



Special Session Proposal

Places for sustainable food: what's behind and beyond the relocation of food systems?

Amélie Gonçalves, amelie.goncalves@inrae.fr, INRAE UMR AGIR (corresponding convener)
Yuna Chiffolleau, yuna.chiffolleau@inrae.fr, INRAE UMR Innovation
Isabelle Duvernoy, isabelle.duvernoy@inrae.fr, INRAE UMR AGIR
Frédéric Wallet, frederic.wallet@inrae.fr, INRAE UMR AGIR

Abstract

The relocation of food systems is considered as a key avenue for promoting more sustainable models of food production and consumption. The vision of those systems is diverse, from a food chain approach –in which the main stake is to relocate and coordinate all the components of food chains from production to food waste management–, to an approach in which agriculture and food are perceived as components of socio-ecological systems (Hopes and Brons, 2016)

The seek for more sustainable food systems through relocation gives rise to numerous local food policies. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact gather 260 cities worldwide representing 460 million inhabitants (MUFPP, 2023). It emphasizes the importance of building food strategies that consider both economic, social (nutrition, equity, ...) and environmental dimensions. Some countries, such as France, have implemented national policies that support local food strategies, with the stated objective of creating sustainable food systems.

From an academic point of view this topic sheds new light on some recurring debates in regional sciences. First, on the notion of territorial / local system, its frontiers and components (Hopes and Brons, 2016) ; second, on the effects of the reduction of distances in socio-economic systems (Chiffolleau and Dourian, 2020) ; third, on the processes underlying the structuring of the territorial systems, particularly new modes of governance (Yap, 2023) and innovation processes.

The special session therefore proposes four –non-exclusive– axes to address these questions:

- Characterization of local food systems: the food system approaches promote a broad sense of the “system”, beyond that constituted by a network of localized actors. How are these food systems defined and captured? At what scales? How these approaches integrate, or could be an avenue for integrating, a wide range of social and environmental dimensions (for example by promoting the notion of socio-ecological system)? Is there a diversity of trajectories this diversity can be captured?
- Methods and tools for assessing the impacts of relocation: in order to account for the actual impacts of these systems, tools and methodologies of assessment (qualitative, quantitative or mixed) still have to be developed. How to measure the proportion of what is relocated? How to measure the impacts of

relocation? How can multi-criterial / integrated assessments of the sustainability of local food systems be developed, implemented and adopted by and /or with stakeholders?

- Governance and morphogenesis of territorial food systems: governance and new coordinations play a central role in the construction and development of these systems, particularly through the modalities of public action and its links with private initiatives and stakeholders (Moragues-Faus et al., 2021; Sonnino et al., 2019). What are the governances supporting the relocation of food systems? Are they new ways of structuring public policies and their instruments? What are their impacts? How do private stakeholders play a role in these governances?

- Innovations for relocation: beyond new modes of governance, a set of innovations of various natures (social, organisational, technological, ...) is necessary for a sustainable relocation. What types of innovations are being tested? Is relocation of food systems based on specific innovation processes (more frugal, place-based, more nature-based...)? Are local food systems an avenue for designing new innovation systems? What are the impacts of these innovations? What are the obstacles to the implementation and diffusion of these innovations?

Chiffolleau Y. Dourian T., 2020. Sustainable Food Supply Chains: Is Shortening the Answer? A Literature Review for a Research and Innovation Agenda, *Sustainability* 2020, 12(23), 9831; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12239831>

Fournier S., Boucher F., Cerdan C., Ferré T., Sautier D., Chabrol D., Bridier B., Danflous J.P., Marie-Vivien D., Robineau O., 2018. In : Faure Guy (ed.), Chiffolleau Yuna (ed.), Goulet Frédéric (ed.), Temple Ludovic (ed.), Touzard Jean-Marc (ed.). *Innovation and development in agricultural and food systems*. Versailles : Ed. Quae, p. 83-95. (Synthèses : Quae).

Hospes, O., Brons, A., 2016. Food system governance: A systematic review. In: Kennedy, A., Liljeblad, J. (Eds.), *Food Systems Governance. Challenge for Justice, Equality and Human Rights*. Routledge, London and New York, pp. 13-42

Moragues-Faus, A., Battersby, J., 2021. Urban Food Policies for a Sustainable and Just Future: Concepts and Tools for a Renewed Agenda, *Food Policy*, 103, 102-124

MUFPP, 2023. Milan Pact Awards 2022, Milano.

Sonnino, R., Tegoni, C.L.S., De Cunto, A., 2019. The Challenge of Systemic Food Change: Insights from Cities. *Cities*, 85, 110–116

Yap, C., 2023. New geographical directions for food systems governance research. *Progress in Human Geography* 47, 1, 66-84.