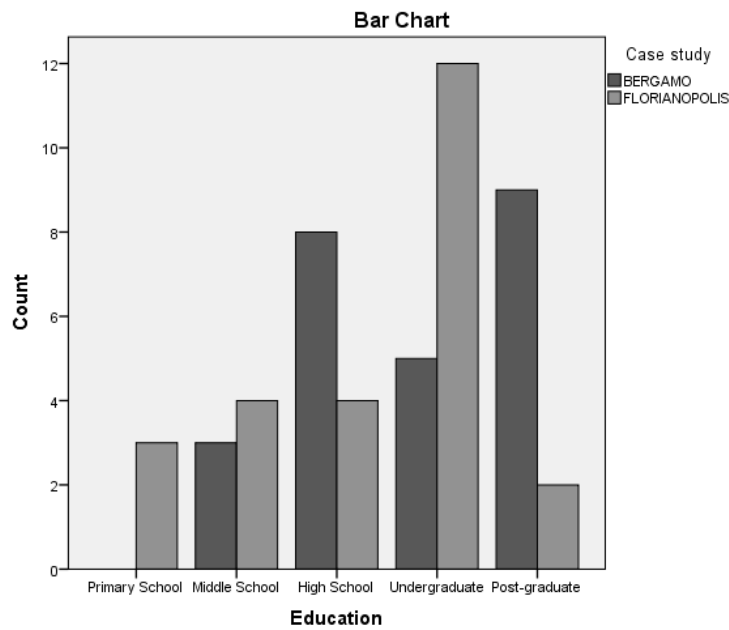


Figure 14 Level of education

Referring to the economic and financial condition, interviewed people seem to belong to the lower-middle class, in terms of income. To find this data, it has been asked them to indicate the gross domestic income of the entire family. It has been differentiated from the nominal income, being different from the economic context in terms of currency values and life cost. As the histogram (Figure 15) shows, this evidence is clearer in the Brazilian case, while Italian producers seem to be better distributed among other income classes.

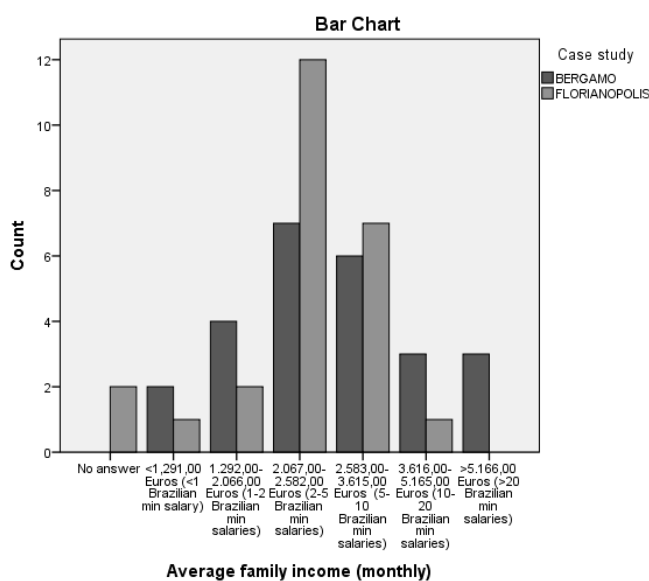


Figure 15 Family income

Asking them the percentage of income coming from agriculture (Table 2), 25 out of 47 respondents, 25 (13 for Bergamo and 12 for Florianópolis) affirmed that less than 50% of the entire income comes from the agriculture activity. If on one hand, other 12 Brazilian farmers stated that most than 50% come from agriculture, in Italy, just 10 producers have answered equally.

Table 2 Income derived from agriculture

% INCOME DERIVED FROM AGRICULTURE	BERGAMO	FLORIANÓPOLIS	Total
0-50%	13	12	25
51-100%	10	12	22
Respondents	23	24	47

Most of the activities are new. Just 16 people on 50 (8 for each case-study) affirmed that their production is an inherited business by their family. Most of them confirmed that initially, the activity was a hobby, or something related to family needs:

I created it with the desire to live open air, closer to nature. I got small kids. We found this field and we bought it. Then, talking with other partners, we have started the business. We have thought and discussed what could be done here. Step by step, we began to produce small fruit and educational projects. We have been living in Milan. We used to come here for vacation during the summer. I left the city to live here, while my family used to be engaged part-time (Producer 11, Bergamo)

On the contrary, others claimed that their activity is a family tradition:

Our family ever was committed to agriculture. My father and his family were producers and bricklayers. He came here in Florianópolis with his brothers. They were 14 sons. After 20 years, my father with my uncle has started to grow conventional vegetables in 1983. My grandfather was a tobacco grower. When they started to be worried about agro-toxic fertilizers, they began to use organic compost. Just in 1996, they certified as organic their property. Our production was ever familiar. This market was in expansion, but there were not that many official organizations supporting us. Firstly, it was a personal worry, then we thought in terms of commercial opportunities (Producers 43, Florianópolis)

3.5.2 Business profile

Most of the farmers represent small entrepreneurship: 31 producers have less than 5 Ha (hectares) available for production (19 in Bergamo and 12 in Florianópolis), while just 4 cases have answered that their production area is bigger than 20 Ha (2 people for

each case-study), as the Table 3 shows.

Table 3 Production area

PRODUCTION AREA	BERGAMO	FLORIANÓPOLIS	Total
<2Ha	8	11	19
2Ha<5Ha	6	6	12
5Ha<10Ha	4	1	5
10Ha<20Ha	3	4	7
20Ha<40Ha	1	2	3
>40Ha	1	0	1
Respondents	23	24	47

The activities are not only small in terms of extensions. What emerged from the interviews is that they are also mainly led following a family-farming approach (Figure 16 and Table 4).

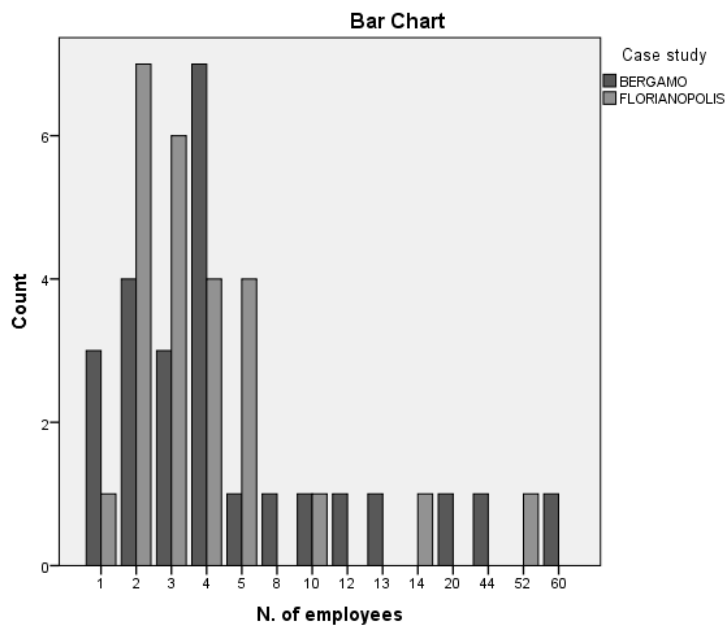


Figure 16 Number of employees

As Table 4 displays, in both contexts, most of the selected activities engage 1-2 family members, drawing a specific kind of business-oriented toward family-management.

Table 4 Number of family employees for each

No. OF FAMILY EMPLOYEES	BERGAMO	FLORIANÓPOLIS	Total
1	9	4	13
2	7	14	21
3	5	3	8
4	4	2	6
5	0	1	1
18	0	1	1
Respondents	25	25	50

For what concerns their specific business, it was asked to indicate the two main activities and the result was a notable presence of vegetables and fruit growers, especially in Brazil. In Italy, there was a considerable presence of livestock and dairy activity, being Bergamo historically dedicated to this type of farming. Moreover, what emerged from the interviews was their attitude toward diversification and agroecology (Figure 17): In Brazil, 17/22 respondents affirmed that grow 15 different species (minimum), while in the Italian case this aspect rest to be less evident.

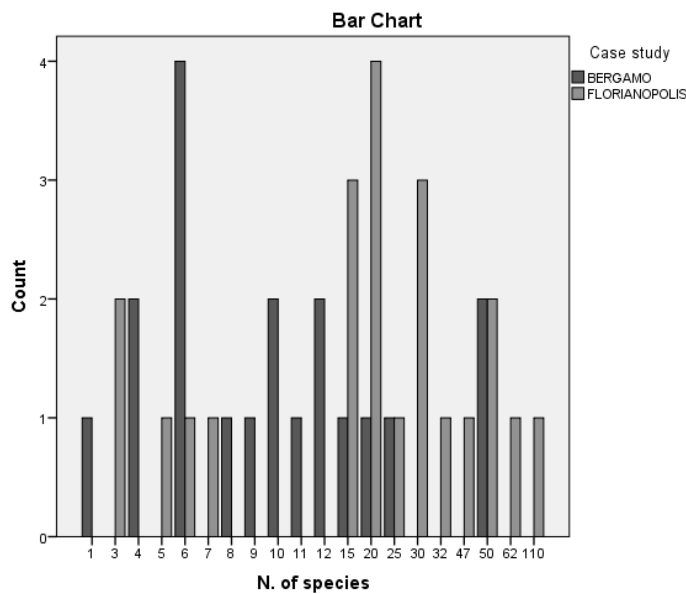


Figure 17 Number of species

It has been consequently asked them to indicate three mains vary factors that push

them to diversify their supply. The results show how the consumer's demand (15/25 for Italian farmers and 11/24 for Brazilian) and the sale potential (8/25 for Italian farmers and 7/24 for Brazilian) are central for the diversification. To have an idea of their sales volume, it has asked them the sales amount of the previous year (Figure 18).

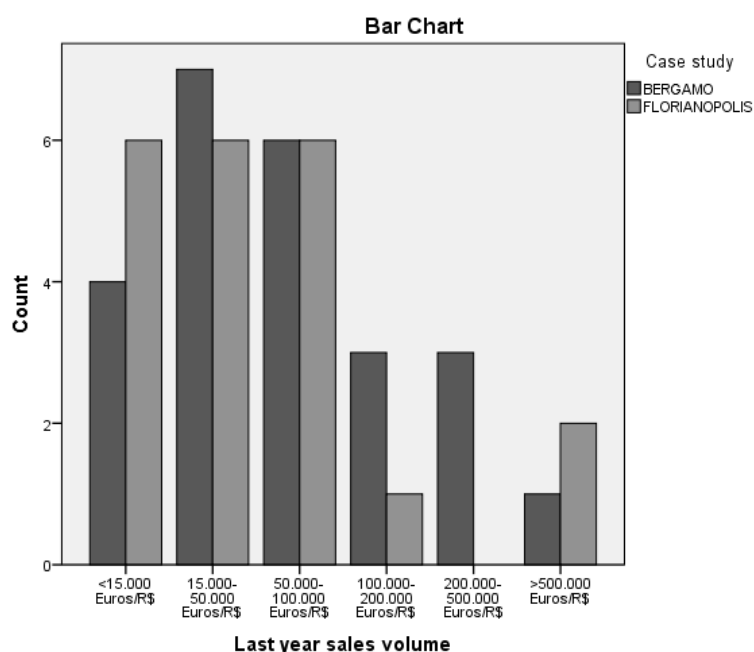


Figure 18 Last year sales volume

This picture shows, for both contexts, how the sales amount reflects the property dimension, being just the biggest activities, those who have indicated the highest rate of sales volume.

3.5.3 Market approach

The sampled interviewers being involved in AFNs are mainly oriented toward SFSCs channels to sell their products. Almost all of them sell more than 50% of the entire production within SFSCs. Just 8 producers of 49 respondents (4/each case-study) sell less than 50% within SFSCs. Specifically, looking at findings it seems that Italian producers are more SPGs/CSAs initiatives-oriented (10/25 people sell them more than 50% of the entire production) and direct sell-oriented (10/25 people sell directly more than 50% of the entire production), while within Brazilian producers, the privileged channels seem to be Farmers Market (13/25 sell more than 50% of the entire production). Most of the producers, both Italians and Brazilians, affirmed that they prefer to stay within SFSCs for the strong ties with consumers and the chance to get and a higher and fairer price for their

products, as these two producers stated:

I guess it could resume around the Slow Food slogan ‘good, clean, and fair’. We must understand that the economy, which food is embedded, is no more sustainable for us because the prices within GDO are extremely low. They are extremely low because labour input is not respectful of human beings. It is also unsustainable for consumers because they do not understand the value and the important efforts behind production [...] so we decided to stay among alternative markets firstly because we want to make ‘culture’, for this reason, we started the ‘pick-your-own’ activity. The consumer could understand what means stay under the sun and picking fruits (Producer 11, Bergamo)

I never sold for supermarket and GDO, and nor I want to do it. I never agree with that concept. I want to sell my product as much as possible closer to the consumer. To work with GDO, I should have more sources, subsidies, a guarantee of production. If I have to make contracts with GDO, I would break them. Here, I don’t have a specific product. The consumer comes here, and I can sell him. With GDO I should buy from other producers. I met SFSCs thanks to a course. I had two sons. I didn’t want to leave agriculture, but at the same time, I didn’t want to work with chemical fertilizers. I have never met organic Agriculture, but coming from a peasant family, everything was organic in the past. So, I decided to commercialize my production within these channels (Producer 33, Florianópolis)

It has been also questioned them to indicate the two main economic resources through which they sustain their own activities. As Table 5 displays, most of the people have noted profits from sales and public funds like CAP (for Italian producers) and public investment of the Federal Government of Brazil.

Table 5 Two main economic resources

TWO MAIN ECONOMIC RESOURCES	BERGAMO	FLORIANÓPOLIS	Total
Voluntary subscription	1	0	1
Regional/State funds	4	2	6
EU/Federal Gov. funds	8	7	15
Sales profits	12	16	28
Respondents	25	25	50

Regarding their relationship with consumers, from the interviews, any specific consumer target did not emerge. However, it is shared the idea that building a stronger relationship with consumers distinguishes their actions, rather than who works

exclusively with GDOs and other conventional channels of distribution. The relationship with consumers is trust-based and often becomes a soft friendship. This is clearer for those who sell directly or among SPGs and farmers markets. These producers stated:

It is a relationship similar than friendship. There is mutual trust. If someone writes me about wasted products, the next time I will give back his money. With possible new SPG, normally we meet in person, before having any commercial relationship. It is important for us because if they do not know deeply what we are doing, it is complicated for them to deeply understand our actions. We have some customers since the early 1990s. We use to lose them if they move somewhere else [...] Along the year, in the farmers market, we try to create a relationship. We invite costumers here. If they visit us, they could understand what creates the final price of our products. Within the farmers market it is quite complicated to build up a trust relationship without knowing in-depth our way of producing [...] Information technologies have reduced the human contact, but when you call them you can be closer and maintain the trust (Producer 24, Bergamo)

I do not feel differences between consumers. Every customer wants safety food and quality. This is a common element. Relationships are good, friendly, and closer. There are not that many people who come to the field, but there are. Here (at the farmers market) the 80% of people are the same. 20% is variable. There is fidelity. I like it. It is a quality credit (Producer 29, Florianópolis)

Other several people noted obstacles to work with other intermediates like local restaurants and local supermarket:

It is complicated to work with restaurants, especially for price giving. They want to spend less money, then they could sell my wine three times more expensive rather than money that I collected [...] The farmers market is good, you can create fidelity and trust relationship, even though sometimes you sell not that many products. Creating trust, the customer comes to your property. There you have time to talk, discuss, and show him your job (Producer 22, Bergamo)

Finally, for what concerns the certification, what emerged is that most of them are certified, especially Brazilian producers, but there is a considerable number of producers not organic certified or not at all interested as it can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6 Certification

Certification	BERGAMO	FLORIANÓPOLIS	Total
Third-party certification	9	4	13
PGSs/Organismo de Controle Social (OCSs)	0	13	13
I don't have any certification	7	2	9
I don't believe in certification	5	2	7
Other brand (e.g. Slow Food)	2	2	4
Work in progress	2	2	4
Respondents	25	25	50

Motivations

To understand what address their actions toward sustainable agriculture and being engaged in AFNs, it was questioned to the farmers to indicate some issues which have influenced them in the past, in the present and in the future. It has been presented them a list of issues (see Appendix 2). A list of issues was presented to them resulting in two different histograms (Figure 19 and Figure 20) as follow:

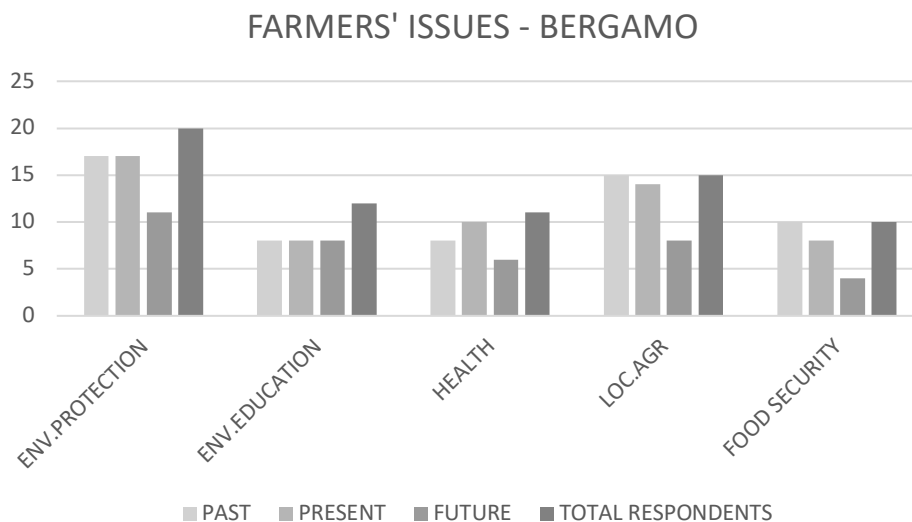


Figure 19 Farmers' issues – Bergamo

FARMERS' ISSUES - FLORIANÓPOLIS

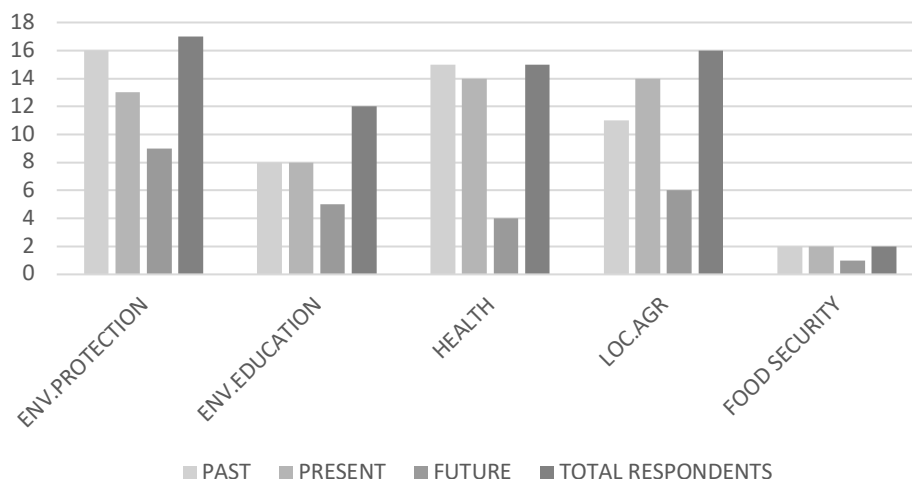


Figure 20 Farmers' issues – Florianópolis

For both the contexts, the environmental protection has been and still is central as well as the support to local agriculture. However, what is interesting is the clear importance given to their own health, especially for the Brazilian farmers. Indeed, due to their attitude to be self-sufficient, results of utmost importance to improve a 'clean' production, it means without agro-toxic input, which unfortunately Brazil is the most important consumer in the World⁸⁵.

3.5.4 Farmers relations/networking

Another important element discussed during the interviews was their approach to establish ties with other farmers, the cooperative attitude, and political and networking ties which they have built over time. It has been asked them to indicate a maximum of 5 other producers who are often working with.

⁸⁵ <http://www.mma.gov.br/seguranca-quimica/agrotoxicos> last accessed 19 June 2018.



Figure 21 Network analysis Italian producers

The above-reported graph was developed by using a social network analysis software. Based on the degree of their relations, it was possible to use the *k-core* analysis, using UCINET dataset and NetDraw software. Generally, a *k-core* is a set of nodes that are more closely connected to one another than they are to nodes in other *k-cores*⁸⁶. Nodes have been coloured differently. Considering the biggest and light grey-coloured squares, what emerged is that the spatial-proximity (terms of production’s geo-localization) and the key-role of social cooperatives (see the lower part of Figure 21) play a central role in creating ties between producers. In Brazil (Figure 22) the black squares represent nodes with the highest *k-core*. They are members of the same group of Rede Ecovida (Florianópolis), and the others are farmers who share stands within the farmers market “*Viva Cidade*” in the city centre of Florianópolis. In this case, spatial-proximity for what concerns the commercialization, and the engagement in the same certification’s group (Ecovida) are the key-elements which encourage the establishment of stronger ties among farmers.

⁸⁶ http://faculty.ucr.edu/~hanneman/nettext/C4_netdraw.html last accessed 20 June 2018.

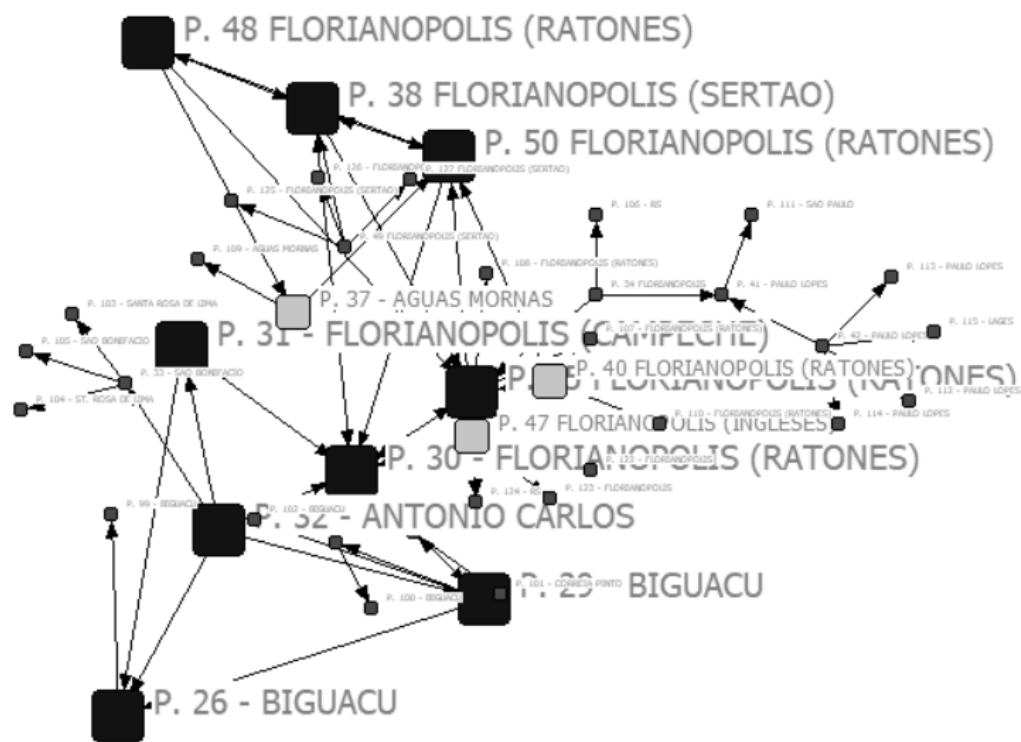


Figure 22 Network analysis Brazilian producers

For what concerns their membership to some farmers associations/unions/groups, 16/25 Italian producers belong to *Coldiretti* (the most important Italian farmers' union), 9/25 to the solidary economy network *Mercato e Cittadinanza*, 8/25 to *BioDistretto*, and 8/25 to Slow Food. In Brazil, 14/25 are Ecovida members and there are also 7/25 who are members of Fetaesc (the most important Brazilian farmers' union).

It has been requested them any possible degree of political engagement (Table 7).

Table 7 Political engagement

POLITICAL TIES	BERGAMO	FLORIANÓPOLIS	Total
Not engaged	11	6	17
Slow Food	7	1	8
Environmental organization	1	2	3
Political party	2	3	5
Farmer union/organization	3	10	13
Global Justice Movement	2	0	2
Religious organization	2	1	3
Vegetarian/Vegan Movement	0	1	1
Via Campesina	0	1	1
Rede Ecovida	0	14	14
Movimento Sem Terra	0	1	1
Respondents	25	25	50

In Bergamo, there is not a strong relevance of their political commitment. Most of the interviewed are not engaged, the only movement/initiative which has been highlighted was Slow Food. In Brazil, Rede Ecovida, being not simply a certificatory organization, but a solidarity economy network plays a central role for the political activism. Being engaged in the same group or in the same farmers' market helps them to create relationships, between them and between consumers, as a Brazilian producer affirmed:

Having space through which it could be possible to get directly in contact with consumers it has been helping the interaction between various actors. The cooperation is very important. The small farmer must collaborate because, without collaboration, it results so hard to survive. SPGs/CSAs are good, so interesting, these are new forms of creating relations between production and consumption. In the future, it will increase the chance to be successful. In our Ecovida group, we share knowledge, materials, crops, we have interesting cooperation among us (Producer 29, Florianópolis)

On the contrary, in Bergamo, producers involved in the AgrImagna association have underlined the trouble to work together:

I am disappointed respect AgrImagna. Here it is hard to collaborate. Everyone works for themselves. I use to create good relationships with people who do not come from this territory (mountain). It's hard to work together with locals. They are close. (Producer 6, Bergamo)

Furthermore, it was asked their opinion accessibility of AFNs and SFSCs (Table 8). They agree on the accessibility, but while it should be improved.

Table 8 Opinion AFNs/SFSCs

Opinion AFNs/SFSCs	BERGAMO	FLORIANÓPOLIS	Total
Accessible	11	15	26
Still unaccessible	3	3	6
It works but should be improved	11	4	15
Respondents	25	22	47

Analysing the presence of young people within these networks, they stated that there are more of them than before, but they are committed mostly on the production side, especially in Bergamo, where 18/25 have answered it. In Brazil, producers were more sceptical about it, half the people stated it, the other half claimed that there are not that many young people.

3.6 Discussion and conclusion

Interviewed farmers are relatively young, most of them are married or engaged in a domestic relationship and high-educated. Comparing these findings with the general census of agriculture for both contexts, what emerged is that more than 80% of the Italian interviewed farmers got at least the high school level. This result is strongly higher compared to the average finding showed by ISTAT which affirms that just 36% of them have got the same level. In Brazil, it is more evident in the IBGE survey of 2006 shows an average of 11% of farmers who got at least the high school level (IBGE 2012). Their family income results to stay between lower- and middle-class, even though Italian farmers are better distributed along the other classes. This result is coherent to the average per capita income registered (per month) in both countries. Indeed, the Italian per capita income registered in 2015 was € 1.724,17⁸⁷, with the highest rate in Lombardy (€ 1.915,00). On the contrary, in Brazil in 2015⁸⁸, the IBGE registered an average per capita income corresponding to R\$ 1.113,00, with highest within the Federal District where is located Brasilia (while, for what concerns the Santa Catarina State, the result was R\$ 1.368,00). Most of the

⁸⁷ http://www1.finanze.gov.it/finanze3/analisi_stat/index.php?opendata=yes last accessed 21 June 2018.

⁸⁸ <http://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/economia/noticia/2016-02/ibge-renda-capita-media-do-brasileiro-atinge-r-1113-em-2015> last accessed 21 June 2018.

interviewees answered that the income coming from agriculture represents less than 50% of the entire family income. It means that other people within their family have another job or another economic source. This finding leads to consider the dimension and the structure of their activities. All the respondents represent a specific group of producers, being involved in AFNs initiatives. These findings could not be interpreted as a frame which explains sustainable agriculture and entrepreneurship overall. Undoubtedly, there are some features which are necessary to consider. Most of them are small, having indicated an extension smaller than 5 Ha. These data are quite different compared to the average production area measured through the agricultural census for each country. Indeed, if on one hand the ISTAT (Italian Institute of Statistics) in 2010 measured an average extension of 18,2 Ha for each activity in Lombardy (ISTAT 2013), on the other hand in the Santa Catarina State, as the IBGE stated (2012), the average extension for each activity is 31,3 Ha. It confirms the idea that these farmers are smaller compared to the average dimension. As it has been shown in the previous paragraph, they are also small in terms of employment. They belong to what is commonly known as 'family farming', being employed most of the family members. It links the family with the farm, they co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, social and cultural functions (FAO 2015). Moreover:

The movements and organizations promoting family farming are aware of the need to make the involvement of young people the prime driver of this form of agriculture as an alternative route towards sustainable farming (WCC 2018, p. 3)

The presence of young people within the sample is prevalent. Moreover, family farming continues to be the main source of food, especially in developing countries, where small and medium-sized holdings produce at least the 80% of World's food (WCC 2018), and it has been confirmed by data collected, which it has been displayed in the table related to agrobiodiversity.

As it has been stated in the first chapter, in Europe there is not official recognition of what is intended as family farming. Public Communitarian policies such as the CAP, even though recognizes the importance of this kind of activity, does not consider specific norms for sustaining family farmers. Subsidies are granted in terms of spatial extensions, so, until 2014, when the new CAP has been introduced, the common agricultural policy has financed mainly middle and bigger landholdings. Subsidies were mainly thought to sustain specific cultures. As it has been demonstrated, it has affected small owners,

because the subsidies system had decreased the food-stuff prices under the production cost (McMichael 2011). On the other hand, as previous researches have demonstrated, in Southern Brazil, family farming represents 90% of the agricultural holdings and occupies 60% of the croplands in the Santa Catarina State (Schneider and Niederle 2010). Family farming is also responsible for agrobiodiversity and environmental resilience (WCC 2018). In Brazil, it has been officially recognized, and thanks to the Workers Party's administrations, several public policies⁸⁹ have been developed for sustaining this type of agriculture (Grisa and Schneider 2014),

In terms of global income of their activity, it has been presented how their annual sales volume reflects their dimension. This finding stays coherently aligned with the average statistical survey previously done. Specifically, in Italy (ISTAT 2013), as the annual report "*L'agricoltura lombarda conta 2015*"⁹⁰ (CREA 2015) claimed, most of the small-medium agricultural activities have an annual sales volume lower than €. 50.000/year. Unfortunately, for what regards Brazil there is not a similar study, but, referring to the last survey of "*Censo Agropecuário*" (IBGE 2012), for the Santa Catarina State, the average sales volume is almost R\$ 50.000,00/year, in line to what Figure 18 displays. Furthermore, farmers affirmed that the main economic source is profited from sales and public subsidies as expected.

Another point that has been studied was the relationship with the market. As expected, most of the interviewees sell most of their products within SFSCs. However, what stands out are their motivations, economic opportunities, to get more money and create strong relationships with consumers according to what in literature has been described around AFNs literature (Goodman et al. 2012; Renting et al. 2012). However, it appears still hard to create a sustainable local food system. Various producers have underlined how is critical to create a systemic organization of local distribution yet, especially with restaurants and small or local supermarkets. Probably, there are two orders of reasons which explain it: firstly, they might be too much involved in a strong and closer niche to be ready to enlarge their links; secondly, they might be too small for provisioning local distribution. Even though public investments, such as the Brazilian programs for

⁸⁹ E.g. PNAE and PAA programs. See <http://www.fn-de.gov.br/programas/alimentacao-escolar> last accessed 22 June 2018.

⁹⁰ Available at:

<http://www.regione.lombardia.it/wps/portal/istituzionale/HP/DettaglioRedazionale/servizi-e-informazioni/imprese/imprese-agricole/ricerca-e-statistiche-in-agricoltura/la-agricoltura-lombarda-conta-opuscolo-2015/la-agricoltura-lombarda-conta-opuscolo-2015> last accessed 25 July 2018.

public canteens, which oblige public institutions to get at least a 30% of food from small farming, they result unable to provide enough food to the Florianópolis' institutions.

What it has been described, in the literature review, as 'post-organic' framework emerged during the interviews. Especially for what concerns Bergamo's case, where SPGs left to be specifically focused on sustaining organic agriculture, farmers involved in their AFNs do not need to get the certification or to be strictly respectful of the organic protocol. Contrary, in Brazil, where peer-to-peer certifications are officially recognized by the law, most of the interviewees follow that paradigm. In Italy, where these kinds of certifications are still out of the law, more producers are sceptical toward the 'conventional' guarantee system formally recognised by EU, affirming that they are not interested in certifying their production. However, this specific issue will be discussed in-depth in the next chapter.

What left to be considered are the motivations which have pushed these farmers to follow a more sustainable way of production. As expected, the environmental protection is central behind their actions, but what stands out is the importance given by Brazilian farmers to their own health. As it has been stated before, Brazil is the biggest consumer of agro-toxic fertilizers and chemical inputs in the World. Consequently, before being worried for commercialization, farmers are worried for their own health, because of numerous cases of agro-toxic contaminations (Abreu and Alonzo 2016; Faria et al. 2007; Oliveira-Silva et al. 2001). Their increasing awareness toward risks for their own health could be explained through the increasing media attention to scandals, but also it is necessary to consider the role of local actors who help the stream of information. In the Brazilian context, for instance, the role of Rede Ecovida is extremely important as previous studies demonstrated (Zanasi et al. 2009). The organization in groups helps people to share knowledge and information. As it has been reconstructed through the social network analysis, asking them to indicate people who use to work with, it has clearly emerged this link between their engagement within Ecovida's groups, but also sharing the same sales point, such as a farmers' market, it is a moment for sharing knowledge and discuss. Differently, in Italy, what emerged is similar to what previous research showed (Salvi and Vittori 2017). The centrality of pioneers of organic agriculture in developing social networking is outstanding. Specifically, social cooperatives still play a central role. In 2016, they have started the activities within BioDistretto association, which is mainly focused on enhancing cooperation among organic farmers, but it is too early to evaluate their effectiveness.

Finally, the political engagement reflects the general disaffection registered in Western democracies over the last years. There are few producers who are directly involved in farmers' unions, but most of them are mainly not engaged. In Brazil, as stated above, most of the producers are committed to Rede Ecovida, which tries to improve collective actions and goes beyond certification. But, for what it could be studied, there is not a political purpose behind their actions, especially for the Italian producers.

In conclusion, this chapter has tried to frame what sustainable agriculture represents in two different contexts. It has given a picture of the actors involved in this relatively new trend in agriculture. Most of the issues have resulted to be similar in Northern Italy and Southern Brazil. Other ones, such as motivations and political engagement still be different. Further studies should be done to have a more complete idea of what it is and in which direction is going to move sustainable agriculture. Specifically, it should be compared, for example, conventional farming and sustainable farming, as well as the conventional distribution and the alternative ones. It should be studied the public policies impact to prove their effectiveness.

In the next chapter, the certification issue will be further discussed. Specifically, the case of Participatory Guarantee Systems will be studied as a possible tool for strengthening AFNs, thus enhancing relationships and information flow within producers, and between consumers and producers.

4. Participatory Guarantee Systems as a Tool to Strengthen Alternative Food Networks Framework⁹¹

4.1 Introduction

The need to produce and consume healthier and more sustainable food is a phenomenon in constant growth over the last years (Willer and Kilcher 2011). The increasing importance which organic agriculture is getting on both consumption and production sides is a trend which has been happening in both the Global North and Global South (Zanasi et al. 2009). The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) defined organic agriculture as:

Organic Agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic Agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved (General Assembly of IFOAM – Adelaide, Australia 2005)⁹²

The growth of the organic market could also be interpreted as an answer to the industrialization and globalization of the so-called conventional food system (Lassen and Korzen 2009; Lockie et al. 2004). Some scholars have demonstrated which this growth could be seen as a possible demonstration of the increasing consumers' awareness concerning the environmental and social risks of the conventional food system (McGregor 2006; Young 2004, 2006), even though, as other scholar showed, quality and health issues are still crucial (Hemmerling et al. 2015; Pearson 2001). Organic consumption has also been intended as a form of political expression. Important streams of studies have considered two different forms of political consumerism: the anti-consumerism (boycotts) and the alter-consumerism (buy-cotts) (Bostrom and Klintman 2009; Forno and Graziano 2014; Graziano and Forno 2012; Halkier and Holm 2008; Micheletti and Follesdal 2007; Micheletti and Stolle 2007, 2012; Sassatelli 2015).

However, this market presents entry-barriers which are still limiting the accessibility: the products' availability (Hemmerling et al. 2015; Jensen 2004; Midmore

⁹¹ This chapter is co-authored by Oscar José Rover (Dept. Zootechnics and Rural Development, Federal University of Santa Catarina), and it has been presented within the 3rd International Conference 'Agriculture and Food in An Urbanizing Society', September 17-21, Porto Alegre (Brazil).

⁹² <https://www.ifoam.bio/en/organic-landmarks/definition-organic-agriculture> last accessed 03 July 2018.

et al. 2005), their promotion (Andersen 2011) and their price. is universally recognised as the main limit to increase organic food (Brown et al. 2009; Padel and Foster 2005; Zanoli and Naspetti 2002). Organic food is perceived excessively expensive, even though its higher prices is perceived as a quality indicator (Cicia and Del Giudice 1999). Organic products, independently to their related of channels of distribution (GDOs, farmers market, SPGs/CSAs, etc.), are defined as ‘trust goods’ (Barbosa and Lages 2006), which are bought by consumers for both ethical and/or political issues, and health-related and/or environmental issues (Honkanen et al. 2006), or to directly support farmers (e.g. British CSAs and French AMAPs), which consumers have structured strong ties and good relationships (Kneafsey et al. 2013; Lang 2010; Nost 2014). They are considered as ‘trust goods’ because the consumer, finding an organic food among the market, expects to come across to a good with specific physical and organoleptic features, being respectful of certain qualitative and productive standards. Although, these features are not evident. Goods do not physically present these values. Consumers expect it because they are brought to think that product owns their specific features, and this is achievable through a premium quality guarantee system. To do so – thus, to provide a neutral assurance for consumers – starting from the early 1990s, universally accepted standards have been created (Fouilleux and Loconto 2017), especially for the biggest players which use to sell their products among the GDOs. However, the lack of trust toward organic certifications has been also considered as another limit to the improvement of such market (Hamzaoui et al. 2008). There are several factors which have constrained the establishment of trust-relationship between consumers and producers (Marsden et al. 2000). On the consumers’ side, the media attention on fraud scandals, the lack of full knowledge, and the whole awareness on the mechanism which feature the guarantee systems (Klintman 2006) have discouraged consumers to be trustful for what concerns food and organic certification. On the producers’ side, the presence of specific normative and institutional conditions, an unfair sources’ distribution able to involve actors in practices oriented to food production (Barnett et al. 2005), have disheartened in particular smallholders to be certified. This was also the reason why most of the SMOs related to organic agriculture (especially in Brazil) have challenged the idea of an organic certification, which has been interpreted as too much bureaucratic and far from the awareness and socialize making-processes which SMOs have been working on (Byé et al. 2002).

Due to the above-mentioned issues, over the last years, several initiatives of what in literature is labelled as Civic Agriculture (CA), oriented to ease the acquisition of

organic products, breaking the entry-barriers previously mentioned, have emerged. At the same time, due to the issues related to the lack of trust in organic certification, and the difficulty for small farmers to be certified, over last three decades alternative forms of guarantee, which are defined as Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGSs), emerged.

After a brief presentation of what is intended as CA, the various guarantee systems for organic agriculture will be presented, starting from the widespread third-party certification. The aim of this chapter is to analyse in a comparative perspective two specific examples of Participatory Guarantee Systems: the Rede Ecovida's certification (Southern Brazil) and the PGSs of Lombardy (Northern Italy), considering both normative differences and their related "*modus operandi*". To do so, the comparison will be made starting from the analysis of their related legal frameworks and the data collected through the participant observation in both case-studies and few qualitative collective interviews made with some local farmers' committees and social actors involved in such participatory processes.

4.2 Civic Agriculture

As it has mentioned before, to fill the gap between organic consumption and production, starting from the early-1990s a new trend in food provisioning arose (Jarosz 2008; Lyson 2004; Morgan and Murdoch 2000). This rebirth of proximity agriculture, which reduce the distance between producers and consumers, has been labelled as CA, due the tight link between this new form of production and local communities' social and economic development (Cox et al. 2008; Holloway and Kneafsey 2000; Kneafsey et al. 2008; Sage 2003). Consumers' role starts to be even more important concerning the direct support and the diffusion of community networks around food, where they become, together with producers, responsible toward the territory where they are embedded (Cembalo et al. 2012; Fonte 2013; Forno and Graziano 2014; Grasseni et al. 2013). Consumers, often organized in groups pushed by health-related issues (Hemmerling et al. 2015; Pearson 2001), and global and environmental sense of justice (Bostrom and Klintman 2009; Forno and Graziano 2014; Halkier and Holm 2008; Micheletti and Follesdal 2007; Micheletti and Stolle 2007, 2012; Sassatelli 2015), have engaged producers to create a more sustainable production-distribution systems (Andersen 2011; Cembalo et al. 2013). Some examples of CA are farmers' market (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000; Moore 2006), urban farming and community gardens (Rosol 2012;

Vitiello and Wolf-Powers 2014), the so CSAs, the AMAPs⁹³, and the Solidarity Purchase Groups⁹⁴ (SPGs) (Brunori and Rossi 2010; Cembalo et al. 2013; Cox et al. 2008; Fonte 2013; Forno et al. 2013b; Grasseni et al. 2013; Janssen 2010; Kneafsey et al. 2013; Nost 2014). These last three examples seem to be the experiences which the tight relationship between consumers and producers is more evident (Migliore, Caracciolo, et al. 2014). The direct consequence of this mutual involvement is the re-creation of a community-based dimension, where producers and consumers closely interact and share decision and knowledge (Corrado 2008; Janssen 2010). CAs put itself such as an alternative toward the conventional food provisioning system (Brunori et al. 2012; Goldberger 2011; Rover 2011). The relationships, the shared knowledge, and the shared norms are more informal compared to the conventional system. They adopt methods which are not strictly linked, and in accord with, the international widespread protocols and standards. Official certifications, for some of the stakeholders involved (e.g. the Italian SPGs), are not necessary. Most of them, especially agroecological producers, think that organic certifications (the third-party one) need exaggerated efforts and waste of economic and personal resources. Bureaucratic and economic costs – somehow – discourage organic farmers (Bravo et al. 2012). The ‘conventionalization’ of food products demands increasing controls and certifications, even more, based on ‘objective’ and ‘standardized’ criteria. Some of the CA experiences, along the last years, have structured their own criteria and standards for dealing with their internal operation modes. For instance, the Italian SPGs guarantee the food quality on several levels, which not completely exclude to adopt the widespread parameters, but firstly they consider the direct interaction with other stakeholders. In this scenario, ‘conventional’ certifications seem to be unable to intercept the relational dimension of such alternative forms of food production-distribution, being consumers completely excluded from the guarantee process. The social movements’ pressure (in Latin America) has brought to the PGs official acknowledgement within the Brazilian system. An interesting interpretation of such dualism, thus between standard certification and grassroots tools of guarantee, has been provided by Monica Truninger (2013). Through that research implemented in Lisbon on organic products, she made a classification of the different orders of trust. The

⁹³ In French, “*Associations pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne*”. See <http://reseau-amap.org/> last accessed 04 July 2018.

⁹⁴ In Italian, “*Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale*”. See <http://www.economiasolidale.net/> last accessed 04 July 2018.

first typology is what it can be found within the institutions which she called ‘dis-embedded trust’ (in Portuguese, “*confiança desenraizada*”). The second typology is the relational-based trust, which she called ‘embedded trust’ (in Portuguese, “*confiança enraizada*”), referring to the theoretical approach previously made by Sassatelli and Scott (2001). Applying this classification toward the organic market, it is easy to imagine that the first trust typology is related to GDOs and to the consumers’ need to recognize, even noticeably, an organic product from a non-organic one. To provide trust, within these channels of distribution, official *logos*, products’ descriptions, and specific packaging are employed, which give the idea of pureness, naturalness, familiarity, and sustainability. Practically, they are all products that can be bought everywhere, even though they do not say anything about who has worked for making that good, how he/she has produced it, how it has been verified, and so on. On the other hand, the other typology of trust is what emerged from CA initiatives, where the consumer and producer are discursively assured and committed through grassroots processes based on trust-relationships ‘daily’ nourished. Indeed, to answer to these problems, some participatory guarantee processes have started to be scattered in both the Global North and Global South. The most popular experiences are Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGSs) as it has been demonstrated (Källander 2008; Rover 2011, 2013; Rover et al. 2017; Sacchi et al. 2015). Thus, in the following paragraph, they, together with the main forms of organic guarantee, will be presented and discussed.

4.3 Organic certification

The idea of organic certification arose more than thirty years ago in Europe and in the US. Farmers’ organizations were pioneers, who used to visit each other’s to guarantee the fulfilment of specific quality-standards, previously established (Källander 2008).

In Europe, the first Communitarian norm on organic agriculture has been approved in 1991 (EEC 2092/1991)⁹⁵, which has been regulated by the Council Regulation No. 834/2007 (European Commission, June 28, 2007)⁹⁶. In the United States, despite the first normative on organic production has been discussed in the early-1990s

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https://www.fsai.ie/uploadedFiles/Legislation/Food_Legislation_Links/Organic_foodstuffs/Council_Regulation_EEC_No_2092_91.pdf last accessed 13 July 2018.

⁹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/eu-policy/eu-legislation/brief-overview_en last accessed 04 July 2018.

(the so-called ‘Organic Food Production Act’), the organic certification has been introduced just in 2002.

In both contexts, the unique universally accepted guarantee system for organic products imposes a third-party certification system, in other words, a guarantee system which implies external supervision made by a third body officially accredited among the national institutions (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture or Rural Development). This framework is the most popular, almost universally accepted, but is not unique. Over the last decades, starting from some Southern Countries of the Global World, other forms of certification have begun to strengthen themselves.

4.3.1 ‘Conventional’ Guarantee Systems: The Third-Party Certification

Among the ‘conventional’ guarantee systems, the unique universally accepted is the third-party certification. In spite of the universal acceptance of this guarantee system (Sacchi 2016), it presents several open questions. This certification is released by a third-body, hence, producers and consumers are not involved in the guarantee process, nor they could not reciprocally see or meet. It creates distance between involved stakeholders (Bravo et al. 2012; Källander 2008; Kiessel 2014; May 2008; Wilkinson et al. 2008), inhibiting the relationships’ establishment within the market and communities. It appears expensive and onerous at the economic and bureaucratic level, especially for small farmers (Sacchi 2016; Sacchi, Zanasi, and Canavari 2011; Zanasi et al. 2009).

However, alternative forms of certification have been structured starting from the Global South. Some of these frameworks are the Group Certifications/Internal Control Systems (ICSs) and the PGSs. The key-elements which feature these alternative forms of guarantee are the responsibility and the trust-relationship within the involved stakeholders. These elements represent the innovative way to face the emerging issues around organic certifications. Within these initiatives, people have structured new internal processes of organizational change (the way of guarantee). They have carried out new outputs and outcomes (the participatory certification), reflecting the definition of what is commonly known as social innovation (Nicholls and Murdock 2012). All the involved stakeholders – producers, consumers, and their related associations – are considered trustworthy and affordable. The visit is considered the most important step of the trust-building process, together with the support of all the involved actors and the seriousness of the peers.

4.3.2 'Complementary' Guarantee Systems: Group Certification and Internal Control Systems (ICSs)

Group Certifications have developed over the last decades to allow producers to collectively organize themselves in Internal Control Systems (ICSs) (Campbell 2005; Cassells et al. 2011; Fonseca 2004; Zobel 2007). They are not formally recognised. However, through an advisory process which they have, together with IFOAM, they are “*de facto*” accepted, at least within Developing Countries. Through a Group Certification, producers can define the ICS, a set of standards which each producer must follow and respect. This model also needs an external body to verify and to control the compliance of organic standards. So, the process is participatory, but the last verification is delegated to a third-body. This last monthly controls the bureaucratic part of the process, so, documents and parameters related to production. It gives to the producers the chance to organize themselves for visits and inspections. In this way, they reduce certification costs. Farmers can acquire more autonomy being obliged to work collectively, but at the same time, it could be a problem: more independence entails more knowledge and skills which not ever are present, and it could limit the applicability of this kind of organic guarantee (Källander 2008). The certification is not individual: who takes part in the Group Certification can be certified, but just as part of a collective group, no one can individually use it. Often, this kind of organic certification is released by some intermediates who use to export or simply sell the group products, or sometimes farmers engaged in the same selling point, such as a farmers’ market, are collectively certified. Along with these ‘complementary’ guarantee systems, which could be also defined as second-party certification, we find another set of certifications, the PGSs, which have been considered as ‘alternative’. Despite their similarities, PGSs are completely independent of the external bodies. The certification is individually granted, and consumers participate in the process. PGSs could also be interpreted as ‘alternative’ forms of guarantee systems, having, in some Countries, the official acknowledgement like third-party certification.

4.3.3 'Alternative' Guarantee Systems: Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGSs)

PGSs were created in Brazil in the ‘1980s. IFOAM defined them as:

Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGSs) are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on the active participation of stakeholders and are built on a

foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange⁹⁷

PGSs are out of the ‘conventional’ guarantee systems and their separation push to a notable reduction of economic and bureaucratic costs (Francisco and Radomsky 2009; Lamine 2011; Lamine et al. 2012; Sacchi et al. 2015; Zanasi et al. 2009). These mechanisms of compliance assessment offer to consumers the guarantee of organic quality, as well as the observance of the main principles of the solidarity economy. Through the co-construction process, PGSs could place closely producers and consumers in some cases (Andretta and Guidi 2017), even though it could not happen in other ones (e.g. within the case of Rede Ecovida). PGSs can be considered as a tool to reduce the lack of consumers’ trust, to reduce the informative asymmetries, as well as they could or not approximate producers and consumers, but it depends on the specific PGS framework and territorial contexts, and they could avoid the organic’s logo branding (Sacchi et al. 2015).

PGSs have lesser management’s costs, compared to the third-party certification. They foster the knowledge exchange, even though often are strictly linked to the ‘conventional’ set of rules (Källander 2008). Another key-point is related to the decision-making process: it is transparent and structured, it allows to improve the level of trust and the establishment of new partnerships between producers (Källander 2008). Each farmer could be certified, even though, normally, is still a farmers’ group who gets the certification.

There are two different main forms of PGSs. A first typology regards those PGSs which properly can be defined as a form of certification. They provide a logo which certifies organic products and it can be used within both conventional and alternative supply channels. An example of such experiences is the PGS certification which the Brazilian solidarity economy network Rede Ecovida provides to its farmers, and which allows them to sell products within the national boundaries (hereafter, they will be classified as *Organismo Participativo de Avaliação da Conformidade* (OPACs). On the other hand, there is a second typology which regards those PGS frameworks which do not provide certification, even though they act following the PGSs principles. They guarantee organic production and allows farmers to directly sell their products, but it does not allow the producer to extend their commercialization to conventional supply channels

⁹⁷ <https://www.ifoam.bio/en/organic-policy-guarantee/participatory-guarantee-systems-pgs> last accessed 05 July 2018.

or to locate the organic logo on the products. An example of such experiences is the “*Organismo de Controle Social*” accreditation (hereafter, OCSs) officially established within the Brazilian Law on organic agriculture, which allows family farmers to the direct sales of organic products.

In the following paragraphs, two case-studies will be presented: the Brazilian case-study, with the specific focus on the Rede Ecovida’s PGS, and the Italian case-study, with the specific focus on the PGS of Lombardy, which it has been fostered by the Regional Solidarity Economy Network (RES Lombardia)⁹⁸.

4.4 Data and methods

As it has been anticipated in the introduction, to develop this chapter, two different case-studies have been considered: the PGS of Lombardy and the Rede Ecovida’s PGS. The research has been implemented in two different moments. For both case-studies, it was necessary to start from their related legal frameworks. Then, for what specifically regards the case of the PGS of Lombardy, its construction process has been joined since the early beginning (January 2015-March 2016). The methodological tools employed to structure the research design were: collective interviews and focus groups made with both local and general committees, participant observation and field-notes collected during the committees’ briefings (for both local and general committees), finally, the analysis of the guarantee protocols which were chosen to create the certification (logo) “*C’è Campo*”⁹⁹. In addition, few telephonic interviews have been done with key-actors, which were important to collect specific information about the Italian panorama around organic certification.

For what concerns the other considered case-study, the Ecovida’s PGS, the adopted methodology has considered the following tools: collective interviews gathered with a farmers’ group (Biguaçu), participant observation and field-notes collected during a farmers’ group meeting (February 2017) and the Grande Florianópolis’ nucleus annual meeting (October 2017), during the *pilot work* and the *field work* of this research. Moreover, thanks to the long-standing research interest of one of the authors, for what concerns the Rede Ecovida, it was possible to compare the functioning’s mechanisms of each considered experiences. Thus, in the following sections, the normative frameworks and the “*modus operandi*” of both experiences will be analysed, as well as the producers’

⁹⁸ <http://www.economiasolidale.net/res-lombardia> last accessed 05 July 2018.

⁹⁹ <http://www.cecampo.org/> last accessed 06 July 2018.

and consumers' commitment in the process.

4.5 The European normative framework and the PGS of Lombardy

There are several experiences of PGSs in the World. In Europe, the pioneers of these grassroots guarantee systems were the French solidarity economy association “*Nature et Progrès*”, which is composed by both consumers and producers, who have been promoting organic agriculture since the mid-1960s. Nowadays they collect hundreds of certified farmers who take part in their PGS, but they are not a unique European experience. From the IFOAM website¹⁰⁰ is possible to consult the interactive map which reports all the PGSs experiences present over the World. In Italy, the current situation follows the European trends. Several experiences have been structured today over different regions of the Country. However, before analysing the Italian context, it is necessary to historically reconstruct the European Organic Agriculture framing.

The organic agriculture has been firstly regulated at the Communitarian level among the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) through the Regulation No. 2092/1991¹⁰¹ which was approved by the Ministries' Council of the EEC (now, European Union). This first regulation was important because it gave to the European consumers the opportunity to buy organic products in each European adherent Country with the assurance and safety for what they were buying. Each Country must respect guarantee standards necessary to distinguish an organic product from a conventional one. This norm had initially previewed just to protect and certify fresh products. It has been progressively modified along the time including some specific rules for what regards live-stocking, dairy activities, animal feeding and their related well-being, illness prevention, and so on (EC Regulation No. 1804/1999). Later, in 2007, a new set of norms has been introduced, abrogating *de facto* the previous norm. This new regulation (EC Regulation No. 834/2007), which is related to organic production, labelling, and aquaculture, completely excludes the genetically modified organism (GMO) employment for what concerns organic agriculture. It allows only natural inputs which are listed in the Regulation text, as well as their related function. This important modification has focused on environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, animals' well-being, but especially on consumers' food security and safety. To pursue this goal, in 2010 the official *logo* for European Organic Products has been introduced, even for transformed and processed

¹⁰⁰ <https://pgs.ifoam.bio/> last accessed 24 July 2018.

¹⁰¹ Later introduced in Italy through the Ministerial Decree No. 220/1995.

products – which must contain the 95% of ingredients coming from organic agriculture. After this brief historical reconstruction for what regards the institutionalization of organic certification in Europe, it is necessary to consider the alternative certifications' evolution. Indeed, even though the “*Nature et Progrès*”, as well as other agroecological and peasant association/organizations experiences, or rather SFSCs and AFNs initiatives such as AMAPs, Italian SPGs or British CSAs, there is no official laws or rules which regulate PGSs or other forms of guarantee systems, apart from the third-party certification (the unique recognized by EU). However, organizations like “*Genuino Clandestino*” (in English ‘Genuine Clandestine’), founded in 2010, which is an organization who promote a ‘social’ and ‘resistant’ agriculture, today is widespread located over several Italian Regions and is one of the most important PGSs promoters. They sustain the idea of peasant agriculture (for this ‘genuine’). They directly criticize Communitarian norms which impose numerous bureaucratic procedures and controls, especially for what concerns the products’ transformation (for this ‘clandestine’). They define themselves as follow:

A communicational campaign aimed to denounce a set of unfair rules, which comparing peasant processed food to those which come from big food industries, has declared out of law peasant food. For this it claims, since its origin, the free transformation of peasant food, giving back the right to do it, which the neoliberal system has expropriated¹⁰²

This ‘clandestine’ small farmers network, which has started its activity with the aim of creating alternative market spaces, has made the PGS the core-node of their action (Andretta and Guidi 2017; Sacchi 2016). In Bologna (Northern Italy), for instance, within the urban farmers’ markets, which the agroecological association “*CampiAperti*¹⁰³” organizes, can get access only certified producers, both third-party and PGSs certified. Their PGSs is something like the OCSs accreditation presents in Brazil, which will be described in-depth in the next paragraph. Today, these organizations collect hundreds of small farmers around all the Country. They are just a few examples of PGSs experiences in Italy (Vittori 2018).

4.5.1 The PGS of Lombardy – “*C’è Campo*”

Before analysing the PGS construction process, it is necessary to briefly describe

¹⁰² <http://genuinoclandestino.it/chisiamo/> last accessed 06 July 2018.

¹⁰³ It takes part to the “*Genuino Clandestino*” network. For more info, see <http://www.campiaperti.org/>, last accessed 06 July 2018.

the context among which it has been implemented. Lombardy is the richest Region of Italy. It is also the most industrialized, and the agriculture is prevalently monocultural and industrialized. To answer these problems, starting from the mid-1990s several initiatives of the so-called AFNs have emerged (see chapter 2, section II). In Italy, and especially in Lombardy, the SPGs are one of the most important stakeholders which has stimulated the consumers' awareness of organic consumption. Lombardy is the Region which has got the strongest presence of AFNs, such as SPGs, on the entire country, even though the most productive Region, in terms of extension (20% of the entire Italian organic croplands) and the number of organic producers (almost 16% of Italian organic farmers) is Sicily (SINAB 2017). As previous researches have demonstrated, SPGs have remarkably increased until 2010 (Table 9).

Table 9 SPGs per each Province of Lombardy¹⁰⁴

PROVINCE	SPGs self-registered among retegas.org	SPGs mapped by Cores Research Group	SPGs who took part in Cores Research
Milan	95	153	51
Bergamo	24	62	44
Brescia	23	50	22
Como	14	46	14
Varese	18	40	17
Monza-Brianza	23	33	23
Lecco	8	17	10
Pavia	7	1	9
Cremona	8	7	5
Mantova	4	4	3
Lodi	1	3	3
Sondrio	2	3	3
Total	227	429	204

The main goal of SPGs is to collectively organize the food distribution involving organic farmers (prevalently locals) to provide food for such consumers who take specific attention toward products' choice criteria. Following this purpose, SPGs have started to scale-up their action through the creation of the so-called "*Distretti di Economia Solidale*" (DESS) (in English, Solidarity Economy Districts), significative phenomenon which sees

¹⁰⁴ Source: Data CoresNet Research (previously, Osservatorio CORES) "*Dentro il Capitale delle Relazioni*", (Forno, Grasseni, and Signori 2013a)

several experiences in Lombardy which are officially part of the “*Tavolo per la Rete Italiana di Economia Solidale*” (in English, National Network of Solidarity Economy). DESs want to coordinate, study, and organize SFSCs, and sometimes they go beyond food provision considering alternative renewable energies, rural districts, and much more issues. SPGs and DESs grow within the context of “*Reti di Economia Solidale*” (RESs) (in English, Solidarity Economy Networks). RESs are active among the entire national territory. These experiences of ‘alternative economy’ have improved basing their action on relationships, social and environmental sustainability, with a collaborative and reciprocity vision, defending common goods, and providing an available alternative to the mainstream market economy. Starting from this socioeconomic and cultural framework, some DESs and RESs of Lombardy decided to begin a PGS collaborative construction process for the regional territory.

The first trial began in 2012 with the purpose to get the start, at the local level, to a new form of grassroots guarantee. It was exclusively thought for involved actors. It served to strengthen relationships between consumers and producers and to sustain SFSCs and local productions, according to the principles of environmental and social sustainability. The project leader for this first attempt was the DESs of Provinces of Como, Varese and Monza-Brianza¹⁰⁵. Each territory has created a local committee, where people – consumers, producers, agronomists, and activists – deepened technical knowledge related to organic production, and shared principles and ethical-based values to define experimental protocols. All these inputs and outputs gave life to the PGS.

The first trial has been funded by an external grant. The lack of sources has slowed down the process until 2015 when new sources were collected from another public grant. New territories have been included, such as Bergamo, Milan, Sondrio, and Brescia (“*Valcamonica*”). Along with this new attempt, together with local DESs, the project manager was AIAB Lombardia, the association of organic agriculture, the main Italian stakeholder who promotes this type of production. Then, in 2015 a new PGS have been started with the aim to satisfy the following goals: strengthening local networks and the relational systems within each involved territory; improving the network capability for what concerns local communities’ involvement in resilient processes; reinforcing and spread at Regional scale PGS’s practices with the aim to stabilize grassroots initiatives through a shared strategy. Both first trial and the second attempt of 2015 were funded by

¹⁰⁵ Isola che c’è (Como), DES Varese, and DES Brianza (Monza Brianza).

a public grant. The economic sustainability issue has been highlighted several times by involved stakeholders. Currently, the Regional Solidarity Economy Network (*RES Lombardia*) appears interested to carry on this project. Starting from 2016, voluntaries of the various local committee have returned to organize briefings to define the future. Today, farmers certified by the PGS are 20 coming from various Provinces of Lombardy.

4.6 The Brazilian normative framework and the case of Rede Ecovida's PGS

There are several PGSs in the World. Within the pioneering experiences, the Brazilian model is the globally recognized reference, being one of the few Countries (together with Bolivia and India) where PGSs are officially identified by the law as a possible way to guarantee organic agriculture (Meirelles 2010). The long pathway of the institutionalization of organic agriculture started with the birth and the appearance of few social movements in Southern Brazil, thanks to the grassroots religious organizations' (both Catholics and Lutherans) and NGOs' direct engagement and support. Starting from the 1990s, these organizations began to claim toward the State the need to regulate also alternative forms of guarantee systems, which left to be the main contested issue between them and those considered the third-party certification as the unique really reliable (Fonseca 2009; Meirelles 2010). In 1999, the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture (MAPA) published the "*Instrução Normativa n° 007/99*" which have officially recognized the third-party certification as the unique way to guarantee organic agriculture. Contextually, the social actors above-mentioned, who tried to spread the agroecological approach, had been continuing to sensitize and be proactive in the Southern Region of Brazil. It was in this scenario when it was created, through a grassroots construction process, the solidarity economy network Rede Ecovida (Rover 2011), which today collects 340 farmers groups (encompassing almost 4.500 involved families) from the São Paulo, Parana, Santa Catarina, and the Rio Grande do Sul States¹⁰⁶. Who takes part to this network are associations, farmers groups, cooperatives, NGOs, single actors, all of them guided by agroecological principles like the environmental protection, and promotion of human resources and life (Sacchi 2015; Zanasi et al. 2009). The experience of Ecovida was central for what has been carried out in 2003. There, through the Federal Law No. 10.831/03, the Brazilian government finally established the rules for commercialization and production for organic products. Since 2003¹⁰⁷, Brazil has started a long process to

¹⁰⁶ <http://Ecovida.org.br/> last accessed 05 July 2018.

¹⁰⁷ www.agricultura.gov.br/assuntos/sustentabilidade/organicos/regularizacao-da-producao last accessed

regulate organic and agroecological production. Brazil has recognized the peer-to-peer certifications, as well as the third-party certification, such as the ways of guarantee organic production, including a specific regulation to give the chance to small farmers, and family farmers, to get a certification able to guarantee their products, and enable them to sell directly. Later, this law has been regulated in 2007 through the Governmental Decree No. 6.323/07 which has introduced the “*Sistema Brasileiro de Avaliação da Conformidade Orgânica*” (SisOrg). It recognizes, together with the third-party certification, for the first time the PGSs certification, in compliance to “*Organismo Participativo de Avaliação da Conformidade (OPAC)*”, which allows commercializing PGSs certified products within national boundaries (exportations are still allowed just for third-party certified products). The Ecovida’s PGS is an example of them. It is not unique in Brazil and hereafter they will be labelled as OPACs. However, together with these forms of certification, another way of guarantee has been introduced, especially for those small farmers which are interested in directly sell their products, in other words, without any intermediate. This third way of guarantee has been defined by the law as OCS, which is not a certification: it is not provided to the applicants any *logo*, and it does not allow small farmers to sell their products as organic within conventional supply channels, such as OPAC. Indeed, small farmers who are accredited through the OCS are just registered within the “*Cadastro Nacional de Produtores Orgânicos*¹⁰⁸” and officially allowed for direct sales as organic producers, but they are not certified. Following the Decree No. 6.323, OCSs are:

Grupo organizado de geração de credibilidade a partir da interação de pessoas ou organizações, sustentada na participação dos indivíduos, comprometimento, transparência e confiança, reconhecido pela sociedade – tran. – An organized group of creating reliability starting from the interaction of people or organization, supported by individuals’ participation, by agreements, through transparency and trust, recognised by society (Decree No. 6.323/2007)

Producers must fill a group register, a handbook to verify the organic production, and the general documentation which certify the family-scale of the production. Somehow, it could represent a preliminary step for those small producers who try to be certified and sell their products without any other intermediation, at least at the local level

16 March 2017.

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.agricultura.gov.br/assuntos/sustentabilidade/organicos/cadastro-nacional-produtores-organicos> last accessed 05 July 2018.

through the farmers' market, direct sales, deliveries, and toward consumers groups. These normative incentives have aided the growth of organic and certified family farmers. This approach encourages also producers to build up strong relationships within the same group, and sometimes with consumers, who buy from them strengthening trust-relationships. Finally, it improves the solidarity-based relationships and it increases also the inclination toward a cooperative perspective for all the stakeholders involved in the guarantee system (Pugas et al. 2017).

4.7 A comparison between two case-studies

As could be seen, the considered contexts are very different. The Italian context is featured by a preponderant relevance of consumers' activism organized in groups, which are structured in SPGs, DESs, and RESs. Especially in Lombardy, where the croplands available are highly lowered, due to the urbanization and the strong industrialization which have characterized the post-war decades. The widespread agriculture is mostly monocultural and dedicated to livestock and dairy activities, even though the organic agriculture is a sector which grows with an important percentage over last years. On the other hand, the Brazilian case-study, where the Rede Ecovida emerged, is characterized by a long pathway of contention politics and political participation started in the early 1980s, which have influenced the public policies on organic certification, thus PGSs. This work, made by the solidarity economy networks, has been implemented mostly by family farmers and supporting organizations, instead of organized consumers' groups¹⁰⁹.

To analyse the certification's systems from a comparative perspective, it is necessary to revoke some key-points which distinguish these participatory processes from the more standardized ones.

Firstly, it is important to remember that organic products, whatever their related selling points of channels of distribution (GDOs, farmers markets, SPGs/CSAs, etc.), are 'trust goods' (Barbosa and Lages 2006) which are bought by consumers for both ethical and/or political issues, and health-related and/or environmental issues (Honkanen et al. 2006), or in other cases, to directly support farmers (i.e. British CSAs and French AMAPs), which consumers have structured strong ties and good relationships (Kneafsey et al. 2013; Lang 2010; Nost 2014). They are 'trust goods' because the consumer, finding

¹⁰⁹ Even though, nowadays, several initiatives, inspired by the Italian SPGs and CSAs, have been structuring.

an organic product among the market (no matter the specific channel of distribution), expects to come across to a good with specific physical/organoleptic features, being respectful of a certain quality and production standards. These features are not evident. The good does not present these values. The consumer expects it because he/she is brought to think that product owns their specific features, and this is achievable through a premium quality guarantee system. To do so – to provide a neutral assurance for consumers – starting from the early 1990s, it has started to create universally accepted standards (Fouilleux and Loconto 2017), especially for big companies which use to sell their products among the GDOs. This was also the reason why most of the organic agriculture SMOs (especially in Brazil) have challenged the idea of an organic certification, which it has been interpreted as too much bureaucratic and far from the awareness-making and socialize processes which social movements organization has been working on (Byé et al. 2002). As it has previously described, social movements pressure brought at least to the PGSs official acknowledgement within the Brazilian system. An interesting interpretation of such dualism has been provided by Monica Truninger (2013). Through research implemented in Lisbon on organic products. She made a classification of the different order of trust: the first typology is what it can be found within institutions which she called ‘dis-embedded trust’ (in Portuguese “*confiança desenraizada*”); the second typology is the relational-based trust, which she called ‘embedded trust’ (in Portuguese “*confiança enraizada*”), referring to the theoretical approach previously made by Sassatelli and Scott (2001). Applying this classification toward organic products’ market, it is easy to imagine that the first trust typology is related to GDOs and to the consumers’ need to recognize, even noticeably, an organic product from a non-organic one. To provide trust, in these channels of distribution are employed official *logos*, product description, and specific packaging which give the idea of pureness, naturalness, familiarity, and sustainability. Practically, they are all products that can be bought within supermarkets of specialized shops, which guarantee organic production, but they do not say anything about who has worked for making that good, how he/she has produced it, how it has been verified, and so on. The third-party certification, at least in Europe, is the unique way to guarantee organic products within conventional food channels of distribution. For what concerns PGSs, the scenario is completely different. Their construction process answers to different producers and consumers’ needs, placing themselves as possible intermediate answer located in the middle of the above-mentioned two trust typologies (Truninger 2013), being the selling

of such certified products allowed to commercial intermediates (at least in Brazil). For what concerns the OCSs accreditation, which is the direct outcome of the commitment and strong ties created between farmers and consumers, the consideration is different. It guarantees just the direct selling, and so it encourages trust-relationships establishment without any commercial intermediate engagement. It is a ‘trust embedded’ among the networks and groups which create this kind of production’s supervision. Formally, it is what in Brazil is made with small farmers to carry them toward a gradual process of certification. Informally, it is what in Italy has been ever made by Solidarity Purchase Groups with organic farmers. Solidarity Purchase Groups procure organic producers (most recently they tend to seek out local producers). They visit and control the production, monitoring it according to social and environmental sustainability’s criteria.

The PGS of Lombardy is directly inspired by the Ecovida’s experience, for what regards the adopted methodology, as well as the formal approach. The involved DESs tried to engage as much as possible organic local farmers, which they used to have a good relationship, partially accomplishing this goal. Since its formation, the PGS of Lombardy has seen the involved consumers as the protagonist of this process. The PGS’s constitution was divided into few steps, starting from the previous expertise reached by such territories which have participated in the first trial. The process indeed has started with two general meetings to prepare stakeholders and provide them with the key-knowledge, able to sustain the entire project. However, several actors have highlighted few doubts around the formation step’s target. It has been perceived too much technical, generic and not practical. Contextually, it was asked to the local DESs and RESs to create the local committee and to engage local producers and other consumers organized in SPGs. Participants have underlined how it was hard for them to engaged in a limited timing more actors (due to the expiration of the received public fund)¹¹⁰. These preliminary steps have been felt as excessively rigid, in contrast to what the stakeholders have expected from a participatory approach. Even the local animators of each DESs/RESs have perceived the process such as something too much severe, with fewer possibilities to modify or change the procedures. It was hard to engage local producers too. Most of the farmers indeed, having already got the third-party certification, they did not understand the importance, nor the need to participate in this project/process. It was also complicated to include other consumers within the process, especially because most

¹¹⁰ The project ended in March 2016.

of them were already committed to other mapping processes¹¹¹.

The PGS has been effectively structured basing itself on the European Law, considering, in addition, further standards, not properly linked to the production processes, but mostly social and sustainability-related. During the local committees' briefings, the producers have never been the main actor, even though they have concretely collaborated to write the visits' protocols for each kind of activity. Their role was central just during the visits' phase which has followed the above-mentioned steps. Indeed, the visit, being the only situation to share and exchange knowledge, was considered an important and worthy moment of the entire PGS construction process. On the contrary, the visit itself has been lived as less rigorous and too much open to be personally interpreted, especially by those people designed to be technical. The visiting group was structured including a producer, a consumer, a technical, and whoever wanted to participate. It has been chosen to forbid the control from people coming from the same territory, instead to encourage the personal exchange between people embedded in the same territory. Although, the visit has been perceived as positive because of the relational exchange, and less rigid compared to what emerged during the constitution and formation steps. Between some producers, properly thanks to this frame, a friendship relation born, together with a commercial collaboration. From the consumers' perspective, the visit was a key-point to move closer to the production places, some farmers have complained a certain 'detachment' toward consumers, in terms of language and technical knowledge.

I have participated less, but I was interested in the PGS, even though I am already certified, I was wondering about the idea of leaving the third-party certification and do something for the territory. The outlet may be different compared to the guarantee committee of *Corto Circuito Coop*. For the producer, the visit is interesting to exchange ideas, but it is also interesting for SPGs consumers to be aware on how is developed the production, where it is made, and to justify the price-making process [Producer 1 – Como Committee]

The tools used to deal with visits have been perceived as too much rigid, and at the same time, vague. For instance, an agronomist of the Bergamo's committee noted the visit's protocol was not schematized, and so free to be interpreted. Something more schematized and easily understood could be – from her perspective – more understandable, not just for agronomists, rather to consumers less aware of what regards technical issues behind the production. A visit protocol more user-friendly oriented could

¹¹¹ E.g. within the Province of Bergamo was already active in a mapping group for what concerns farmers to be included within farmers markets and SPGs.

be extremely useful to have precise data and information, avoiding consequently to have just the trust as a tool to improve know-how: resuming it could provide higher attention and efficiency from producers in showing official documents, being the strong human element, which is present and notable. This note it has not been taken on consideration by the coordination, without making any modification. Generally, the 'revolutionary' innovation of the process has been recognized by all stakeholders involved in the PGS of Lombardy during the final meeting. Overall, among all territories, 16 visits (2 of them made with producers involved within the first trial) have been made. Within the PGS, 20 producers were certified, but the excessive formalization which has given to this certification appearing not useful nor spendable on the market.

Contrary, The Ecovida's experience shows the marked centrality of farmers' activism and enrolment within the guarantee process. As it has previously described, Ecovida is a solidarity economy network which engages a constellation of different actors. It is non-hierarchical, it promotes agroecology and mutual recognition among groups and environmental associations. The certification of organic products is based on the participatory approach, sharing the quality responsibility between producers, technicians, and consumers. They have created a label which must be shown on each product, and its cost is used to finance teaching and extension programs (Zanasi et al. 2009). The organic farmers are organized in progressively larger clusters, from the local group, normally located within a municipality, o few municipalities which are closer, toward the regional *nucleus* which includes all the smaller nucleus distributed among the Regional territory. To get engaged within the Ecovida's PGS, as it has reported within the «Training Manual of Participatory Guarantee of Ecological Products» (Rede Ecovida 2004) a producer must follow several steps as it will be shown below (Zanasi et al. 2009):

- a. Get engaged in a farmers' association;
- b. Establish a trust-based relationship between producers and consumers through farms' visits as well as starting a direct sales activity;
- c. Ask for the certification to the regional nucleus and filling the form to obtain the certification;
- d. Submit forms to the Ethical Council (it is must be composed of stakeholders who not belong to the farm to be certified);
- e. The farmer who wants to get the PGS certification must be visited by the Ethical

Council to his/her property (farm) or agro-industry;

f. Then, the Ethical Council reports the property's assessment: it can be approved or not. In both cases, it is suggested that the necessary improvements to the property or agro-industry are pointed out by the Ethical Council;

g. In case the farmer passed the Ethical Council evaluation, the regional nucleus gives the Rede Ecovida Seal. It can be obtained only after 18 months of transition to agroecological farming. This transition is jointly established between the Regional Nucleus and each farmer, considering the specific characteristics of each property;

h. The seal (*logo*) expires in one year. Each farmer to continue must be monitored every year by the Ethical Council, and he/she must participate in the local group's activities.

During the field work in the Santa Catarina State (one of the territories where Ecovida works), it was possible to participate in a local group meeting and within an annual local nucleus meeting. The first experience was interesting for what concerns the way-of-work of these groups. Specifically, this group is based within the Biguaçu municipality, a small town close to the Capital Florianópolis. Within this group, 12 producers are engaged and each month they organize meetings in a different property for each month. Contextually, they can visit and control the agricultural activity of each member. Periodically, they send to the Ethical Council documents and details, and it works well. The atmosphere was totally friendly, maybe because of their relatively young age. It was possible to catch their collaborative and cooperative approach. Moreover, they use to sell their product collectively within a farmers' market organized by the Municipality of Florianópolis, together with other ones organized by the Federal University of Santa Catarina and other neighbourhood associations.

It was also possible to participate to "*Núcleo Litoral Catarinense*" annual meeting. That experience highlighted the participatory approach. Producers and activists have organized for the third day of works, a series of open workshops and laboratories to improve the consumers' engagement and their related awareness.

4.8 Discussion and conclusion

Making parallelism to the Brazilian context, the PGS of Lombardy committee tried to apply the OPACs' formalization and framework on a system which needed just a

sort accreditation system, closer to the OCS one, rather than a *logo* and another certification system. The trust level was already high. The relationships between their producers and their consumers have been structuring for many years. It was not necessary to add bureaucratic and formal weight to a system which was already respectful of some criteria and standards. This setting has indeed made more evident the non-need to create a PGS, similar to the OPAC certification, instead of the contrary (Salvi and Vittori 2017), due to the high level of ‘trust-embedded’ already present among these food networks.

As Truninger sustained (2013), related to her research, consumers give value to their consumption habits, to the direct experience, to the honesty, and to the transparency which the producers use to demonstrate within the farmers’ markets (or other AFNs experiences) and among the relationship which he/she used to create with consumers. It is the same for the Italian case-study. The level of trust embedded in the solidarity economy of Lombardy was elevated, but the formalization has returned the process too much complex, at least for what it could be noted during the participant observation.

Generally, it is possible to affirm that for what concern the Italian case-study has emerged a sort of ‘path dependence’ of PGS construction process, too much related to the consumers’ will to build up this framework. They adopted rules which were created in other contexts such as Brazil, where on the contrary they work because OPACs certifications allow sales throughout the country, even though their framework is or could appear bureaucratic.

Among the specific case-study of Lombardy, consumers struggled a lot to engage local producers in the process, even though they have been collaborating yet. Overall, in Italy, it is crucial the role of Genuino Clandestino’s network, which promotes the PGS framework, and who has reached a widespread diffusion throughout the national territory (Sacchi 2016). The direct support toward small farmers, the will to spread the agroecological approach toward agriculture, the attempt to ‘feed’ especially people who cannot have access to organic food through GDOs, all these features of Genuino Clandestino’s action are completely in accord with the PGS’s nature. However, the main purpose of the project was not transferred to producers in Lombardy. Most of them didn’t understand the importance of taking part in PGS. Other ones have considered it as top-down oriented, rigid, and with less meaning and effectiveness. However, other PGSs experiences have emerged over the last ten years in Italy (Sacchi 2016), thus they should be studied in-depth to understand whether their approach will follow this top-down approach or not.

The experience of Ecovida has been passing through a twofold pathway. On one hand, it is following the institutional pathway, for what concerns the need to certify producers and to ask for new and more effective public policies around agroecology and family farming. On the other hand, this network is still acting as a SMOs which faces the political and economic institutions, seeking alternative markets and alternative forms of organization out of the institutionalized framework. Indeed, several technicians, who take part to Ecovida, nowadays, are pushing the network's action toward the strengthening of AFNs initiatives, especially to engage more consumers and to improve social actors' awareness around the importance of the PGS. Indeed, PGSs are a few tools through which AFNs could intensify and re-interlace links between various stakeholders and the related territory. The cornerstones of the socializing and the construction of personal relationships within the Market, as it has been demonstrated for what concerns the Rede Ecovida in Brazil (Rover et al. 2017), are not only possible, but they result necessary (Signori and Vittori 2017). PGSs are and should be more than a simple guarantee system. The relationships' construction and the peer-to-peer support to share knowledge, know-how and ideas are the guarantee system's pillars. Referring to Ecovida, Rover defined it as a participatory certification which it has been characterized by a decentralized relation-making process, by reliability, and by the observance of local products' properties and quality (Rover 2013). In other words, Ecovida is built around the stakeholders' mutual participation and agreement (Rover 2013; Rover et al. 2017). The circularity of established actions, between each involved actor who takes part to the supply chain, which distinguishes these certifications, allows each stakeholder to improve his/her own know-how and the awareness to be part of a common and shared project. This is the main difference between these guarantee systems and the conventional one, such as the third-party certification, which implies a competitive market regime, even oriented to exportation.

Another aspect which must be considered is the normative gap between the European Union and other Countries, where PGSs are officially recognised. The lack of Communitarian laws around alternative forms of certification dis-encourages the enlargement of these 'niches' of production and distribution. Indeed, not casually, these networks which try to develop PGSs refers directly to the Brazilian context, where they are regulated. In Brazil PGSs' experiences, both OPACs and OCSs, work well and collect, each one, thousands of family farmers, due to the same legal level of third-party certification and the OPACs one, which are admitted as equally lawful and equivalent, of

course with some differences such as the opportunity to export abroad (admitted just for third-party certification). In this sense, even the smallest producers, engaged within the Market, have the chance to compete and find out alternative and/or parallel pathways toward the convention food system, being recognised them an objective quality assurance (Meirelles 2010). Small producers, in Brazil, have also access to the OCSs accreditation, which guarantees and provides the possibility to sell directly their products as organic.

The discussion between producers belonging to the same territory could also be interpreted and studied as a tool to assess the degree of cooperation, relatively for what concerns the birth of new producers' groups, who could activate a new pathway of socio-political activism within the local system. Besides, being part of a 'closed' circuit allows anyone to identify him/herself in a specific shared value system, inter-connected with the surrounding panorama (Pratt and Luetchford 2014). It is not a form of autarky, but rather, it is a form of self-organization and self-regulation, which needs a social and normative pattern able to sustain and regulate it. Despite this, in Italy, the logic of 'control' has been maintained. It has not encouraged the interaction between producers embedded within the same territory, privileging the idea of competitiveness, instead of encouraging the cooperative approach. Moreover, other important stakeholders, like farmers' unions and local institution have not been contacted at all, and this could offer more opportunity, for what concerns the project sustainability.

Both experiences also demonstrate how social relations are not completely polluted and submitted to the Market. 'Feeding the territory', social relations can both stimulate producers to build up cooperatives and to be the protagonist for what regards environmental protection, bringing them to embrace the food sovereignty perspective. On the other hand, as the Lombardy case study demonstrated, the consumers' leadership in the PGS making-process has highlighted their interest in strengthening trust-relationships with consumers engaged in AFNs. Moreover, Ecovida's action demonstrates how the relation making-processes within the Market, are not just possible, rather necessary. The socializing and the shared and mutual responsibility between the stakeholders have emerged also along the PGS of Lombardy construction process (Signori and Vittori 2017). However, the Ecovida's experience pointed out the risk to fall into the long food supply chains' trap. In other words, due to the given logo of OPAC certification, which allows producers to sell their organic food in conventional food networks among the domestic market, like supermarkets, grocery, and so, the profit-oriented logics can influence and deviate producers' action from the agroecological principles. Indeed, the

Brazilian legislation, being notably strict, needs the observance of specific protocols to provide the OPAC to permit the commercialization with organic certification. So, Ecovida should continue to control, through visits, the producers' action, and contextually, it should not become too much bureaucratized, which is a key condition to reduce eventual entry-barriers for new farmers.

The Brazilian experience also demonstrates how social relations are not completely polluted and submitted to the Market, but rather, 'feeding the territory', they can stimulate producers to build up cooperatives and to be the protagonist for what regards environmental protection, bringing them to embrace the food sovereignty perspective. Ecovida's action demonstrates how the relation-making processes within the Market, are not just possible, rather necessary. The socializing and the shared and mutual responsibility between the stakeholders have emerged also along the PGS of Lombardy construction process (Signori and Vittori 2017).

Furthermore, the circularity of actions between the various actors of the supply chain, which distinguishes the PGSs, permits to the all the engaged stakeholders to improve their know-how and their awareness to be part of a common and non-competitive system. This recalls the cornerstones of the solidarity economy reducing competitive logic and utilitarian rules or approaches. Common goods and common goals are more important, rather than the profits maximization, private interests, and the cost minimization.

However, even if theoretically the PGS's features are clear and practical, thus, it does not generate competitiveness among the solidarity economy network itself, the current Brazilian normative framework seems to 'conventionalize' this certification, especially for what regards the consumers' side. Following the conceptualization of Truninger (2013), the chance to commercialize organic food in conventional food networks can create 'dis-embedded trust' processes, which de-personalize and increase the distance among the social relations, enhancing the competitiveness in the distribution. On the other side, following the idea of van der Ploeg et al. (2012), PGSs can strengthen AFNs and the so-called 'nested markets' as Lombardy's pathway shown. However, without any or weak educational processes, oriented to improve social actors' awareness, for such experiences, the risk to be 'conventionalised', or simply co-opted by the market, is even more possible.

This chapter presents one of the first comparisons between some Italian and Brazilian PGSs experiences, and this topic should be furthered, especially because there

are even more European, thus Italian, initiatives and organizations which try to spread these types of peer-to-peer certification. However, what can be highlighted is the main difference emerged for what concerns activists' role. Indeed, whether consumers are central in spreading and organizing PGSs' practices in the Italian case study, in the Brazilian considered PGS the producers' engagement has been emphasized. This difference caused, among Italian producers, the idea that the process was structured more as top-down oriented and rigid, instead of grassroots-oriented and more flexible. On the other hand, due to the bigger area in which Ecovida has been operating (the Southern Region of Brazil), the distance between consumers and groups of producers is generating disperse and vary experiences in a huge territory, being necessary for them to find out markets far from the production place, reducing the chance to keep control and maintain and feed the trust embedded. These two opposite externalities led the authors to suppose that a possible intermediate pathway between the two PGS framework, can indicate some ways to make these processes more sustainable. Just to appoint few of them, concerning the Italian case study, a possible solution could be making the process more flexible, while for the Brazilian case, perhaps, encouraging the effort to build more AFNs which could get more engaged consumers, can slow down and reduce the conventionalization process of PGS certification. These are just some suggestions that emerged after several years of direct engagement in these kinds of initiatives. More studies should be done in a comparative perspective, especially considering possible relations between the framing process and the social capital, or, for example, taking into account the consumers' perception of these peer-to-peer certifications, compared to the third-party ones.

EPILOGUE

Discussion and conclusion

Sustainable agriculture, as well as Alternative Food Networks (AFNs), have been presented as an example of alternative practices and direct social actions which are trying to provide a form of ‘resistance’ to the neoliberal food policies and the conventional (or mainstream) agri-food systems (Venn et al. 2006). These experiences have taken central attention in the academic debate. Indeed, the role of consumption as a possible roadmap for civic participation (Renting et al. 2012), as well as these alternative grassroots initiatives which have been encompassed under the idea of Sustainable Community Movement Organizations (Forno and Graziano 2014), are some of the most important widespread interpretations of these phenomena arose over last years.

In accordance with recent trends in the literature on political consumerism, collective action, and alternative forms of food distribution, this dissertation had shown that these phenomena should not be (exclusively) understood such as consumers and responsible producers’ reflexivity driven (Bostrom and Klintman 2009; Veen et al. 2012). Instead, as it has been argued, sustainable agriculture and AFNs should be understood as situated in specific socio-material realities, as recent publications upon political consumerism in Southern Europe and Latin America demonstrated (Lekakis and Forno 2018; Portilho and Micheletti 2018). Thus, motivations and frameworks can vary from a place to another. Moreover, following previous attempts (Wahlström and Peterson 2006), an innovative conceptual framework to analyse these phenomena has been adopted which is built on the dynamic relations between the political, cultural, and economic structures, and the AFNs initiatives.

Extending the idea of Political Opportunity Structure (Mcadam et al. 2004; Wahlström and Peterson 2006) to the other dimensions which feature the social organization, such as the Market and Civil Society, this study highlighted how AFNs are enacted and negotiated through a range of elements, encompassing for example consumers, retailers, political and economic institutions, both local and national, media, and other cultural institutions and agencies. More specifically, by using an extended model of the Political Opportunity Structure, it was possible to highlight the constraints and opportunities of such experiences in two different territories. It has also been shown their tendency to act specifically within the Market, instead of influencing political institutions, except for the local ones. The main contribution of this dissertation is that sustainable agriculture and AFNs were not approached through the consumers’ narratives

(not only at least), but rather focusing on the farmers' narratives. The attention has been directed to farmers' profile, meanings, motivations, and socio-demographic variables. Moreover, AFNs adopt some tools to strengthen their shared actions. This choice has been guided by the will to better understand what is moving these farmers to get collectively engaged in AFNs, due to the variety of studies recently made on political consumerism, thus facing the consumers' motivations and their political background. Moreover, together with the analysis of farmers' profiles, the PGSs have been studied as a tool to strengthen AFNs' framework and their empowerment.

As specified in the introduction of this dissertation, the main research question behind this study was to investigate how the nature, the organizational form, and the alliances of (and among) different actors, who promote alternative forms of food consumption and distribution, are changing along the time in the urban areas, comparing the insights gathered in both Global North and Global South. Moreover, this research highlighted how people get collectively engaged in AFNs, and how these last have been shaped by the political, economic, and cultural structures which influence their action. It has also been studied the influence of the economic and financial crisis, as well as providing a state of art of sustainable agriculture in both considered cities. Finally, in the last empirical chapter, alternative forms of organic guarantee have been analysed as a tool to strengthen AFNs' actions.

Generally, this work has marked how these new practices provide a new relationship between food, consumers, and producers. This new relationship is counterposed to the increasing 'dis-embeddedness' of food production and distribution, which separate places, times, and way of consumption. This framework is typical of the mainstream, or conventional food system, as it has been shown. In spite of this increasing tendency, AFNs have been even more structuring and articulating. This was clear for both the considered contexts in time of crisis, thus, during the Great Recession. Indeed, the diachronic analysis (showed in the second empirical chapter) has proved this hypothesis, confirming what emerged from previous studies (Andretta and Guidi 2017; Maurano and Forno 2017). However, the insufficient propensity, in both contexts, of local social actors to establish and seek political intermediation, for example, able to scale up their issues, tends to relegate AFNs as a marginal phenomenon. As will be explained in the following pages, this trend risks to leave these initiatives as somehow functional to the conventional system, instead of being 'revolutionary' or simply influencers.

To sum, the epilogue shows the major findings of this study. Its main theoretical

and practical implications will be discussed. Then, this dissertation will end with an identification of the limits of this study. Finally, it will identify possible future researches to undertake.

Major Findings

In the past two decades, academic literature on AFNs has predominantly framed evolutions in alternative food markets in terms of the geographical relationships between food production and consumption. Studies have focused on how food practices have been changing the relations between food and territory, producers and consumers, and large and small retail groups (Goodman 2004). Starting from the 1990s, the debate was based on food-sustainability literature. AFNs were considered an antagonist of the large-scale food system, centred on industrial production, long supply chains, and GDOs distribution (Mackenzie 1990). AFNs emerged as a niche which encompassed ethical experiences defined as local, correct, profitable, sustainable and qualitative (Feenstra 1997). Starting from the 2000s, the academic debate has been enriched by several researches on specific empirical case studies, including localised and short supply chains, farmer markets, CSAs, community gardens and organic schemes (Hinrichs 2003; Jarosz 2008), as well as theoretical perspectives used to study these alternatives (Sonnino and Marsden 2006; Tregear 2011). One of the most important interpretations of AFNs refers to their social inclination. Among these networks, which try to disseminate the importance of preserving the environment, the workers' rights, and a more sustainable lifestyle, the social element is crucial. As was discussed at the beginning of this dissertation, the re-socialization of food is the intrinsic feature that distinguishes AFNs from the conventional food networks (CFNs), by emphasising the role played by context components (environmental, social, cultural and economic) and giving value to food in specific spaces/places, against the dominant regime described as 'dehumanising' and socially marginalising (Kneafsey et al. 2008; Sage 2003).

More recently, AFNs have been considered as a part of new 'economic social movements' (Niederle 2014). Moreover, following the latency-visibility model presented by Melucci (Melucci 1985, 1996), Forno (2018) describes what has happened after the downturn of the international and transnational mobilization of the GJM. What this scholar showed is that networks and activities persist even when movements are not mobilizing. Indeed, several SMOs, which took part in the GJM, after its downturn, have shifted their attention to locally-oriented actions. Most of these organizations have

developed alternative economic practices and solidarity-based actions. To encompass these initiatives, the idea of SCMOs has been proposed (Forno and Graziano 2014). Using the political consumerism as a repertoire of action, such experiences create new economic and cultural spaces for civic learning and consumerist actions that aim to construct and sustain alternative markets based on knowledge exchange, loyalty, and trust (Forno et al. 2013b; Grasseni 2014). These experiences help the circularity of information between involved stakeholders, create common interpretations of reality, and help the improvements of alternatives and more sustainable lifestyles (Forno et al. 2015). However, depending on the context, these experiences share common traits. At the same time, they could also vary. Indeed, the Brazilian and Italian considered AFNs have been enacted by different actors. In Europe, and thus in Italy, as it was supposed, these initiatives are mostly encouraged by consumers' activism. In Latin America, even though political consumerism initiatives have been strengthening along the last years (Portilho and Micheletti 2018), AFNs, in the considered Brazilian context, are promoted by producers and technical personnel's activism yet. Moreover, the membership of collective organizations like a solidarity economy network, or a farmers' union, or rather a SMOs, helps to strengthen the development of AFNs. Adopting specific tools, or simply intercepting a wider audience of consumers and supporters, acting in specific places, such as universities or popular neighbourhoods, AFNs can enlarge their public, they can improve citizens' awareness. In other words, they can be more effective, in terms of providing alternative choices to the mainstream agri-food system, creating a shared interpretation of reality.

Implications regard Social Movement Studies

Scientific implications

Forno and Graziano (2014) discuss a range of anti/alter-consumeristic initiatives defined as SCMOs. The most important feature of these experiences is their attitude to influence the Market, instead of being oriented to force the State. What this dissertation shows is a preliminary attempt to understand such organizations through Social Movement Studies. Specifically, analysing from a comparative perspective AFNs structured in two different cities, it was demonstrated how they could be interpreted through the POS model enlarged toward Cultural and Economic Opportunity Structure. This represents an innovation within social movements and AFNs researches. Moreover, as the Social Network Analysis demonstrated in the third empirical chapter, the

background and the previous participation in other SMOs display how AFNs could act as other social movements in terms of creating alliances, links, sharing sources and knowledge.

This issue has been specifically faced in the **first empirical chapter** through the enlarged POS model. The research question behind that chapter was related to seeing how AFNs have been fostered or constrained in their own contexts. Food has been undoubtedly put in the core-action of several urban and peri-urban social and community movements. The cases of Bergamo and Florianopolis displayed it. Food has pushed several groups of people to make and strengthen ties. It is still not possible to say that it is the vector for the creation of a new social paradigm, but in a de-mobilization era, AFNs are springing up. However, these initiatives, even though collect an increasing number of consumers and producers, they appear as functional to the mainstream system, due to their non-contested approach to the system. Their innovative contribution has been used by bigger economic actors to reinforce their own role within the Market, instead of forcing political institution to control more the conventional production, which often hides a systematic exploitation system on Earth and people. As above-mentioned, AFNs seem to be 'functional'. In other words, in spite of providing an alternative 'exit' for the sustainable markets' development, carrying on an aggregative function, and being a medium for flowing public interest among the democratic process, AFNs tend to build closed economic networks. This limit impedes to these 'niches of innovation' to go further and leave them as the 'niche' dimension of their market.

The implications for Alternative Food Networks field

Therefore, this project highlighted is the lack of a shared political action among these initiatives. Their market-oriented actions risk to be functional, instead of dis-functional, or simply critical, toward the conventional food system and the neoliberal system in general. Even though they recognize the conventional food system as the common enemy, and the alternative markets a possible solution to the negative externalities behind that system, they still present limits in creating a dense informal network able to build up a shared political action, which could overlap also other claims, together the food-related ones (Diani 2003, 2004; Diani and McAdam 2003). The lack of available sources, and their limited and closed dimensions constrains the AFNs' space of action. Their relative closeness risk to leave AFNs in a dimension of 'sub-culture', instead of becoming a social movement able to be influent at the institutional level. Indeed, as it

has often stated, they risk being self-expression of the middle and upper classes, mostly represented by 'white' and high-educated people which are often scarcely politicized and more interested in preserving their own health and their identity (Goodman et al. 2012). The community or collective-organized collective consumption, as a recent contribution affirmed, is destined to remain a niche on the edge of the Market (Dubuisson-Quellier 2018), which, on the contrary, has reinforced itself co-opting, through corporates' market strategies, these alternative forms of consumption. Notwithstanding, media still represents food system through stereotypes, even though SMOs try to frame other interpretations. Eating well becomes a privilege, instead of being a right guaranteed by UN and FAO.

Moreover, erasing the contention between the Market and the State, AFNs 'steal' available resource from such SMOs directly committed to guarantee better workers' conditions and so on. For instance, Italian AFNs used to be environmentally aware and oriented toward the direct support of a more sustainable form of growing food, preferring, for instance, SFSCs, organic and agro-ecological producers. However, the peasants' conditions, often illegal immigrants, which are employed in Southern Italy, providing manpower to the conventional agri-food system, are worsened¹¹². It is the same in Brazil, where the solidarity economy movement and the agroecological movement arose. Critical consumers seem to be more worried about their health, because of the chemical and toxic external input, adopted by the industrial food system¹¹³.

It does not mean that they are unsuccessful. In both considered contexts, these AFNs, are trying to act as the so-called Civic Food Networks (Renting et al. 2012). They are more interested in local political lobbying activities. Indeed, in both cities, they are collecting successes, but the pathway to follow appear so long, especially to be inclusive. However, keeping the State as the target is crucial, especially in times of crises, where social rights have been reduced and constrained by Austerity policies imposed by transnational political and economic institutions. As Crouch showed in a recent contribution (Crouch 2011), big companies are interfering with democratic processes to pursue their goals. Even during the Great Recession, these big actors reinforced their power. This is a problem not only related to the democratic regime but especially referred

¹¹² https://www.corriere.it/cronache/18_agosto_07/dietro-null-tutte-cifre-caporalato-italia-foggia-morti-migranti-63418ee4-9a31-11e8-b29e-fbb2c6c2bbaf.shtml last accessed 10 August 2018.

¹¹³ <http://outraspalavras.net/ojoioeotriago/2018/08/uso-de-agrotoxicos-no-brasil-aumentou-20-e-afeta-agua-comida-e-saude/> last accessed 10 August 2018

to the Market. Neoliberal policies, presented as emancipatory forces, appear as the opposite. Big retailers, companies, and other transnational actors, which are leading global markets, are even more numerically less and centralized in a few subjects. The historical conflicts between the State and the Market hide the existences of this third force, which is more effective. Especially after the 2008-crisis, global politics is not depending on the historical dualism between these forces, but rather it seems to have reached a shared agreement about the need to pursue this kind of social, political, and cultural organization (Crouch 2011).

These specific issues related to the Great Recession have been analysed in the **second empirical chapter** which investigated whether the crisis has been differently affecting AFNs in different places in the Global World – and eventually – the reasons behind this tendency. The research proved how AFNs have been spreading, despite the Great Recession. Italian AFNs appear to be fostered mainly by the activism of consumer-actors, accordingly with previous studies made on the evolution of these alternative practices in times of crisis (Guidi and Andretta 2015). One reasonable explanation of this trend could be linked to the strong presence of SPGs within the metropolitan area of cities, where the consumption use to materialize itself (Wiskerke 2015). In the case of Bergamo, along the urban and peri-urban area have been established tens of different SPGs, apart from other forms of AFNs. Contrary, in Brazil, AFNs are mostly encouraged by the producers' activism with the support of the Rede Ecovida and the Federal University. In Florianópolis, the first initiatives of alternative forms of provisioning were developed by the university personnel, properly inside the campus. The current will of spreading some practices like the Italian SPGs, in several neighbourhoods of Florianópolis, confirm this trend which is supported by other social actors like NGOs and the solidarity economy network. What previous researches – and this one – have demonstrated is that the economic crisis, the impoverishment of the middle class, and the greater citizen awareness on economic, social, and environmental sustainability issues have shaped the form of development of this type of collective action (Maurano and Forno, 2017). Therefore, the economic crisis, as well as the increasing attention toward sustainability, are pushing both consumers and producers to find out alternative solutions. The evidence of the increasing citizens' awareness has been also confirmed by people interviewed along this research project (both Italian and Brazilian producers). People interested in these claims is greater than before, but as most of the Brazilian farmers affirmed, the economic crisis has impoverished lower-middle classes. Consumers buy less, also

because the number of distribution points is growing, as well as the presence of more sustainable products within the GDO. This enlargement of the supply reduced the small producers' power among the Market. Brazilian farmers are passing through worse times, instead of Italian farmers, who highlighted their continuous positive trend, and this is reasonable. On the other hand, the consumers' awareness is still weaker in Brazil, comparing to Italy. From what I could observe during the interviews, local consumers are more focused on their own health, rather than in Italy. Even though are surfacing consumers' experiences, they still are weaker and less numerous compared to the Italian case-study. It could be a possible explanation of the Brazilian AFNs, which are mainly built by local producer organizations and/or local NGO or research groups belonging to the university. All these circumstances reconfigure new balances within the Market and the society. The economic and financial crisis creates insecurity, instability, fears, precariousness, distrust toward institutions. However, most interviewed people have confirmed the idea of Castells et al. (2012): the current economic crisis offers opportunities to develop alternative practices among the urban (and peri-urban) landscape. There are ever more new farmers which started to produce and to be engaged in alternative forms of distribution. The lack of opportunities and values, which the crisis has created, was filled with a new value system. This new re-configuration is not anti-consumeristic, but alter-consumeristic, and it is carrying out itself as a new 'cultural vanguard'. That study confirmed the centrality of environmental and workers' rights protections within young people claims, who are leading these new activities. Even though the solidarity economy is increasing, this specific market is still a marginal economic sector. Whether the will is to institutionalize this form of making the economy and create new markets, undoubtedly, they should make a special effort to engage a bigger portion of people, who are still unaware.

Implications regard Alternative Food Networks' markets

Scientific implications

As Boltanski and Thévenot claimed (2006), in the structures of markets, especially referring to specific 'niches' of consumers, people also mobilize beliefs, ethics, values views of the common good to talk about the effects of market processes. Moreover, as Granovetter pointed out (2017), people seek simultaneously economic and non-economic goals. It pushes to consider both economic analysis and sociological theories to understand these phenomena, related to the solidarity and 'moral' (Fligstein 1996). By

their own nature, markets are the place where economic and moral conflicts between the social actors materialise themselves (as opposed), but at the same time, it is the place where political conflicts, between these same actors, are materialized (Fligstein 1996; Schneiberg and Bartley 2001). This idea overlaps with the conceptualization of ‘feeble’ nature of the market (Fourcade and Healy 2007). Markets are intensely moralized, and moralizing, entities. This conceptualization goes further compared to the neoclassical idea of the market as a set of efficiency, self-interest, and rationally-oriented choices. The dominant system defined as ‘neoliberal’ does not need to be justified. Arbitrary principles which sustain the neoliberal framework need to be explicitly defended, just when they directly come under attack. In this case, these principles are protected by condemning alternatives as morally evil. This is what Polanyi (1944) called the ‘double movement’. In other words, it refers to the societal backlash against the advance of self-regulating markets. Most of the considered experiences which have been studied in this dissertation could be interpreted through this idea of double movement. Referring to food movements and AFNs, they have been considered as forces which re-embed the ‘social’ nature within the Market and Civil Society. Through food discourses, they act as moral and ethical forces. They develop ‘nested’ or alternative markets with specific rules, norms, and habits, which are mostly based on strong trust-relationships, direct commitments of social actors, and shared ethical and political values. They have developed a counter-paradigm to the mainstream agri-food system. They are framing themselves among the market economy, and it constrains them by the existing institutions and the rules of the game, in which they are inevitably embedded and on which they sometimes directly depend.

Alternative Food Networks implications

As this research proved, it is clear how AFNs are increasing, despite the financial and economic downturn, not only in two selected case studies but also by the macro-data related to sustainable consumption and production. However, this growth is mostly referred to the ‘green’ choices offered by GDOs. Big retailers have intercepted consumers’ needs to get healthier and ‘cleaner’ food. The organic market is getting conventional, not just in the distribution, but mostly because of the ‘zero residual’ production. In other words, the conventional organic production replaces the ‘Green Revolution’ development model. It may preserve consumers’ health. However, it is not clear how it can affect the environment, as well as the workers’ employed in this kind of production. AFNs could also lose their public recognition by the political institution

which they have already reached. AFNs should include and continue to convince conventional farmers to convert their production. The pedagogical and educational tasks of these experiences are crucial if they really want to be effective. What they represent today is just a ‘niche’ of consumers and producers. They might also consider the chance to create an alliance with those big actors who are relatively willing to accept and support their claims. AFNs studies should investigate these possible future pathways. Urban AFNs, like farmers’ markets, specialized shops, consumers cooperatives, and so on, could also be influent in some processes of ‘green gentrification’, which could exclude twice lower and poorer classes from the ‘environmentally-aware’ centre.

This enlargement, thus, the increasing number of responsible producers, could also replace and pollute AFNs with conventional schemes of competitiveness and profit-oriented economic behaviour. This is what emerged from the **third empirical chapter**, where a ‘state of the art’ of sustainable agriculture in both cities has been sketched. Indeed, even though the environmentally-oriented issues seem to push these farmers to start these activities, the opportunity to make profits is central, especially in the Italian case study, where the political engagement is weaker. Moreover, the ‘failure’ of the case of PGS in Lombardy, as the **fourth empirical chapter** displayed, testify this possible risk, where farmers, instead of cooperating and supporting other producers embedded in the same territory, have been pushed to maintain the competitive logic.

Expectations regarding evolutions of Alternative Food Networks’ scenario

These experiences put into the public agenda critical issues such as environmental protection, workers’ rights, and negative effects of the conventional food system. However, they have also reinforced big companies which produce conventional organic food. Indeed, AFNs nowadays are moving beyond the idea of organic and sustainable food. This new paradigm has been defined as ‘post-organic’. In this new scenario, new shared rules and newly shared imaginaries emerged, maybe because the society has strongly changed, maybe because they are aware of what concerns the above-mentioned risks. In this new scenario, AFNs are getting back to the initial idea of the solidarity economy, not just related to food issues. In Italy, for instance, experiences such as the recovered factory of Ri-Maflow (Orlando 2017), or the recovered and occupied farm “*Mondeggi Bene Comune*” (Poli 2017), are crossing over a series of claims and issues to spread solidarity and mutualism as social shared practices. Other experiences such as “*Genuino Clandestino*”, Movimento Sem Terra, Rede Ecovida, promote other forms of

organic guarantee, which are based on trust-relationships and strong commitment of involved social actors, both institutionally and somehow ‘illegally’.

The road to future research

From the **first empirical chapter**, which compared and analysed AFNs through the enlarged POS, it is possible to argue that further investigations should be conducted, maybe combining Social Network Analysis, AFNs literature and urban and rural sociology. Certainly, another possible improvement around these phenomena could be to combine studies on future evolutions of the Market and the State, possibly by combining insight gathered through quantitative researches on AFNs economic impact at macro-level.

Referring to the **second empirical chapter**, it focused on the diachronic AFNs’ evolutions in times of crisis. However, the political and social crisis appears to be more rooted and worrying especially in Brazil and it should also be observed together with the future economic trend, to assess its impact. Both countries are passing through serious times of uncertainty. More studies should be carried out to better understand a possible connection between these trends.

The **third empirical chapter** gave static photography of the sustainable agriculture ‘state of the art’ in Bergamo and Florianópolis. However, what left to study is the assessment of their effective nature. Indeed, further studies should be done to have a more complete idea of what it is and in which direction is going to move sustainable agriculture. Specifically, it should be compared, for example, conventional farming and sustainable farming, as well as the conventional distribution and the alternative ones. It should be studied the public policies’ impact to prove their effectiveness. It would be also interesting to understand the reason why most of the small farmers are still following the idea developed by ‘green revolution’. Indeed, the phenomenon of sustainable agriculture is an exception, for what concerns family farmers. In Brazil, on 7 million agricultural activities, more than 50% are family farmers (Schneider and Niederle 2010), but less than 1% of Brazilian producers have got any certifications or accreditations (MAPA, 2018).

The **last empirical chapter** analysed, from a comparative perspective, the modus operandi of two different PGSs. Even though it is a preliminary comparison between the Italian and Brazilian PGS framework, these guarantee systems should be investigated in-depth to be widely understood and described. Especially in Europe, where these tools are still understudies, due to their illegal condition. On the other hand, could be interesting to

verify, at the large-scale, the consumers' perception of what is certified through PGS, and what is certified through the traditional form of certification like the third-party one.

Finally, what it could be stated on AFNs is that are not all the same. Some AFNs can be more successful than others. They can differ in terms of constraints or support by political and economic institutions. Differences can also depend on the form and sustainability of their organizations, as well as pre-existing organizations, and on social actors' motivations. It means that further research should continue to investigate the usual micro-macro divide in collective action to shed light on the internal, external, and organizational characteristics AFNs. At the **micro level**, major claims on how people decide to join the initiatives, on the importance of social actors' motivations, and how shared meanings are constructed, should be pursued. At the **meso level**, research should be implemented on constraints and consequences of tactics, on the role of pre-existing SMOs and the impact of professionals and the academia. At the **macro level**, research should study the role of local, national, and transnational institutions in fostering the observed forms of market-based mobilizations. Specifically, the attempt made in the dissertation to compare two different contexts, as Europe and Latin America, should be followed by other streams of empirical studies which aim to highlights similarities and differences between AFNs, maybe implementing similar studies in other cities for both the considered contexts.

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Appendix 1

In Table 10, details regarding each interviewed informant are reported.

Table 10 Key-informants' overview

Acronym	Role	Organization	Case-study	Date
A.1	Representative of farmers union	Coldiretti	BERGAMO	21/07/2017
A.2	Representative of consumers initiative	ReteGAS	BERGAMO	18/07/2017
A.3	Representative of farmers union	Confagricoltura	BERGAMO	28/07/2017
A.4	Representative of farmers association	Ass. Amici Areté	BERGAMO	26/07/2017
A.5	Representative of Slow Food Bergamo	Slow Food Bergamo	BERGAMO	24/07/2017
A.6	Representative of botanic garden	Orto Botanico "Rota" Bergamo	BERGAMO	01/08/2017
A.7	Representative of farmers association	Ass. AgrImagna	BERGAMO	31/07/2017
A.8	Representative of organic farmer association	Ass. BioDistretto	BERGAMO	18/07/2017
A.9	Representative of local administration	Municipality of Bergamo	BERGAMO	20/07/2017
A.10	Representative of consumers initiative	Ass. Mercato & Cittadinanza	BERGAMO	19/07/2017
A.11	Representative of farmers association	Ass. Parco dei Colli	BERGAMO	01/08/2017
A.12	Representative of solidary economy network	Rete per l'Alternativa al G7/Gruppo di Acquisto Popolare	BERGAMO	27/07/2017
A.13	Representative of the local university	CoresNet Research Group (University of Bergamo)	BERGAMO	19/07/2017
A.14	Representative of the public company supporting local development of sustainable agriculture	Epagri (State Research and Agriculture Support)	FLORIANÓPOLIS	30/11/2017
A.15	Representative of solidary economy network	Rede Ecovida	FLORIANÓPOLIS	23/11/2017
A.16	Representative of consumers initiative	Grupo de Compra EcoSolidaria	FLORIANÓPOLIS	19/11/2017
A.17	Representative of a non-profit organization	Cepagro NGO	FLORIANÓPOLIS	09/11/2017
A.18	Representative of Slow Food Brasil	Slow Food Brasil	FLORIANÓPOLIS	09/11/2017
A.19	Representative of farmers union	Fetaesc (Sindicato Trabalhadores Rurais)	FLORIANÓPOLIS	04/12/2017
A.20	Representative of urban agriculture initiative	Revolução dos	FLORIANÓPOLIS	30/11/2017

		Baldinhos		
A.21	Representative of consumers initiative	Community-Supported Agriculture (Itacorubi, Florianópolis)	FLORIANÓPOLIS	10/11/2017
A.22	Representative of cooperative initiative	Coop. Agreco	FLORIANÓPOLIS	17/11/2017
A.23	Representative of farmers union	Fetraf	FLORIANÓPOLIS	07/12/2017
A.24	Representative of local administration	Municipality of Florianópolis	FLORIANÓPOLIS	19/11/2017
A.25	Representative of consumers initiative	Solidarity Purchasing Group	FLORIANÓPOLIS	21/11/2017
A.26	Representative of the local university	LACAF – Federal University of Santa Catarina	FLORIANÓPOLIS	16/11/2017
A.27	Representative of peasant social movement organization	Movimento Sem Terra	FLORIANÓPOLIS	17/11/2017

In Table 11, details regarding each interviewed farmer are reported.

Table 11 Interviewed farmers overview

Acronym	Role	Company	Place	Case-study	Date
P. 1	Director	Coop. Soc. Biplano	Urgnano	BERGAMO	18-Jul-2017
P. 2	Owner	Az. Agr. Val del Fich	Ponteranica	BERGAMO	14-Jul-2017
P. 3	Employee	Az. Agr. Bonacina G.	Bergamo	BERGAMO	14-Jul-2017
P. 4	Employee	Az. Agr. Fustinoni A.	Sedrina	BERGAMO	08-Jul-2017
P. 5	Partner	Il Tesoro della Bruna, Soc. Agr. Coop.	Corna Imagna	BERGAMO	13-Jul-2017
P. 6	Owner	Az. Agr. La Selva dei Fungu	S. Omobono Terme	BERGAMO	13-Jul-2017
P. 7	Employee	Az. Agr. Casa Eden	S. Giovanni Bianco	BERGAMO	14-Jul-2017
P. 8	Owner	Az. Agr. Prat di Bus	Ardesio	BERGAMO	13-Jul-2017
P. 9	Owner	Soc. Agr. Miriam	Trescore Balneario	BERGAMO	15-Jul-2017
P. 10	Employee	Az. Agr. AgriGiò	Gandellino	BERGAMO	10-Jul-2017
P. 11	Employee	Az. Agr. Moioli M.	Calcinante	BERGAMO	07-Jul-2017
P. 12	Owner	Az. Agr. Il Frutteto	Bolgare	BERGAMO	12-Jul-2017
P. 13	Owner	Az. Agr. Le Galose	Cologno al Serio	BERGAMO	08-Jul-2017
P. 14	Owner	Az. Agr. Bonzi Fabio	S. Giovanni Bianco	BERGAMO	31-Jul-2017
P. 15	Owner	Az. Agr. Orto Felice	Songavazzo	BERGAMO	25-Jul-2017
P. 16	Partner	Soc. Agr. La Serradesca	Torre de Roveri	BERGAMO	14-Jul-2017
P. 17	Owner	Az. Agr. Santinelli	Bergamo	BERGAMO	08-Jul-2017
P. 18	Owner	Az. Agr. Galizzi	Lefte	BERGAMO	10-Jul-2017

P. 19	Director	Coop. Soc. Why Not	Almenno S. Salvatore	BERGAMO	13-Jul-2017
P. 20	Owner	Apicultura Grisa	Bergamo	BERGAMO	11-Jul-2017
P.21	Owner	Az. Agr. Cascina Castello	Chiuduno	BERGAMO	25-Jul-2017
P. 22	Director	Coop. Soc. Oikos	Villa d'Almé	BERGAMO	28-Jul-2017
P. 23	Employee	Coop. Soc. Areté	Torre Boldone	BERGAMO	21-Jul-2017
P. 24	Owner	Avicenna Bio	Fontanella	BERGAMO	26-Jul-2017
P. 25	Owner	Az. Agr. Tosi E.	Filago	BERGAMO	28-Jul-2017
P. 26	Owner	Paulo - Coop. Sabor da Terra/Ass. Flor do Fruto	Biguaçu	FLORIANÓPOLIS	03-Nov-2017
P. 27	Owner	Jedean - Coop. Sabor da Terra/Ass. Flor do Fruto	Biguaçu	FLORIANÓPOLIS	03-Nov-2017
P. 28	Owner	Anderson - Coop. Sabor da Terra/Ass. Flor do Fruto	Biguaçu	FLORIANÓPOLIS	10-Nov-2017
P. 29	Owner	Aldir - Coop. Sabor da Terra/Ass. Flor do Fruto	Biguaçu	FLORIANÓPOLIS	04-Nov-2017
P. 30	Owner	Sítio Lício	Florianópolis	FLORIANÓPOLIS	18-Nov-2017
P. 31	Owner	Erasmus Tiepo	Florianópolis	FLORIANÓPOLIS	04-Nov-2017
P. 32	Owner	Organicos Junkes	Antonio Carlos	FLORIANÓPOLIS	18-Nov-2017
P. 33	Owner	Sítio Melcher	Sao Bonifacio	FLORIANÓPOLIS	18-Nov-2017
P. 34	Owner	Sítio Borsuk	Florianópolis	FLORIANÓPOLIS	14-Nov-2017
P. 35	Owner	Sítio Pergalé	Florianópolis	FLORIANÓPOLIS	11-Nov-2017
P. 36	Director	Ass. Quinta das Plantas	Florianópolis	FLORIANÓPOLIS	11-Nov-2017
P. 37	Owner	Sítio Saraquã	Agua Mornas	FLORIANÓPOLIS	28-Nov-2017
P. 38	Owner	Sítio Flor Bela	Florianópolis	FLORIANÓPOLIS	22-Nov-

					2017
P. 39	Owner	M.P. - Ass. Valor da Rosa	Biguaçu	FLORIANÓPOLIS	17-Nov-2017
P. 40	Owner	Chacara Clara Noite de Sol	Florianópolis	FLORIANÓPOLIS	10-Dec-2017
P. 41	Owner	Glaico José Sell	Paulo Lopes	FLORIANÓPOLIS	25-Nov-2017
P. 42	Owner	Naturama	Paulo Lopes	FLORIANÓPOLIS	20-Nov-2017
P. 43	Owner	Chacara Beija Flor	Antonio Carlos	FLORIANÓPOLIS	06-Dec-2017
P. 44	Owner	M.S. - Ass. Valor da Rosa	Biguaçu	FLORIANÓPOLIS	24-Nov-2017
P. 45	Owner	Recanto da Natureza	Santo Amaro da Imperatriz	FLORIANÓPOLIS	29-Nov-2017
P. 46	Employee	BOX (Ceasa)	Sao José	FLORIANÓPOLIS	25-Nov-2017
P. 47	Owner	Sítio Vida Verde	Florianópolis	FLORIANÓPOLIS	27-Nov-2017
P. 48	Employee	Cheiro Verde	Florianópolis	FLORIANÓPOLIS	10-Dec-2017
P. 49	Employee	Sítio Hortencio	Florianópolis	FLORIANÓPOLIS	29-Nov-2017
P. 50	Owner	Sítio Flor de Ouro	Florianópolis	FLORIANÓPOLIS	08-Dec-2017

Appendix 2

A. Key-informant interviews' checklist

Data: ___ / ___ / ___

Location: _____

First name and surname: _____

Institution/Group/Association of reference/: _____

1. We hear more and more about sustainable agriculture, local, organic and craft productions in recent years, but agriculture has always been a sector that it has characterized your territory. **Could you tell the evolution which it has witnessed over the last few decades/years? How did we come to today's reality?**

1.1 In the light of the literature, it is argued that it is a relatively expanding sector, **do you agree?** Could you – from your point of view – **illustrate the reason why of this dynamic? What are the factors that have made this development possible? What is your position on this? Which role can sustainable agriculture play in the territory?**

2. Respect for this growing interest in food, local productions, **which actors do you think have played a fundamental role in the development of the of this trend? Why did some actors have more weight and why not others? Who was not involved?**

What was the role of:

-Consumers

-Producers

-Distributors

3. Through which tools/actions these actors have Increased interest and favoured the development of this trend?

4. Talking about your reality/organization/institution, **what has been and what are the issues related to the agri-food system that have pushed you and push you to action?**

4.1. Please, indicate 5 choices per column. Give the order of importance

ISSUE	Promoted in the past	Promote today
Environmental education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biodiversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GMOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pollution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. Farmers semi-structured interviews' checklist

AFN typology: _____

Data: ___ / ___ / ___

City: _____ Production area: _____

S1. The company/personal profile

1. Business name

2. Year of birth

3. Role in the company

4. Married Y () N ()

5. Children Y () N () **How many** _____ **How many live in the family** _____

6. Education _____

7. How many people work in the company (including you)

8. How many people of your family work in the company

9. Could you indicate which of the following classes is approximately including the average monthly income of your family?

(considering all its receipts and relatives: wages and salaries, professional or business income, pensions, annuities, allowances, subsidies, etc., including 13e, 14e and other annual premiums, net of taxes and social contributions)

- up to 1,291.00 Euros (<1 Brazilian min salary)
- from 1,292.00 to 2,066.00 Euros (1-2 Brazilian min salaries)
- from 2,067.00 to 2,582.00 Euros (2-5 Brazilian min salaries)
- from 2,583.00 to 3,615.00 Euros (5-10 Brazilian min salaries)
- from 3,616.00 to 5,165.00 Euros (10-20 Brazilian min salaries)
- more than 5,166.00 Euros (>20 Brazilian min salaries)

10. What is the percentage of income derived from agricultural activity?

11 Inherited business? YES () NO ()

12. Year of beginning _____

13. What is your company's prevailing production address? (in terms of sales volume)

- vegetables grain
- Fruit livestock/dairy
- wine honey
- Other (specify)

14. Can you indicate the sales volume of your company in the last year?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 15,000 Euros/R\$ | <input type="checkbox"/> From 15,000 to 50,000 Euros/R\$ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> From 50,000 to 100,000 Euros/R\$ | <input type="checkbox"/> From 100,000 to 200,000 Euros/R\$ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> From 200,000 to 500,000 Euros/R\$ | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 500,000 Euros/R\$ |

15. Made 100 the total of your sales, specify the percentage of the sales volume allocated to the different supply chains:

- GDO _____
- Small-scale shops _____
- Short-food supply chains _____
- Other commercial intermediaries _____
- Other (Specify) _____

16. Made 100 the total of your sales, specify the percentage of the sales volume allocated to the different typologies of the Short-Food Supply Chains:

- SPG/CSA _____
- Farmers market _____
- Home delivery _____
- Direct sell _____
- Other _____
- Other (Specify) _____

S2. History of the Company: From the Birth to the Short-Food Supply Chain

1. Tell me your story. When was your business born? How was it born? Why was it born?

2. What was your job before entering the sustainable agriculture sector?

3. How was your business set up at the beginning? How has your production activity changed over time? What did you produce? What do you produce now? Has the product category changed over the years?

4. How many species are cultivated? _____ and how many varieties? _____

5. What are the most important factors to vary the number of species/varieties of products offered?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumers demand | <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediary agreement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decreasing of work | <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change |

- () Family's tradition
- () Productivity growth
- () Sales potential
- () Other (specify) _____

6. What are the factors that encourage or discourage the diversification of the production activity?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Easing diversification factors | Slow down diversification factors |
| () _____ | () _____ |
| () _____ | () _____ |
| () _____ | () _____ |

7. Could you indicate the two main resources that support the company's activities?

Voluntary subscription <input type="checkbox"/>	Donations <input type="checkbox"/>
Regional/State funds <input type="checkbox"/>	Support from other stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/>
EU/Federal Gov. funds <input type="checkbox"/>	Personal sources <input type="checkbox"/>
Regional/State funds <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Sales profit <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)

8. Is production your main business? Do you have other parallel activities? If so, which ones? Are there elements that encourage/discourage the multifunctionality of the company?

(Educational farms, agritourism, other social activities)

9. From what was born the idea to be part of the circuits of Short-Food Supply Chain? Did you already know someone who was part of it? Have you ever have sold in the AFN, or in the past, did you sell just to the large distribution? Was there any event (even biographical) that marked your activity?

10. When did you start marketing your company's products through Short-Food Supply Chain forms?

(Make distinction for each of the channels of the short chain)

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| SPG/CSA _____ | Direct sell _____ |
| Farmers market _____ | Other _____ |
| Home delivery _____ | Other (Specify) _____ |

11. Do you have an average budget that is dedicated to organizing your short chain initiative? If so,

would you indicate roughly how much it amounts to in percentage versus total revenue volume?

(The sense is, how much of what revolves, is reinvested in the organization of the initiative?)

12. Which is, if there is, the target that your company intends to achieve?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Italian/Brazilian citizens | <input type="checkbox"/> | People with allergies | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Specific ethnic/religious groups | <input type="checkbox"/> | Elderly people | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Young people | <input type="checkbox"/> | Specific counterculture | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Families | <input type="checkbox"/> | Anyone | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Locals | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lower class | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Middle-Upper class | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Working class | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify) | |

13. Tell us how the relationship with the customers is. Why stay in alternative circuits? Which way does it give? Is Other than the relationship between customers who come to the company, order from the SPG, or come to the market? How has it changed over time?

S3. Identity and Motivations

1. Which of these issues related to production/distribution/consumption of food, your company Promotes/Promoted in the past?

Please, indicate 5 choices per column. Give the order of importance

ISSUE	Promoted in the past	Promotes today
Environmental education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biodiversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GMOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pollution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ecotourism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multiculturalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food security/safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food sovereignty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Animal welfare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic and social development of the territory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traditional cuisine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduction of food wastes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Globalization (hence TTIP, CETA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local entrepreneurship development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ISSUES – Order of importance

1) 2) 3) 4) 5)

2. Which of these issues your company would like to promote?

Please, indicate 5 choices per column. Give the order of importance

ISSUE	More Likely	Less Likely
Environmental education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biodiversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GMOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pollution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ecotourism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multiculturalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food security/safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food sovereignty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Animal welfare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic and social development of the territory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traditional cuisine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reduction of food wastes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Globalization (hence TTIP, CETA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local entrepreneurship development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ISSUES – Order of importance

- 1) 2) 3) 4) 5)

3. How do you define – in his own words – your company, in terms of identity, objectives, action carried out?

(e.g. social Movement, voluntary association, Community Movement, etc.)

4. Did/Does your company belong to a particular political movement (or party) or specific social movement? If yes, indicate which and why.

S4. Relationship with other companies/networks

1. Did/Does your company belong to any coordination/umbrella network? If yes, indicate which and why.

2. Please, indicate 5 companies/groups/organizations with which your company collaborate more often and what is the nature of the relationship.

	Sharing resources	Personal Ties	Sharing key-people	Share info	Common projects	Solidarity
1						
2						

3	
4	
5	

3. Among those 5 that you have indicated, did any of them influence your strategy? If so, could you explain how?

4. Are there similar groups/initiatives that work roughly on your issues, but with which do you not cooperate closely? Could you indicate why did you not create a collaboration with these people/subjects? What can encourage or discourage – from your point of view – the interaction with other subjects of the alternative distribution?

5. Do you have close relationships with groups that also operate in different areas than yours? If so, what is the nature of the relationship with these subjects? Indicate a maximum of 5.

	Sharing resources	Personal Ties	Sharing key-people	Share info	Common projects	Solidarity
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

S5. Relationship with the institutions (political, economic, cultural)

1. What is the initiative, which in recent years, your company raised mainly?

(if there was more than one, repeat Questions 1, 2 and 3, even for the other. Max 2)

2. What were the two main objectives of this initiative?

	1	2
Opposition to a specific project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opposition to a specific law	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support a specific project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support a specific law	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Production of goods/services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being a lifestyle influencer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facing legitimacy from another actor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Was this initiative directed against/supporting any of the subjects listed below?

	Against	Supporting	Neutral
Local administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private Company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other social groups (e.g. NGOs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Political party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other political organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foreign governments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anyone specifically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (Specify)

4. Did/Does your company have any contact or regular contacts with the local administration? If so what kind of contacts?

5. Did/Does your company have any contact, or regular contacts with any local, or national, politician? If so, what kind of contacts?

6. How politics is giving support to your initiative? If not, what should do politics to support you more?

7. At an economic level, do you perceive a more favourable or more unfavourable condition for the development of initiatives like yours? Data confirms a growing trend in the consumption of healthier products. What's the impression? There is more competition, but profits for all, or the centralization of wealth is a phenomenon that is affecting even in areas like yours?

8. At the cultural level, do you think that the media and political attention given to food issues is having a positive effect on alternative chains? What should be the role of university research in relation to these initiatives?

S6. Economic crisis

1. The current crisis has conditioned or conditions yours Operated? How so?

1.1. Many companies note certain suffering, because of the economic crisis. However, from what emerges in the scientific literature, it is paradoxically evident in times of crisis, a development of the companies operating within the circuits of the short-food supply chain. **Is it so in your case too?**

2. You hear a lot about the short-food supply chain. It is used by many people/subjects to improve a more sustainable production system and build stronger relationships between actors, to provide healthy food and to ensure better working conditions. **What do you think? Short-food supply chain products are accessible to all? Even during the current historical time? What was the role of consumers in this scenario? and SPGs/CSAs? and producers?**

3. There are also always scandals concerning the certifications of agri-foodstuffs. **Does your initiative have a participatory certification/guarantee/certification protocol to ensure the quality of the products sold?**

4. There are always many younger people facing these 'new markets'. **Do you agree? What is your point of view of the reason why, in times of crisis, young people return 'to the Earth' and/or shift their consumption toward more responsible consumption practices?**

5. Joining your company/activity, did it change your individual behaviour or the behaviour of other members? How is important to share knowledge within your group/initiative?

S7. Future Scenarios

1. What developments do you see within your territory compared to the phenomena we have talked about? And for his group/initiative of which it is a part? Do you feel you glad about your initiative? Are you satisfied? Do you think your activity will have a quantitative growth or will remain of this size? Would it have any idea/proposal that could better the system locally?