Territorial agrifood systems: a Franco-Italian contribution to the debates over agrifood systems transitions in rural areas.

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Key words: food systems, agro-ecological transitions, AFN, territory, GIs, social justice

Abstract

The increasing diversity of food networks and initiatives has given rise to a variety of analyses and approaches among which the literatures on “Alternative Food Networks” (AFN) and the “quality turn” stand out for the role of European and more specifically French and Italian contributions and the richness of the debates between authors from different horizons. These debates focus especially on the transformative power of alternative and/or quality food networks at the scale of larger agrifood systems and the risks of territorial and social inequity that they may embody, thus raising social justice issues. However, in the AFN literature, the central focus on specific networks (most often emanating from the civil society) often leads to overlook the effects of possible interactions between different networks and stakeholders, while in the “quality” literature, the central focus on specialty products leads to a lack of consideration of entire food diets and agrifood systems as well as often, of social justice issues. Based on a focused critical review review of these literature, we thus argue for an intertwined approach that aims at assessing food systems as territorial constructions. In this purpose, our approach defines the research object by starting from a hypothesis of territorial assemblage instead of from specific initiatives considered in isolation. This allows taking into account various initiatives, different ambitions and their combined effects in facilitating – or not – just sustainable transitions. We do not base our argument on an optimistic vision of the potentials of hybridisations and combinations, but rather on a critical perspective focused on the effects of the alternative/conventional confrontations (and controversies) in terms of “re-differentiation” processes. Based on two case studies in Southern France and Northern Italy, we demonstrate how this approach can be applied and contribute to wider debates over the key questions related to the AFNs’ transformative power and social justice.

Introduction

Alternative food networks (AFNs) are increasingly present both in the societal debates and in the scientific literature, but the fact that they encompass a wide variety of initiatives such as Community Supported Agriculture groups (CSA), farmers’ markets, community gardens, and other kinds of marketing schemes makes it difficult to clearly define this concept (Tregear, 2011; Dansero and Puttilli, 2014). Such initiatives are not always new, and part of this recent and current dynamic appears as the effect of a revival of rather traditional forms of exchange and interaction. Despite blurry definitional boundaries, in the literature the notion of AFNs generally refers to networks that try to link producers and consumers in direct ways and/or at the local scale and that are most often promoted by civil

society organisations (which leads some authors to label them Civic Food Networks, see Renting and al. 2012). They involve consumers and farmers in the promotion of food-related issues neglected in “conventional” supply chains. This is why they are called “alternative”: because they oppose mainstream food systems’ principles of distance and standardisation (Goodman 2002; Allen et al. 2003; Lamine 2005). However, in the AFN literature, the fact that these networks are considered as autonomous objects and mostly studied in isolation (eg. community-supported agriculture, farmers’ markets etc.) often leads to a failure to examine the interactions between these alternative networks and other initiatives, including those that emanate from more conventional stakeholders.

Other kinds of initiatives, that we may coin “quality food networks”, such as collective local brands and geographical indications (GIs) also aim at developing supply chains and marketing schemes that differ from mainstream food systems (Brunori 2007; Tregear et al. 2007). These initiatives usually stem out from other kinds of stakeholders than those involved in the types of AFNs mentioned above; they are mostly endorsed by producers’ organisations linked with other agrifood chains actors (cooperatives, processors, retailers etc.). They also mostly focus on specific products, whereas AFNs would rather include a diversity of products. They aim at reaching tourists or distant consumers, whereas AFNs rather develop short food supply chains.

The studies about these two types of initiatives also form quite distinct bodies of literature relying on different conceptual approaches. This is why we distinguish between them here and refer respectively to quality food networks and alternative food networks in our analysis, even though some authors would include both types of initiatives in a wider definition of AFNs (see Deverre and Lamine 2010 for a review). The bodies of literature devoted to these two categories of initiatives give different definitions of the term “local”: while in the literature focused on alternative food networks (AFNs), the adjective “local” tends to be defined in terms of positionality and proximity between different actors of the commodity chains, in the literature about GIs and quality food networks, “local” relates to a notion of “anchorage” within particular territories (Muchnik 1996; Bowen and Mutersbaugh 2014).

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Throughout the studies we have conducted over the last years (Lamine 2012; Lamine 2015a; Garçon et al. 2017), we have observed that food systems barely fit into such circumscribed boundaries, but borrow from different models instead. Therefore, we argue for an intertwined approach that draws from different bodies of scientific literature in order to build a relevant research framework for assessing food systems at a territorial scale. It consists in delimiting the research object by starting from a defined area instead of specific initiatives. Our objective is to show that this “territorial agrifood system” approach, which considers in a dynamic and pragmatist perspective the diverse actors and institutions involved in the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food products in a given territory, and their interdependencies, offers new perspectives to explore two fundamental questions raised by both alternative food networks and quality food networks literatures: Do these networks only provide alternative options for their own participants or do they also influence larger agrifood systems (Allen et al., 2003)? Is the “local” (whether defined in terms of proximity or of spatial anchorage) a source of territorial and social inequity (the “elitist localism”, DuPuis and Goodman 2005) or is it a basis for more social justice and fairness?

In the first section of this paper, we show that the genesis of the different approaches to alternative and quality food networks results from the influence of different more general theories as well as from their anchorage in different socio-political contexts. We identify two main divides related

to this specific anchorage: a classical US/Europe one, but also a less commented Anglo-Saxon/Latin[1] one. At the interface of these fundamental debates, and borrowing from more general theoretical strands that also cross this Anglo-Saxon/Latin divide, we then suggest our own approach based on the concept of the territorial agrifood system. In the second section of this paper, we apply this approach to two case studies - Southern Ardèche in France and the hinterland of Genoa in Italy - and conclude with a discussion of how this approach can contribute to wider debates and to the two key questions related to transformative power and social justice.

1. Recent and current debates over alternative food networks

A fading US/Europe divide?

The debates over alternative food networks have developed from the late 1990s onwards, in an intellectual context that is characterised by two main approaches to agrifood systems changes. Roughly speaking, we can identify on the one hand, critical approaches inspired by political economy and mainly located in the USA and, on the other hand, more optimistic ones focusing on actors' agency and mainly located in Europe.

Among the critical approaches, food regime theories have concentrated on negative trends in global food relations and their effects on resource-poor farmers (Friedmann and McMichael 1989), as well as on the adaptation of the global food system to the growing criticisms it has confronted, as is exemplified by the emergence of a "corporate environmental food regime" (Campbell 2005). Food regime theorists have described AFNs as "sites of resistance" to and within these larger trends (Campbell 2009). However, many scholars have criticized the AFN's potential elitism (Hinrichs 2000; Winter 2003; DuPuis and Goodman 2005; Tregear 2011) and questioned their "transformative potential" by showing that they might be less "really oppositional" than simply alternative (Allen et al. 2003).

Among the more optimistic approaches, it is mainly within European scholarship that both alternative and quality food networks have been analysed as networks and places for experimentation with alternative paradigms of rural development, through their focus on viable forms of agriculture and fairer relations between producers and consumers (Van der Ploeg et al. 2000; Renting et al. 2003). These initiatives do indeed offer new options for agriculture and rural futures, in a context where the relatively decentralised governance of rural development, which characterizes Europe as opposed to the USA[2], potentially allows the participation of a wide variety of actors in the definition of local development models. This leads to what can be seen as a "more reformist" European perspective where alternative and quality food networks but also their scholars are also more directly involved with public policies (eg., rural development and multifunctionality, see Fonte 2008). This resonates with the fact that American AFN scholars have long tended to focus more on radical forms of opposition to the industrial food system, on inequalities and social justice issues; while European ones

[1] "Latin" refers here to countries where Romance languages are spoken (mainly French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese) both in southern Europe and Latin America. Here as indicated in the title we will consider mainly the French and the Italian literature.

[2] These different socio-political contexts are also characterized by different agricultural histories and social structures, different human and social geographies, and different kinds of rural/urban links.

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would rather focus on the possibility of reforming public policies and the food system (Goodman, 2004).

However, this contrast between a North-American “oppositional” standpoint versus a more reformist European perspective is partly blurring today. On the one hand, the development of farmers’ markets movements, food hubs, or food policy councils in the USA and Canada has led to focus less on “radical” initiatives. On the other hand, even in the context of a more reformist European scholarship, we find more radical and critical currents, and the debate about potential inequalities in food access and about food justice has gained importance in Europe in the last years (Hochedez and Le Gall, 2016).

A more significant Anglo-Saxon/Latin divide?

While most literature reviews about alternative food networks approaches tend to overlook the literature found in Latin countries (Deverre and Lamine, 2010), we suggest that reintroducing this literature in the debate might reveal a second divide between Anglo-Saxon and Latin countries, even *within* Europe, with quite distinct approaches in quite distinct contexts. In France and Italy (and in some other Latin countries, even *outside* Europe, especially in South America), specific approaches have been developed in recent decades, such as districts or localized agrifood systems (SYAL) approaches. These approaches are anchored in distinct intellectual heritages: institutional economics and learning organisations in Italy (Saccomandi and Van der Ploeg 1998; Iacoponi and al. 1995), marshallian theory of industrial districts (Courlet, 2002), conventions theories (Boltanski and Thévenot 1991; Nicolas and Valceschini 1995) and the regulationist school in France (Allaire 2002). They are also anchored in specific socio-political contexts, as Latin European countries are characterised by strong rural development policies, a certain importance of short supply chains and small farms, and a longstanding presence of quality signs. GIs for example have long been developed in Southern Europe, since the 1930s in France and Italy for example, and were developed later on in the Mediterranean region (Pratt 2007) and in other parts of the world, such as Latin America (Requier-Desjardins et al. , 2003). This has led to a wide literature which seeks to understand the way they relate to specific qualities of specific products found in specific territories, and discusses the famous notion of “terroir” which is so difficult to translate into other languages. In France, these approaches have been articulated since the 1990s on within a specific approach and research community called SYAL (French acronym for “localized agrifood systems”). SYAL are defined as ‘‘production and service organisations (units of agricultural production, agrifood enterprises, markets and stores, restaurants, services, etc.) [that are linked] by their characteristics and by their relationship to a specific territory’’ (Muchnik 1996; Muchnik and de Sainte Marie 2010, p. 13). In Italy, starting from the 1990s, an intense debate on agri-food and rural ‘districts’ has developed in the scientific circles and beyond (Iacoponi et al. 1995; Brasili and Fanfani, 2006) that has given way to the incorporation of these concepts into national regulation as recognized governance patterns. In France too, the scientific work about quality signs and quality food networks in general has influenced the evolution of regulations over time. Symmetrically to this “applied” use of the academic work in public policies, scientists have studied the impacts of public and private regulatory systems as well as the particular expressions of territorial governance that are set up around these initiatives (Muchnik et al. 2008; Requier-Desjardins 2010; Belletti et al. 2017).

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However, these approaches most often focus on specialty products and neglect ordinary ones. Italian agri-food districts, for example, codified into a national law in 2001, were defined based on a criterion of local specialisation, following the definition of industrial districts. The study of these initiatives, focused on products and production systems, also overlooks the role of consumption and of

164 consumers. Food practices and diets cannot be addressed in a holistic way through these approaches,
165 not least because the average diet is not only composed of specialty products. Moreover, these quality
166 food networks have been criticized for favouring processes of specialisation of agricultural production
167 (for example, in wine or olive production in some French, Italian or Spanish regions), which has
168 ambiguous if not detrimental effects on the social and ecological dimensions of rural development
169 (Belletti et al, 2015). In contrast, alternative food networks include a larger diversity of ordinary food
170 products, which makes it possible to tackle their impacts on food practices and everyday diets. It also
171 allows to assess their potentials and limits in terms of fairness (among producers and consumers as
172 well as between producers and consumers) and social justice, as in the case of Italian GAS or French
173 AMAP[3] networks (Lamine 2005; Brunori et al. 2011; Grasseni 2013), as well as, potentially, their
174 ecological dimensions.

175 Of course, the boundaries between the two kinds of initiatives (alternative and quality food networks)
176 and accompanying literatures are rather blurry and some initiatives or networks embody intermediary
177 forms, as the case of Slow Food shows. Indeed, whereas the debates on quality food networks and
178 especially GIs have initially focused on production systems and producers, neglecting consumers and
179 civil society's potential roles, a bridge with the Alternative Food Networks' concern for overcoming the
180 production/consumption gap (Goodman 2002) has been provided by local food networks developed
181 around local breeds and varieties and traditional recipes, to which Slow Food has given an
182 unprecedented visibility in the public space (Miele and Murdoch, 2002; Fonte, 2006; Brunori, 2007). In
183 the manifesto of Slow Food founding father, Carlo Petrini, the concept of consumers as co-producers
184 was introduced (Petrini, 2005), while the aphorism 'eating is an agricultural act' has become the key
185 principle of Slow Food initiatives. However, given the characteristics of products promoted by Slow
186 Food – high quality, low quantities, high prices – more than one scholar have identified an internal
187 contradiction in the Slow Food discourse when applied to the daily food of masses of people (Pratt,
188 2007).

189 Common influences and shared questions

190 Beyond these US/Europe and Anglo-saxon/Latin divides, the recent intellectual context is also
191 characterised by the emergence of new approaches to processes of change in agrifood systems,
192 emanating from other fields than agrifood studies, but that have increasingly been incorporated into
193 them, such as Sustainability Transitions theory, Actor Network Theory, or more recently Assemblage
194 theories. Sustainability Transitions approaches[4] focus on transition mechanisms defined around a
195 particular technology or sector, either for understanding past transitions as in the Multi-Level
196 Perspective (MLP) approach (Geels 2004; Geels and Schot 2007), or for governing transition towards a
197 specific sustainable goal as in the Transition Management approaches (Rotmans et al. 2001). The MLP
198 approach conceptualizes transition as the processes of regime reconfiguration under the pressure of
199 the landscape (exogenous economic, political, and cultural context) and the ability of niches (spaces
200 where radical innovations are developed by small networks of actors) to be integrated in the
201 sociotechnical dominant regime. Actor Network Theory approaches focus on socio-technical
202 controversies, alliances, enrolment processes and visions alignments within networks (Callon 1986)

[3] Gas are Solidarity Purchase Groups and AMAP are Organisations aimed at Maintaining Peasant Agriculture.
[4] While we can consider that Sustainability Transition frameworks also encompass social-ecological systems approaches, here we consider socio-technical transition approaches which themselves include many strands among which Transition Management (TM) and Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) are the most known (Markard et al. 2012).

203 and adopt a more ethnographical stance in order to understand how actors progressively change in
204 their visions due not only to relational processes but also to socio-technical devices and artefacts.
205 Finally, assemblage theories, inspired by the work of G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, allow to understand
206 the dynamics of the development of systems as the progressive coordination of independent entities,
207 retaining their autonomy and the capacity to have multiple links and multiple belongings, within
208 '(re)territorialisation' processes (DeLanda, 2006; Levkoe and Wakefield 2014; Brunori et al. 2016).
209 These different approaches are increasingly used both in European and North-American scholarships
210 - for example, (European) transition approaches are now often mentioned by US scholars (Hinrichs
211 2014) - which tends to "reduce" the historical theoretical divide described above.

212 Moreover, these different scientific strands share two key questions that have aroused intense
213 debates. The first question has to do with AFNs' transformative potential and can be worded, as
214 suggested by Allen et al. (2003): do alternative food systems only provide alternative options for their
215 members or do they influence the larger agrifood system? Even though some authors both in North-
216 American and also increasingly in European contexts consider that AFNs are laboratories for food
217 democracy (Hassanein 2003; Levkoe 2006; Renting et al. 2012), many studies show that their
218 conception of food citizenship often remains focused on consumers' freedom and ability to define
219 their choices rather than on their participation in discussions and actions aiming at a deep
220 transformation of the food system (see Allen and Wilson 2008; Guthman 2008 and Goodman et al.
221 2011 for a wider discussion of these issues).

222 The second question deals with social justice, which is one of the key issue that is explored in the more
223 critical approaches we have presented above. The debate about potential inequalities in food access
224 and about food justice is much more present in the North-American scholarship (Mares and Alkon
225 2011; Agyeman and McEntee 2014) where it has been on the agenda for a few decades (Clancy 1994;
226 Koc and Dahlberg 1999), than in the European one. The social justice focus, far from being marginal
227 within agrifood studies, could appear as their next step, after three preceding periods that have
228 focused mainly on agrarian issues (in the 1980s), on environmental ones (in the 1990s) and on food
229 ones in the 2000s (Constance 2008). However, most of the literature about social justice in agrifood
230 systems is about urban areas and urban food strategies (Allen and Guthman 2006; Friedmann 2007;
231 Jarosz 2008). In rural areas which will be our focus here, social justice issues might be of different
232 nature. First of all, there is most often a strong focus on small farmers as well as on their access to
233 resources and AFNs and quality food networks claim to combat the marginalization of these farmers.
234 Morevoer, specific risks exist in rural areas as opposed to urban situations in terms of social justice,
235 despite the common idealisation of rural community solidarities. Even though the closer relationships
236 might lead to greater concern for vulnerable social categories, the lack of public institutions and
237 programs specifically targeted at marginalised groups, both on the farmers' and consumers' sides,
238 might not be offset by these local solidarities, as poverty is more scattered and underprivileged
239 population is thus often more difficult to identify.

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243 ## 2. A territorial agrifood system approach

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245 ### An approach aimed at considering the diversity of food networks and initiatives

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247 By focusing respectively on alternative and quality initiatives, both strands of literature described
248 above overlook the diversity of initiatives that make local and ecological production more accessible
249 to farmers and consumers in a given place, and their possible complementarities. We thus suggest to
250 introduce a territorial agrifood systems approach, that could contribute to bridging this gap between
251 the two main kinds of initiatives and literatures. This approach defines the research object by starting
252 from the territory (and the diversity of initiatives) instead of starting from specific initiatives studied in
253 isolation, thus taking into account various models and different ambitions – and their combined
254 effects.

255 We suggest that this territorial approach also helps to explore the two key questions above. On the
256 one hand, it allows to empirically delineate "territorial agri-food systems", and to study their
257 transformations over time and under the influence of both alternative and quality food networks. On
258 the other hand, it allows to explore the way social justice is addressed – or not – throughout this
259 diversity of initiatives and changes and whether or not this leads to a process of just and sustainable
260 territorial development. To what extent do proximity (key to AFNs) and spatial anchorage (key to
261 quality food networks and GIs type initiatives) form a basis for a just and sustainable territorial
262 development or are they rather a source of territorial and social inequity and "elitist localism" (DuPuis
263 and Goodman 2005)?

264 The concept of agrifood system has been suggested, at least in France, long ago by the rural economist
265 L. Malassis and is mainly used at the global scale (Malassis 1996; Rastoin and Ghersi 2010) and/or to
266 qualify different kinds of agrifood models (Fournier and Touzard 2014), while our own approach is
267 applied at the geographical scale of small regions that are called in France "bassins de vie" ('living
268 areas"[5]). The territorial "stance" has been explored mostly through a paradigm of relocalisation (of
269 production/consumption links), utilising notions such as the foodshed (Kloppenburg et al. 1996) or
270 regional food systems (Clancy and Ruhf 2010), and/or through a focus on the production side, as in the
271 case of territorialised food systems (Bowen and Mutersbaugh 2014).

272 Our own approach of territorial agrifood systems aims at encompassing the diversity of actors involved
273 in the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food products at the territorial scale
274 (farmers, middle men, processors, CSOs, agricultural institutions, local authorities, etc.) who aim at
275 favouring local and ecological products (Lamine 2012; Lamine 2015). This approach borrows from
276 different theoretical frameworks mentioned above – food regimes theory, sustainability transitions
277 theory, and ANT – its key principles. The first one, key to all these theoretical strands despite their
278 differences, is to analyse the interactions between the different components and actors of the socio-
279 technical system (here the agrifood system) in a dynamic way. However, while these approaches – and
280 especially sustainability transitions - may be criticized for overlooking actual changes in practices that
281 individuals or collectives may implement (Shove and Walker 2007), as well as the variety of visions and

[5] These "living areas" are often defined based on the journey time of daily commuters (travel-to-work areas) and also correspond to an area where most inhabitants can access to the main public and private services and retail outlets.

282 possible controversies between actors and social groups, we rely on ANT but more generally on French
283 pragmatist sociology in order to better address these aspects. We thus borrow our second key principle
284 from this theoretical strand, which shares with the American pragmatism the concern for the
285 contested emergence and construction of public problems (Dewey 1927). This allows us giving
286 consideration to the trajectories of visions, paradigms and controversies over time (Cefaï 1996;
287 Chateauraynaud 2011).

288 Our approach to agrifood systems transitions is systemic, dynamic and pragmatist (Lamine et al. 2015).
289 It adopts a systemic and dynamic standpoint as it aims to study how transition processes result from
290 the transformation of the interdependencies between the different components and actors of the
291 agrifood systems over time. It is a pragmatist approach because it studies the different and sometimes
292 conflicting visions of what an ecological transition should be among these diverse actors, their possible
293 controversies and compromises, as well as the actual changes in these actors' practices.

294 This approach considers territorial agrifood systems as systems of actors and institutions that may
295 have different visions and aims guiding their actions but yet are interdependent. Of course, they are
296 at the same time inserted in visions, actions and interdependencies which may relate to other
297 geographical scales. While retracing "inter-scalar pathways" remains a pressing challenge in food
298 studies (Weiler et al. 2015), we suggest that the choice of the territorial scale allows tracing empirically
299 the diverse manifestations of the global that reflect in actors' and networks visions, actions and
300 trajectories, relationships and interdependencies at the territorial scale.

301 Focused on transition towards organic agriculture and other forms of ecological agriculture, previous
302 applications of this approach trying to tackle the first key question above (the transformation question)
303 have shown that these ecological transitions result from a diversity of transition mechanisms. These
304 rely on a combination of civil society action (lobbying, grassroot initiatives and their diversity), private
305 actors' efforts, and on governance innovations (public policies, market mechanisms, collective action),
306 with a key role of civil society grassroots initiatives in influencing both private and public action (Lamine
307 et al. 2012; Bui, 2015; Bui et al. 2016). These diverse transition mechanisms act on the different
308 components of the agrifood systems and allow more ecological paradigms to progressively be adopted,
309 legitimated and put into action. The inclusion in the analysis of not only diverse AFNs in a given territory
310 but also diverse conventional or hybrid actors and initiatives such as food quality networks and
311 especially GI-type ones (Dansero and Puttilli, 2014) allowed us to show how hybrid relations may
312 develop and lead to the emergence or reinforcement of new visions and discourses about social justice
313 and models of development that influence collective action (Brunori et al. 2013; Bui, 2015). In the case
314 studies we present below, we rely on these findings while putting more emphasis on social justice and
315 fairness issues.

316 Methods and material

317 Our analytical framework consists of different steps which we followed in the two case studies:

318 - An analysis of the reconfiguration within the regional agricultural sector (types of production, of
319 farms, of value chains and sales channels);

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320 - An identification of the diversity of agrifood initiatives at the territorial scale (whether they belong to
321 alternative or food quality networks categories) and of the main territorial(ized) agrifood public
322 policies over the last 25 years;

324 - Focused monographical analyses of successful or failed initiatives and projects carried out by civil
325 society and private actors (such as farmers, cooperatives or processors) and of the governance
326 innovations or modes of coordination they implement;

327 - An analysis of the interactions between the identified initiatives and between them and public
328 authorities and programs. In order to tackle our two key questions about the contribution of these
329 initiatives to territorial agrifood system's transitions and about social justice, we study how these
330 diverse actors interact, how power relationships are changed over time, and how common visions are
331 possibly forged (or not) about future transitions and key issues such as fairness and social justice.

332 This analytical framework allowed us to characterize the territorial agrifood systems transitions in the
333 two regions under study. In each case, our empirical data come from a series of interviews with key
334 actors (farmers, civil society leaders, intermediaries, local authorities etc.) as well as ethnographical
335 observations of diverse events, meetings and interactions. In Ardèche, 50 interviews were carried out
336 as part of different research projects between 2009 to 2016, and various events were observed,
337 ranging from agricultural organisations' or CSOs' general assemblies to local markets and events
338 devoted to organic and local products as well as seminars and debates bringing together researchers
339 and local stakeholders. In Liguria, 39 interviews were carried out between 2011 and 2015 with a wide
340 panel of stakeholders (farmers, greengrocers, restaurant owners, consumers, development brokers
341 etc.). An analysis of personal archives of stakeholders (meetings reports, drafts of specification notes,
342 press statements and newsletters) completed these investigations, as well as participant observations:
343 various collective events were attended, such as general meetings, seed exchanges, training days and
344 side events of local markets (seminars and debates).

345 The choice of these 2 case studies is justified by the characteristics and the recent evolution of these
346 rural territories, where we find different food quality initiatives around the valorisation of local
347 products (such as GIs) and a diversity of AFN-type initiatives dealing with social access to local quality
348 food and farmers' access to resources (see table below).

	Southern Ardèche	Genoa Hinterland[6]
Population	140000 inh. 46% rural (Insee 2004) 6% of farming population (Insee 2008) but the agrifood sector as a whole is the first employer[7]	610 000 inh. in the biggest town 17 % rural; 77 % mountainous area[8] 1,9 % of farming population
Average size of the farms (2016)	62% farms < 20ha in Ardèche (French average is 55ha)	94,4% farms < 5ha 58% < 1ha (Italian average is 6,3ha)
% of organic farmers (2016)	about 15% vs 4.5% at the national scale	2,3% vs 2,7% at the national scale
GIs	Chestnut (PDO)	Olive oil (PDO)

[6] Since Genoa hinterland doesn't match any administrative boundaries, we take here the Region as a rough guide. General data stems out of Istat last tables while data specifically focused on agriculture comes from the 6th Agricultural census delivered in 2010.
[7] As stated in the territorial food project (« projet alimentaire territorial ») set up by the local chamber of agriculture in 2016.
[8] In Italy, the definition of « rural » is calculated based on the density of population of areas surrounding the main towns or villages of one region. If the density is over 150 inh/km2, the area is considered as urban area. The left areas are then characterized by the importance of agriculture, measured through a percentage of cultivated area that should exceed 65% to be considered as rural.

	Wine (PDO and PGI) Picodon cheese (PDO) 75% of all farms in Ardèche combine diverse productions[9]	Basil (PDO) Wine Anchovy (PGI) Focaccia (PGI)
Diversity of AFNs	Lively farmers markets, farmers shops, school procurement initiatives, AMAP etc.	GAS, farmers markets, farmers shops, delivery systems, Slowfood groups, etc.
Social justice issues	Focus of some alternative networks on poor families' access to food, and on farmers' access to resources.	"Agricultura sociale" promoted by the Region to foster social reintegration Care about fair prices of food products for consumers as well as for producers

Table 1. main characteristics of the two regions

Both regions, despite their difference in size and population (3,500 km2, pop. 140,000 for southern Ardèche; 1,600 km^2, pop. 268 000 for Genoa hinterland) share several common features. That is, contrasting population densities between littoral or lowland valleys and mountainous areas[10]; a strong 'pull' factor leading to increasing population (for example, over the last 20 years in Ardèche, after more than a century of decline); a declining farm population and smaller farms than the national average[11] although in both cases there is an increasing number of farming projects – despite strong difficulties in terms of access to land; a co-presence of quality food networks (mostly GIs-type)that often emerged in an earlier period, and of AFNs, that were launched by civil society actors more recently.

3 The Southern Ardèche case

Southern Ardèche (France) is a rural region that has long been attractive to neo-rurals and has a strong cultural identity, linked to its history but also to its more recent reputation as an alternative region (Rouvière 2015). A variety of initiatives have developed over the decades, often launched by new comers in interaction with local farmers and inhabitants but also by agricultural actors and public rural development programs, especially along the 1990s and 2000s (see the timeline in figure 1 below). This region has undergone a strong loss of agricultural land and in terms of farming population (a decline of 33.5% in farm numbers from 2000 to 2010[12]). Today, the local agriculture appears quite diverse, and about 15% of the farms are organically run.

This current structure of local agriculture is the result of a profound reconfiguration process. Indeed, this region used to be much more orientated towards fruit production, which had been a successful agricultural industry from the post WW II period to the 1990s. There was a well-organised chain based on local actors - the local fruit cooperative used to be the largest one in Europe - that were well inserted into larger markets - and good levels of recognition of the local fruits quality. Fruit from southern Ardèche was exported to the big cities and consumer markets through intermediaries based in the Rhone Valley. In the early 1990s, this sector collapsed as it lost its competitiveness vis-a-vis new specialised regions both in France and in Spain (that had recently entered the European common

[9] http://rhone-alpes.synagri.com/portail/07---les-cles-de-l-agriculture

[10] Within Genoa hinterland, Istat records great density variations: between 950 hb/km2 on the coast and 72hb/km2 in the mountains.

[11] However, whereas the small size of the farms is often linked to a diversification of the agricultural activities in Ardèche, in Liguria, it is a sign of specialisation in floriculture or other crops with high added value.

[12] Agreste, 2016

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market), with more favourable climate conditions for fruit production. In this context of crisis, many farms stopped their activities, while those who strived to remain in the fruit market had to undertake profound changes in their production and marketing strategies. Some diversified their fruit production, in order to provide more diverse and more direct outlets, others turned to other products, such as wine as this production was "relaunched" through quality schemes in the same period (see below), or to organic farming which would allow them to get better prices and contracts for their products, or to the inclusion of processing and direct sales operations, or even to non-farming activities such as eco-tourism. Many farms combined these different strategies.

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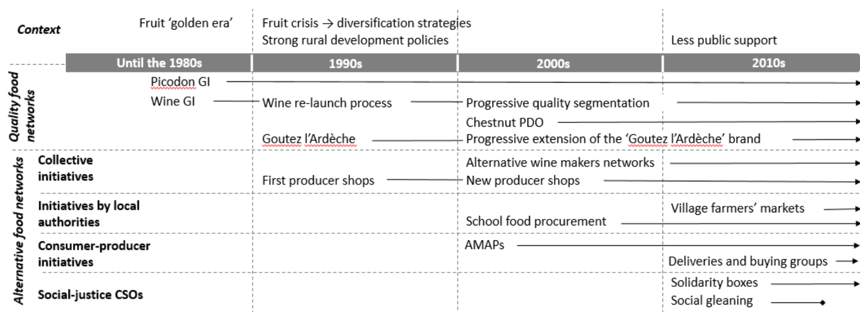

Figure 1 – Timeline of the diverse kinds of initiatives emerging in the Ardèche case study, along the decades

From the early 1990s on, local farmers' groups with the support of agricultural extension services and public rural development programs have tried to develop strategies in order to valorise their products through GIs. In this region, wine and chestnut are the two main products today concerned with GIs (the Picodon goat cheese also has a PDO since 1983, but many producers sell directly without belonging to it). As both grapes and chestnuts have to be processed, the success of these initiatives depends on the mobilisation of processors. In the case of the wine sector, the different local cooperatives worked together in the "re-launch process" of the local vineyards (Boyer and Reyne, 2005), through the creation in 1994 of a union of these cooperatives. This union has led to economies of scale, coordination efficiency and a standardisation of local wines, but also to segmentation strategies, with a diversity of wines of different qualities, including organic ones. More recently (since the 2000s), other wine producers who wanted to keep the singularity of their wine and closer links to consumers have created, either individually or through small collective networks, and outside these cooperatives, their own wine making infrastructures, often joining the "natural wine" ("vin nature") movement that is gaining importance in France (Barrey and Teil 2011). This shows the recomposition that occurs over time between more institutionalised and more alternative forms of organisation.

Eliminato: transformed

We can observe similar processes of qualification and recomposition in the chestnut chain, with a similar "re-launch process" that has been strongly supported by public programs, through the involvement of public research in the genetic improvement of chestnut tree cultivars (see Dupré, 2002), and the involvement of agricultural extension services and local authorities in the organisation of the chestnut sector. Here, the Regional Natural Park (PNR des Monts d'Ardèche) plays a strong role, as chestnuts constitute one of the main crops produced in the mountainous area it covers. While the

large processing firms[13] have supported the creation of a PDO for Ardeche chestnuts (obtained in 2006) and devoted a part of their processing activities to this regional production, many smaller chestnut producers have started or continued processing their own production in much smaller processing units, as has happened in the wine sector.

These diverse food quality initiatives have contributed to the dissemination of new visions for the local agriculture and its revalorisation, around what could be coined a “quality turn”. However, they do not have much direct impact on the food practices and diets of local inhabitants, as these are not just made of wine and chestnut, despite the fact that it makes consumers but also food chain actors more sensitive to local products. In the meantime, other types of initiatives have emerged in the region, seeking to develop the local production of more basic food products, such as vegetables, meat and dairy products, and fruits, and their valorisation on local markets, and to reach a larger part of the local population. The local chamber of agriculture in conjunction with the chambers of trade and crafts and with once again the support of public funds, initiated a collective brand named “Goûtez l’Ardèche” in 1994, a rather pioneering initiative at that time. It is used for a large diversity of local products (400 references today) from the whole department of Ardèche, that are sold in all sorts of outlets, ranging from local grocery stores to large supermarkets, and are also valorised in local restaurants, which is of key importance in this very touristic region (more that 120 local businesses involved today). The local chamber of agriculture and the local organic producers’ organisation have also supported the development of organic production by accompanying farmers’ conversions, especially since the late 2000s.

In parallel to these “institutionalised” initiatives, diverse civil society and farmers’ initiatives have flourished in their efforts to valorise local products for local markets: producers’ collective shops since the mid 1990s, local box schemes aimed at establishing fair prices and contracts between producers and consumers such as AMAPs since the late 2000s, farmers’ deliveries, and farmers’ markets since the 2010s. These farmers’ markets are organized in many villages on a weekly basis during the summer season, most often initiated by local inhabitants and/or farmers with the support of the municipalities. Among these diverse grassroots initiatives, the collective farmers’ shops are noteworthy in that they introduce new modes of marketing based on collective involvement. The shops are run by the farmers, each of whom has to spend half a day every week there and know the other products, which allows the customers to always have a direct access and link to a farmer. Six have been created in this small region between the mid 1990s and 2016. Most often, these are established by neo-rurals but they also involve local “traditional” farmers who find new outlets and diversification opportunities in the context of agricultural crisis described above.

Agricultural extension services and local authorities have sometimes supported these grassroots initiatives, even though most of them have been developed without much institutional and technical support. These initiatives have strongly contributed to the processes of legitimation of a new vision of local agriculture (and of its functions) which is, complementarily to the above one focused on certified quality within a GIs vision, focused on the recognition of peasant agriculture and the valorisation of direct producer/consumer links. These initiatives (and this vision) have also impacted more conventional actors over time as some local supermarkets (not all) have increased the share of local

[13] this sector is characterised by the presence of historical operators, as 3 processing firms have been in the region for about a century, and transform not only local chestnuts but mainly imported material as the local production is still insufficient.

products in their purchases. Since the late 2000s, many schools have also reoriented their procurement towards more local and organic products.

The analysis of the diverse initiatives that have emerged along the last 25 years suggests that it is the articulation of civil society and private initiatives and territorial public policies which appears as a key factor in order to better support farms' resilience and the territorial agrifood system's transition, as has also been demonstrated in previous studies in nearby regions (Lamine, 2012; Bui, 2015). However, this transition raises social justice issues. In the recent period, several civil society organisations have started to tackle social justice issues and to work on consumers' access to local quality food as well as on farmers' access to land, agricultural knowledge and support. This was based on a growing criticism linked to the fact that most initiatives often reached rather wealthy and/or committed consumers – whether local ones or tourists in the summer season – and excluded poorer social groups while they would not address the main farmers' difficulties (especially small farmers' ones). Three initiatives are worth mentioning here, among a larger diversity of initiatives that emerged in the recent period (since the late 2000s) with a focus on more vulnerable groups, whether on consumers or on farmers' side.

The first one involves a local box scheme which is part of a national network of social insertion enterprises that market vegetables produced by formerly unemployed people, who work on two-years contracts during which they are accompanied in their future professional projects. Operating within a national project, this scheme also develops "solidarity boxes" that are delivered to local poor families, in interaction with local social services and with an educational program about diets and food practices. The impact of this initiative on families' food practices and on their conceptions of quality food and their links to their territory has still to be assessed, as well as the possible extension of this program to more households, as today it reaches only about 25 families in the small town of this "solidarity economy" structure (besides the dozens of boxes that are sold at regular prices to local households who can afford them).

The second initiative was launched in 2015 by a local farmers' organisation based on the observation that about 30% of local fruits and vegetable production is not marketed because the products are too small, too ripe, or because the harvest period is limited due to work organisation constraints. A "gleaning project" was developed with the support of local social institutions and local farmers, where low-income households go into the fields with the farmer, harvest the remaining fruits and vegetables, and also take part in cooking or processing workshops[14].

The third initiative focused on farmers' access to agricultural knowledge and support and aimed at setting up appropriate ways to support farmers or future farmers who are not well assisted by the conventional agricultural services because of their rules and frames.

However, the last two pioneer initiatives were financed through public funds that have recently been redirected to other priorities in a context of political change at the larger regional scale, which shows the fragility of such initiatives, due to their dependence on public support. For the same reasons, a local network aimed at creating farm incubators in order to facilitate young farmers' access to land and training, has not yet succeeded in creating such innovative structures, in contrast to a nearby region where such a project has benefited from a strong support from the local authorities (Bui et al., 2016). Of course, such initiatives only reach a limited part of local consumers and farmers, but should

[14] see http://civamardeche.org/Glanage-social.

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be considered as social experimentations aimed at tackling social justice issues and likely to be a basis for future dissemination.

Besides showing the importance of the articulation of diverse initiatives (whether they belong to the alternative or quality food networks' categories) and territorial public policies, in order to better support farms' resilience and sustainable transitions, this case study also shows the complementary role of alternative and conventional initiatives and networks. Our dynamic and pragmatist stance allows understanding how the dissatisfaction over quality food networks such as GIs initiatives on the one hand, and the criticism and controversies over social justice issues on the other, led to launch new initiatives that tackle these issues, through permanent "re-differentiation" processes (Lamine, 2015b) that result from the confrontation of alternative and conventional networks. In operational terms, these results call for the articulation of these different initiatives and forms of support in efficient modes of governance within a coherent territorial agrifood project.

4. Hinterland of Genoa

The hinterland of Genoa, as well as Ardèche and many other mountainous regions in Europe, has suffered a strong rural exodus during the twentieth century. Whereas coastal cities have grown, the rural areas in the region have been marked by social decline. Agriculture has been particularly affected by this demographic decline: Istat census records an abandonment of land, the equivalent of 35% of arable land between 1961 and 1970 and to 19% for all the following intercensal periods. Many farms have disappeared since the 1960s, and further decline is continuing, with a decline of 40% in the number of farms in the province of Genoa between 2000 and 2010 (Rica 2006, Istat 2010). All the farms haven't been affected in the same way, however. The crises have mainly concerned livestock farming, wine growing and fruit and vegetables growing, while they have spared other sectors, such as floriculture, production of ornamental plants and trees, and olive growing.

	Before the 1990s	In the 1990s	In the 2000s	In the 2010s
Context	Abandonment of land and economic crisis in rural areas	Agricultural specialization in high added value crops	Consumers' claims for local and quality food	Agricultural development policies focused on the seaside
Quality food networks				
GI type producers initiatives, encouraged by local authorities	Oil and wine GIs	GIs extended to other products (anchovy, basil, bread)	Collective brands for local products and restaurants serving them	
Consumers/producers initiatives			1st Slow Food Condotte & Presidi	
Alternative food networks				
producers initiatives			1st farmers shop	Individual and collective

			delivery systems on the seaside
Initiatives launched by local authorities		Farmers' markets	Local food supply for the canteens
Consumers/producers initiatives	1st GAS		

Figure 2 – Timeline of the diverse kinds of initiatives emerging in the Hinterland of Genoa case study, along the decades

Over recent decades, dairy producers, wine makers and market gardeners have implemented several initiatives to protect and reassert the value of their activities. With the help of regional and local authorities, they have built specific local food products networks in order to benefit from qualification for GIs. Drawing on a pattern initially dedicated to wine qualification, some producers and other stakeholders have banded together in *consorzi di tutela,* established for quality definition and control. Among these numerous protection associations that have been created since the 1990s, four obtained European recognition. Backed by regional authorities, two groups of producers have obtained a PDO – for olive oil in 1997 and for basil in 2005 – a consortium of fishermen, wholesalers, processors and owners of canning factories secured a PGI for anchovies in 2004, and a consortium linking dairy farmers, restaurant owners and bakers gained a PGI for a kind of focaccia stuffed with cheese in 2012. However, most of the *consorzi* applying for a geographical indication have failed to achieve such recognition. Some have disappeared[15], others eventually took other paths of development.

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On the one hand, many *consorzi* have opted for geographical collective brands (MCG[16]) registered at the regional Chamber of trade. This regional qualification process mimics that of PDOs: it focuses on unique plant varieties to promote vegetables – *Antichi ortaggi del Tigullio* – and on typical breeds of dairy cows to promote cheese – *U Cabanin*. Furthermore, the regional Chamber of trade, as in Ardèche, has created two specific marketing schemes that integrate food products qualified by GIs with a broader range of food products grown, raised or crafted in the region. The brand "*Gusta Genova*" aims to help consumers in identifying these local food products, whereas the brand "*Genova-Liguria Gourmet*" sheds light on the restaurants whose chefs revisit traditional recipes to promote local products.

On the other hand, some initiatives stemmed from civil society actors seeking to protect endangered food products. Over the last decade, some inhabitants have joined the Slow Food association and have created local branches (*condotte*) to protect specific food products that were about to disappear. In Liguria, 9 *condotte* protect 15 food products – a purple asparagus, a black chicken, traditional net fishing methods, etc. – and through the Slow Food qualification schemes that are called *presidi*. They amount to geographical indications as each of them focuses on a specific product, whose consumption is rather rare. Even though their qualification does not rely on any certified label, the enhancement of Slow Food products also relies on a quality sign that is broadly acknowledged at a national and even

[15] Most of the *consorzi* split after their first unsuccessful attempts: some producers left the groups they used to belong to join more promising initiatives supported by local authorities ; others have drawn up their own distribution network, taking advantage of emerging initiatives such as GAS at the beginning of the 2000s.

[16] *Marchi collettivi geografici*.

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international scale. Products are disseminated through conventional distribution circuits, ranging from local groceries to supermarkets, and within a dedicated network: the international food retailer *Eataly*[17], the 14 restaurants members of the "Chefs' Alliance"[18] and 2 street markets labelled as "Earth markets"[19] by the Slow Food national association.

Besides the diverse initiatives that we have identified and studied in this region, one group particularly stands out. Initially founded by a history student, a restaurant owner and a few farmers, the *Consorzio della Quarantina* has shifted away from its first ambition of labelling a specific variety of potato with a PDO, towards the development of a much larger network that doesn't fit into any existing category of alternative nor quality food networks. Over the last 20 years, while criticizing mainstream supply chains, the members of the *Consorzio* have drawn up an original agrifood system which calls upon an innovative research framework. While looking for marketing tools that could increase the value of agricultural products and enhance food quality, they have engaged in a process of constant re-differentiation regarding the models they take on in turns.

At the end of the 1990s, while protesting against the commodification of food and industrialized methods of food production and processing, the members have gathered as a *Consorzio* aiming at the recognition of a specific variety of potato by a geographical indication. Nevertheless, after having documented the historical relationship of the product with the place, they have turned away from this qualification scheme when it came to specifications. Various members of *the Consorzio* rejected what they considered an obstacle to the maintenance of biodiversity and cultural diversity. At the beginning of the 2000s, they considered aiming for a status of *Slow Food Presìdi.* In spite of less restrictive specifications, this project has also been soon abandoned. Some members of the *Consorzio* refused to promote an upmarket product that would be mainly sold to tourists as a travel souvenir and cause social exclusion.

If they share common arguments with other alternative food networks present in the region, they do not rank them in the same order. For example, while enhancing the taste and healthiness of traditional varieties as members of the Slow Food *condotte* might do, the members of the *Consorzio della Quarantina* display food products as fruits of farmers' labour in the very first instance. This prioritisation is particularly clear in one of the first initiatives they set up in the early 2000s: *prezzo sorgente.* Literally meaning "price at the root", the expression refers to a method of calculation that better takes into account the real production costs and the amount of hours worked for growing and harvesting every product. It aims at protecting local inhabitants' access to the products as well as aligning farmers' income with the national minimum wage, thus raising social justice issues. This alternative method of calculation of prices is made very explicit through flyers that are distributed to the different stakeholders interested in the product and through regular meetings[20]. By doing so, the members of the *Consorzio della Quarantina* do not only change the attributes which we usually regard as determinants of value, but also the way value is distributed along the food chain and the food chain scheme itself. They reframe the potato value by addressing the issue of the social cost of this activity.

[17] Since the beginning of the 2000s, Eataly's founder has forged specific partnerships with Slow Food. The grocery store, which has turned into a top of the range supermarket chain is now marketing *presidi* products of the association in food halls all over the world. One of them is located on Genova's harbour.

[18] *Alleanza dei cuochi.*

[19] *Mercati della terra.*

[20] Moreover, one of the conditions to retail the products promoted by the association in a shop or in a restaurant is to visit farmers who produce them at least once a year.

Social justice issues are thus addressed here by focusing on questions of fairness and solidarity between producers and consumers (and other actors).
The qualification system is built upon a principle of territorial solidarity that is constantly rekindled through the relationships between small farmers, restaurant owners, grocers and consumers. These stakeholders are not only treated as agents positioned at different steps of the supply chain for adding value to the products, but also as inhabitants of a same geographic area, who share concerns about quality that extend far beyond the production of food. Actually, the potato variety that gives its name to the group is rather the symbol than the result of its activities. When they explain why they participate in the group, the members of the *Consorzio* put forward the maintenance of terraced landscapes, the conservation of biodiversity, or the transmission of knowledge and know-how. Such criteria allow a wide range of ordinary food products to qualify under the name of the symbolic potato – such as corn, grain, chestnut flour, and different varieties of fruit and vegetables. Over the last decade, as their objects and objectives have evolved, the members of the *Consorzio della Quarantina* have changed the status of their group, turning it into an association "for the Earth and rural culture". Inhabitants of the hinterland and of the city of Genoa, as well as citizens living outside of the region have shown a great interest for the activities of the association. Even though it has only 50 members, the participation to seed exchange fairs, rural book festivals, and other events aiming at promoting sustainable ways of life and practices allow to mobilise thousands of supporters. The *Consorzio* is now acting on the national stage for the recognition of peasant agriculture and promoting participatory research in plant breeding processes. In articulation with other social movements, their claims have led to the drafting of legislation, as at the end of the *Campagna per un'agricoltura contadina* initiative[21], and still keep on fostering public debate and giving food for thought about the future of agriculture and rural areas.

Eliminato: numbers

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As in the Ardèche case study, the Genoa hinterland study reveals that change is initiated by the combined actions of civil society (local inhabitants) and private actors (farmers, shops, restaurants etc.) who are in this case gathered in a large multi-actors network. We can assess similar transition mechanisms as in the Ardèche case, that rely on the combination of civil society action and private actors, and on governance innovations. In this case, these mechanisms relied on the transformation of a classical "*consorzio*", initially focused on one specific agricultural product and its valorisation, and thus engaging mainly agricultural actors, into a much more encompassing civil society organisation, and a territorial agrifood system made of restaurants, collective shops, groceries and farmers' markets open to a great variety of local products. This network has set up innovative governance tools such as the rules elaborated for price calculation that allow for greater fairness in the food chain and also aims at influencing public policies at a larger scale. In this sense, like in the previous case, criticism and controversies over social justice issues (although framed differently as it is more fairness than access to food or resources that is central here), due to the confrontation of alternative and conventional actors and networks, led some social actors to tackle this issue "in action".

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[21] The initiative was launched in 2009 as a petition claiming for the recognition of peasant agriculture in Italy. The growing interest of an increasing number of citizens led the main supporters of this campaign to draft a framework law that was presented to the Parliament in 2013 and turned into four bills that have been discussed since 2014.

639 **Discussion**

640 Our territorial agrifood system approach aims to bring into play the diverse actors and actions that
641 contribute to changes in visions and practices related to agriculture and food in a given region, no
642 matter whether they originate in more conventional or alternative networks or from the production
643 or consumption side. In order to study food systems at a territorial scale, our research framework
644 delimits the research object by starting from the territory rather than from specific initiatives in
645 isolation. This territorial agrifood systems approach allows the analysis to escape from the classical
646 opposition between alternative and conventional networks, and describe unstable networks whose
647 evolutions often go beyond these borders. Indeed, at the regional scale which was our focus here, we
648 found in both cases a co-presence of quality food networks such as collective brands or GIs and
649 alternative food networks as well as initiatives launched or strongly supported by the local authorities
650 such as the relocalisation of public food procurement. Of course the borders between these categories
651 may be porous and in some cases, GIs represent the final outcome of a process of formalisation of
652 local informal initiatives; while reversely, in other cases, groups that fail in their GI-certification project
653 are progressively integrated into more informal and alternative networks.

654 Our approach relies on a combination of principles borrowed from different theoretical frameworks,
655 that leads to take into account the diversity of actors involved in agrifood systems transition; to analyse
656 their interactions in a dynamic way (over a time span of about 25 years) and to also study the
657 trajectories of visions, paradigms and controversies over time. Taking into account this diversity of
658 visions among the diverse actors as well as their change over time in link with emerging criticism and
659 controversies, allows to analyse their effects in terms of both legitimation processes (of certain visions
660 and models such as organic farming) and re-differentiation processes (with new forms of action being
661 set up to address social justice issues, for example). This systemic, dynamic and pragmatist approach
662 helps to identify mechanisms of transition that are actually complex and diverse. These rely on a
663 combination of civil society's, private actors' and public policy's action (Lamine et al., 2012), as well as
664 on these legitimation and re-differentiation processes.

665 This territorial approach can be used both in an analytical perspective as has been presented here, and
666 in a transformative perspective (Popa et al. 2015). From a transformative perspective, the goal is to
667 set up an action research process that allows for a reflection on how a "shared future" takes form in a
668 broader community of rural actors which includes the diversity of actors involved in agricultural and
669 food issues. Such an approach has the potential to create collective responsibility through the inclusion
670 of scientists, citizens/consumers, farmers, business people, educators and politicians alike, all of whom
671 represent the different components in a given territorial agrifood system. In this perspective, it offers
672 an alternative to the tendency of putting the responsibility on individual initiative and on market tools
673 only (Goodman et al. 2011; Agyeman and McEntee 2014) and thus allows "re-politicizing" agriculture
674 and food issues.

675 We can now get back to the two fundamental questions about AFNs' transformative power and social
676 justice. Our findings confirm those of previous papers that have attributed the potential influence of
677 AFNs on larger agrifood systems to processes of legitimation of new discourses and visions, to their
678 direct influence on consumers' and farmers' practices by offering them new alternatives, and to the
679 pressure they put on public policies such as local procurement for school canteens (Morgan and
680 Sonnino 2007; Dubuisson-Quellier et al. 2011). However, in our two cases, the categories of initiatives

681 that allow such processes to occur involve not only AFNs in the restrictive meaning of civil society
682 grassroots initiatives (CFNs in the definition of Renting et al., 2012), but also more "conventional" and
683 hybrid quality food networks, especially from the "GI/specialty products" type. Indeed, different types
684 of initiatives have an influence on discourses and visions but also on practices through the new
685 marketing and procurement alternatives they provide to both producers and consumers. They also
686 influence more mainstream actors (eg. supermarkets) that in our two case studies and elsewhere
687 increasingly adopt some of the elements of these diverse networks, such as their products or
688 discourses (support for small and local farmers, for example). They influence public action with
689 increased recognition of food issues in local development programs. Thus, actual changes are catalysed
690 by different kinds of initiatives based on both AFNs and *ordinary* products, on the one hand, and on
691 quality food network and *specialty* products, on the other. Even in the Italian case where endangered
692 (and thus specialty) products are initially these initiatives' main focus, their evolution over time leads
693 them to also include more ordinary products. By doing so, they extend the principles initially adopted
694 for specialty products to everyday food, and suggest a more systemic thinking about local agriculture
695 and food system. Moreover, as other scholars have demonstrated, one of the risks of the
696 alternative/conventional opposition is to overlook the contingency of the "dominance" of
697 conventional food systems and "the constant work required to maintain them, while marginalizing
698 the diversity, scope, and potential of actually existing food practices" (Sarmiento, 2017: 488). In
699 that sense, what we observe in both cases are processes that aim at (or lead to) ensuring more visibility
700 for the actual diversity of agricultural and food products, practices and networks, beyond the classical
701 and more institutionalised "quality way" focused on specialty products.

702 Therefore, the "transformative potential of AFNs' question" that has been enunciated 15 years ago
703 (Allen et al., 2003) might have to be reformulated today because, as our two case studies suggest, the
704 analysis should not only focus on AFNs' influence investigated in isolation (i.e., by excluding other kinds
705 of initiatives) but rather on the larger landscape of diverse networks, not least because the critical
706 capacity of grassroot initiatives leads more conventional actors to adapt and change some of their
707 practices. Attention then turns to the question of coordination within this larger foodscape or
708 'networks of networks' that *de facto* includes both alternative and quality food networks. This raises
709 the issue of territorial governance which would of course take different forms in different institutional
710 contexts. In the Italian case, where territorial policies have been severely weakened in the past decade,
711 the civil society organisation under study takes the lead in this territorial governance, with a strong
712 dependence on its leaders' personal involvement. In France, the recognition of the notion of
713 "territorial food project" in national legislation in 2014[22] led in Southern Ardèche like in many other
714 urban and rural regions, to the launch in 2017 of such a territorial food project by three local
715 institutions, with the support of national funds. The capacity of this project to create an effective multi-
716 actor governance structure that also involves civil society actors and encompasses marginalised forms
717 of agriculture, farmers and consumers thus allowing to tackle major issues of social justice will have to
718 be assessed in the near future. The role of civil society actors will probably be to reinforce their focus
719 on the issues and actors that are *de facto* excluded by this "institutionalisation process" of the
720 territorial agrifood system, in order to give greater priority to social justice issues in this transition and
721 feed the permanent "re-differentiation processes" (Lamine, 2015b) that operate alongside
722 institutionalisation or conventionalisation processes. In that sense, if we suggest to go beyond the

[22] Loi d'Avenir agricole – Law for the future of agriculture (Law n° 2014-1170, 13 oct. 2014)

classical alternative/conventional opposition, it is not mainly based on an optimistic vision of the potentials of hybridisations and combinations, but rather on a critical perspective focused on the effects of the alternative/conventional confrontations (and controversies) in terms of re-differentiation processes.

Social justice, which was our second cross-cutting question, thus appears as one of the key issues that is renewing the ‘alternativeness’ of AFN’s by strengthening their ethical values. In this respect, the territorial food project which has been set up in Ardèche by several local institutions does *include* some key “social justice” related issues, such as farmers’ access to land and public food procurement. However, as initially framed, it *excludes* other key issues and many alternative organisations that aim to incorporate marginalised categories of both producers (through access to resources’ issues) and consumers (through solidarity box schemes, gleaning projects etc.). In the meantime, these organisations, which are highly dependent upon the involvement of public institutions (local authorities, social services), are strongly affected by the reduction in public financial support mentioned above. Indeed, the gleaning project had to be stopped due to the disruption of public support, and while many box scheme systems can be set up without any public support, their extension to less favored families is dependent upon such support not only in terms of funding but also in order to identify the families in need of assistance. Therefore, the risk we see, within the current process which is occurring in this region but also in other ones, is that of an increasing divergence between on the one hand, more institutionalised transition processes that might be efficient in terms of “democratising” local and organic products by making them more accessible on the local markets , but might tend to overlook “strong” social justice issues; and on the other hand, radical initiatives that are mainly introduced by new, incoming inhabitants, who are not the most socially vulnerable, while the few more “socially committed” CSOs are unlikely to continue their actions focused on marginalised social groups in the absence of any public support.

Conclusion

While previous reviews and papers have highlighted a US/Europe divide within the AFN literature (Parrott et al. 2002; Bowen and Mutersbaugh 2014), we have shown that the relevant “divide” is perhaps rather between Anglo-Saxon and latin languages scholars, largely due to the specific socio-political contexts in which their respective approaches and studies are anchored. However, such divides have to be relativised due to international influences both within the scientific circles and also increasingly within policymaking circles and social movements (Edelman 2005). Strong interactions and influences between the different strands and literature lead to new kinds of combination and mutual recognition.

Eliminato: Romance

Borrowing from different theoretical strands, we have suggested a systemic, dynamic and pragmatist approach to agrifood system transitions and applied it to two case studies. This has allowed us to show that it is the combination of a diversity of initiatives that may lead to (relatively) just agroecological transitions. Indeed, we have demonstrated that in these cases, transition mechanisms rely on a combination of actions taken by civil society and AFNs in the restrictive sense and by private actors, such as GI type initiatives or collective marketing ones. These transition mechanisms are reinforced by specific governance innovations, involving public policies, dedicated market mechanisms, including novel price formation in the Italian case, and collective action in general. While the literature often

766 overlooks the possible complementarities of alternative and conventional networks and the effects of
767 their confrontation and reciprocal influences over time, our systemic, dynamic and pragmatist
768 approach allows to analyse the influence of a variety of actors and initiatives on the legitimation and
769 development of ecological paradigms and social justice visions at the scale of territorial agrifood
770 systems, not least through the processes of re-differentiation that result from conflicts of visions and
771 controversies.

772 To this approach one could oppose the unstable boundaries of the territory. The territory might be
773 stabilised as a scale for public action but this may be more unstable as a scale for economic or civic
774 action – despite the fact that our cases present relatively « thick/strong borders » due to their
775 topography and cultural identity. Indeed, rural territories are very diverse and the two considered here
776 are quite specific. They are anchored in the specific socio-political contexts of France and Italy, where
777 there are still quite strong (although threatened) territorial authorities and policies, a strong
778 attachment to local products or local origin, and strong territorial identities (particularly in these two
779 regions). It thus raises a question for further research, namely, its applicability to other kinds of regions,
780 such as more specialised and less attractive ones where the diversity of initiatives might be much more
781 restrained.

782

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